A CREATIVE ETHOS

Teaching and Learning
at the Cloud Gate Dance School in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the complex construction of creativity at the Cloud Gate Dance School in Taiwan by its leaders and specialist dance teachers, for its teachers and students. It focuses on the School's Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes for 6 to 8 and 10 to 11 year-olds.

The School was established in 1998 to provide dance education opportunities for all ages. Its leaders stress the importance of creativity and personal exploration. Yet, there is a paradox in that the high level of prescription in its highly structured and detailed curricula and pedagogy might be thought to be detrimental to creativity.

This interpretative and qualitative study is concerned with understanding creativity as grounded in the perceptions of the School's leaders and teachers. Data was gathered using a range of techniques including observations of lessons and interviews. This is critically analysed with reference to the School's formal curricula and other printed documentation, the history of dance education in Taiwan, dance education theory and practice, and creativity theory.

The study reveals that creativity at the School, a multifaceted and complex phenomenon, influences all aspects of dance teaching and learning, but that creativity and constraint can exist in tandem. For both teachers and students, creativity is founded on the acquisition of knowledge and skills and the development of positive affect and intrinsic motivation. Although often regarded as an individual construct, creativity at the School also has a significant collective dimension.

Underpinning everything is the School's ethos, which has at its core a concern with, and respect for, the worth and creativity of each individual, and a belief that dance education can be a means of developing the whole self. This ethos, shared by leaders, teachers, students, even parents, is visible in curricula; teaching and learning strategies; formal lesson planning and teacher improvisation; publicity and literature; personal attitudes, dispositions, and relationships; and the sense of community.

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This, I suspect, is not so much the end of the journey, merely the end of the beginning.

Thank you all.

NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

Subjects or participants?

Throughout the study, I quite deliberately refer to those in the field as ‘participants’. Some of the literature uses other terms including ‘subjects’ and ‘informants’. I consider the term ‘subject’, with its implicit colonialist connotations, no longer appropriate. Furthermore and contrary to the methodology of this study, it implies those who are the focus of research are simply objects of the observer’s gaze, with the researcher the sole constructor of meaning (Angrosino, 2005, 731).

In practice, I entered into shifting relationships with the participants. As the fieldwork progressed and relationships grew, the study increasingly involved dialogue between us, with shared interpretations and reflections. The teachers and management were not co-researchers but they were joint-participants, as their reflections on actions, comments and interpretations fed into my own thoughts and understandings, although of course the level of collaboration varied. Dialogue in this sense does not necessarily mean a conversation between two people; it can consist of other forms of multiple and even contradictory voices (Angrosino, 2005, 731). In a sense they became joint researchers as the study caused reflection on their own practices. The process was thus collaborative, not in the sense of employing a multi-disciplinary team or taking an action research approach, but rather in the presumed equal status and participation of the researcher and the researched (Wolf, 1996, 26).

East and West

It is sometimes all too easy to resort to simple concepts and presumptions in explaining behaviours in foreign cultures. In his seminal work *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1978) highlighted the narrow and stereotyped view of the East held by many in the West, especially in America. Furthermore, values are judged in terms of, and in comparison to, those in the West.

This is true of creativity. Weiner (2000, 189) observes that American conceptions of creativity are intimately connected with individuality and freedom, and most

Americans start from a standpoint of seeing Chinese people as a whole as neither free nor creative. Lau, Hui and Ng (2004, 2) comment that several stereotypical approaches, beliefs or assumptions can be seen in cross-cultural discussions of almost any topic between East and West, although they add that Asian researchers undertaking such studies also tend to adopt Western viewpoints.

While it is difficult not to draw comparisons, in this study I have made a conscious effort not to judge the evidence purely in terms of my own, or commonly stated British values. Even though the UK and USA are predominantly Protestant countries with significant shared culture, no single ideological viewpoint can explain behaviours or thinking. The Taiwanese similarly are influenced by a multitude of sources. Weiner (2000, 188) observes, and from my experience in East Asia I agree, that even though many in Taiwan are very committed to Confucian or Buddhist ideals, Taiwanese culture as a whole is quite international and American-influenced, much more so than that in China.

Throughout the thesis I have attempted to avoid using the terms 'East' and 'West'. The terms are, however, widely used in the creativity literature, including by the authors cited above. Although 'East' generally means Chinese societies and 'West' mainly the United States, they can have wider meaning, and their use is sometimes impossible to avoid. Wherever possible, I have, however, located texts and references in their specific country of origin.

There is similarly a tendency in texts to refer to the 'Chinese' as a single homogenous group. Lau, Hui and Ng (2004, 3) note how researchers often, for example, equate ethnic Chinese with subjective or self-identified Chinese. My own readings of texts indicate that those of Chinese origin in Asia are often taken as one group, whether they are in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore or elsewhere. In this study, unless otherwise stated, 'Chinese' refers to those in Mainland China.

China and Taiwan

Taiwan's status has been the subject of debate and dispute, both internationally and within Taiwan, ever since the government of the Republic of China fled and re-

established itself in Taipei after its defeat by the communist forces led by Mao Tse-tung in 1949. Since then, China has regarded Taiwan as a renegade province and continues to make repeated claims for sovereignty, despite the fact Taiwan has never been governed by the People's Republic. Although not recognised as a sovereign state by the United Nations since 1971, Taiwan has been *de facto* an independent nation for over 50 years, and hence is referred to as a 'country.' References to China are to the People's Republic.

Chinese names

Taiwanese and Chinese names have been Romanised and appear as they would in the Chinese language, with the family name (surname) followed by the given names (first names). Although Taiwan has an official system for Romanising names, several others are also in common use. I have therefore used the Roman spelling used by the individual, rather than keeping to one system. For place names and other terms, I have used the Romanised form most commonly used. An English/Roman-Chinese list of names and terms appears on pages 254-257.

Schools and studios

Although the terms 'dance school' and 'dance studio' tend to be used interchangeably, for clarity I have used 'dance school' or 'school of dance,' and reserved the use of the word 'studio' for the room in which one dances. In dance especially, the terms 'class' and 'lesson' also tend to be interchangeable. I have used 'class' to refer to a defined group of students who are taught together. A lesson is a structured period of time where learning is intended to occur. When referring to public or private schools, I have followed the convention used in Taiwan. 'Public schools' are those within the state maintained system. Schools outside that system are referred to as 'private schools.'

CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 Introduction

Take a walk in almost any park or public space in Taiwan in the early morning, evening or weekend and it often seems as if everyone is dancing or moving. It is common to see individuals and groups of all ages learning and practising a range of activities from traditional Chinese dance, folk dance, *tai-qi* and martial arts, through ballroom dance, to more contemporary aerobic dance and cheerleading. Many others regularly attend private dance schools to dance for fun, fitness or to learn new dance skills. Appearances can be deceptive, however, and even though the development of Taiwan's pluralistic society has led to an increasingly favourable environment for artists to engage in creative activity, dance has yet to gain a place where it is fully appreciated and respected (Chung, 2002).

The range of styles in dance performances in Taiwan has become increasingly varied as companies experiment with contemporary aesthetics and genres. Developments in dance education have been much slower. Dance continues to be seen primarily as a performance art rather than a participatory art for all and, until recently, as a subject that had little cross-curricular value in schools. Although the situation is slowly changing, most dance education continues to follow the professional model, with the emphasis on choreographer or teacher-created products and bodies trained for performance (Smith-Autard, 2002, 7).

These perceptions have been fashioned by government policies and social attitudes towards the arts and arts education throughout the second half of the twentieth-century. While Government, through the Council for Cultural Affairs,¹ is attempting to encourage dance activity, this is primarily through funding professional performance projects. Little funding is made available for education events or projects, and it is rarely a condition of other grants. In any event, most companies are very small and do not have the time or resources to undertake education activity. Indeed, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre and Cloud Gate 2 are Taiwan's only full-time dance companies.²

In general education, the focus has been very much on the Talented Student Programme, outlined below. Despite recent curriculum changes, dance elsewhere in public schools remains marginalised. Where it does exist, the focus is very much on performance and dance as product. Dance at graduate and especially undergraduate level focuses heavily on training for a professional dance career (Wu and Huang, 1999, 135).

This was the context in which the Cloud Gate Dance School was established in 1998. Just as dance in Taiwan is something of a hybrid phenomenon, often neither Chinese nor Western, and finding itself pulled in different directions, so the School's birth and subsequent success has underlined the dilemmas facing dance education. As more dancers and educators study abroad, questions are being asked about whether it should go with what is generally referred to in the literature as the Western model, which emphasises individuality and creativity, or the Chinese model, which focuses on group consciousness and basic skills (Wu, 1997, 231).

Dance is often considered inherently creative, yet there are many different understandings of the concept (Morris, 2005, 81). Being creative in dance can include all aspects of dancing, dance-making and dance teaching. It may involve creating meaning embodied in movement; use skills that balance imagination and analysis whether for personal or shared purposes; and be a process in which new knowledge is pursued, or others are guided in their pursuit, about sense of self, others, and the expressive nature of dance (Press and Warburton, 2007, 1273). Some might view a child's performance of a short choreographed dance as creative, while others might regard an unstructured improvisation in the same terms. Some may see creativity in terms of products and outcomes, while others view it more in terms of commitment embedded in a dance school's or dance organisation's ethos.

In this study, I analyse the complex construction of creativity at the Cloud Gate Dance School, by its leaders and specialist dance teachers, for the teachers and students, focusing primarily on the School's Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes for 6 to 8 year-old children. For this age group, Life Pulse emphasises creative dance and expression, while the Pre-professional course focuses on preparation for the later

learning that combines ballet and Graham technique. Specifically, I consider how creativity is conceptualised in the documents, languages and practices of the School and those within it.

‘Creative dance’ is a particular form of dance, and is different from ‘creative’ dance. According to American Geraldine Dimondstein (1974, 167), creative dance is the interpretation of “ideas, feelings and sensory impressions expressed symbolically in movement forms” through the use of the body; yet this description could apply equally to many other dance forms. I agree with Canadian dance educator Sheryle Bergmann Drewe (1996, 17), who considers that the key is that it does so without relying on prior training or being bound by tradition. Echoing Dimondstein, she also views creative dance as expressive rather than based solely upon the use of movement elements. Having said that, Bergmann Drewe considers the development of an elemental movement vocabulary can be also construed as creative dance, since its ultimate purpose is to express the inner self (p.18).

The non-reliance on codified technique, prior training and tradition indicates creative dance has much in common with Laban-based modern educational dance. Instead of centring dance education in performance, or focusing on the creation of refined dance phrases, the Cloud Gate Dance School Life Pulse curriculum designers listened to educators such as Margaret H'Doubler, Rudolf Laban and Joan Russell. As H'Doubler (1940, 64) argues should be the case in creative dance, Life Pulse focuses on using creative motor experience as the basis of teaching and learning rather than emphasising technical skill in movement or choreography. Laban (1948, 11) notes that while modern dance as an art has its place on the stage, in schools the focus should be on the beneficial effects of the creative activity of dancing upon the child. While Russell (1958, 52) accepts that demonstrations of class work allow the educational aspects to be appreciated, she argues that regular lessons should not be taken up with developing production work.

Bergmann Drewe (1992, 104) observes that the expressive nature of creative dance lends it a subjectivity that deemphasises the creation of a dance product to be shared with an audience, and has led to some practitioners such as Sheila Stanley and Alma

Hawkins emphasising process over product. Hawkins (1988, 3), for example, refers to the dancer relating to stimuli and his or her surroundings in a “highly personal and unique fashion.” Even if it is accepted that performance, which I consider includes informal sharing with peers, is not a prime aim of creative dance, I agree with Bergmann Drewe that it has a place. As Bergmann-Drewe (1996, 107) says, if creative dance is expressive, it seems logical to share that expression with others. Furthermore, if the outcome of a creative dance activity is seen as an expression of the self whose form can be recognised by others, it provides criteria for both the teacher and student to evaluate the experience.

While this is not a comparative study, the insights it provides will broaden UK dance educators’ understanding of how creativity can be manifested. Pamela Burnard (2006, 313), a British education scholar specialising in creativity, notes there is much public deliberation and publicity around the creativity agenda, both in the UK, Taiwan and elsewhere. In the UK, the value of creativity has been recognised in the National Curriculum, which states that children should be provided with rich and varied contexts to enable them to think creatively and critically, and thus have the opportunity to become “creative, innovative, enterprising and capable of leadership to equip them for their future lives as workers and citizens” (Department for Education and Skills, 2004, 11). The Taiwanese *White Paper on Creative Education* similarly considered that, “The enhancement of creativity is now more than ever an increasingly important national goal” (Ministry of Education, 2002, 1).

The role of arts education in promoting creative thinking is acknowledged by educators and governments worldwide, as evidenced in a comparative analysis of the arts, creativity and cultural education by the National Foundation for Educational Research for the UK Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2000). The UNESCO report *Arts Education in the Pacific Region: Heritage and Creativity* (2003, 25) specifically recognised the value of dance as an artform through which creativity can be developed, as individuals “develop skills, knowledge and understanding as creative problem solvers, collaborators, critical thinkers, and learn to be open minded to new ideas and to value multiple perspectives.” Widening dance educators’ understandings

of different ways creativity may be conceptualised will strengthen dance's ability to play a significant role in creativity initiatives promoted by governments and educational bodies.

1.2 Taiwanese culture and society

Any study of teaching and learning must recognise the multiple contextual variables embedded within both the macro and micro social environments in which it takes place. Cultural beliefs, norms and actions parallel the function of dance teaching and, while I recognise the dangers of generalising about cultural patterns, failure to consider the cultural context could lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding of statements, actions and beliefs. Culture, values and historical contexts, which in the case of a private school such as the Cloud Gate Dance School include the founder's values, impact in many ways on teaching and learning, curriculum design and pedagogy, personal behaviours and relationships, and school management and organisation (Chang, 2003, 292; Chou, 2003, 217).

Taiwan is not China, and as Ku (1999, 42) observes correctly, Taiwanese culture and society should not be equated with a more general 'Chinese-ness.' Travelling around Taiwan, one soon becomes aware of the multi-cultural nature of the island and the diverse historical influences that have affected culture and institutions past and present. Taiwan has absorbed cultural elements from multiple sources including its own indigenous peoples; early settlers from China, the Japanese occupation of 1895-1945; nationalist China following the move of the government of Chiang Kai-shek to the island in 1949; and the USA, especially from the 1970s.

Taiwan has undergone particularly rapid change since the mid-1980s. In politics, the Kuomintang (KMT) regime first legally allowed opposition political parties in 1986, followed by the abolition of martial law a year later. In 1996 Lee Teng-hui became the first directly elected Taiwanese president; and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidential election and became the ruling party for the first time in 2000. Meanwhile, as manufacturing industry declined, successive governments have focused on developing the now flourishing service and technology sectors. These

developments have been matched by reforms in education and fundamental changes in social systems, including the emergence of a large middle-class that serves as a reference for the population at large (Huang and Wu, 1994, 70; Gold, 1998, 62).

Education

Education has long been considered a priority by Taiwanese parents. Taiwanese authors Lee and Huang (2001) and Chou and Ho (2007) ascribe this partly to entrenched Confucian values, but also because it is an effective means of upward social mobility and parents believe it is the only way children can achieve financial success. Some high schools and universities are particularly highly regarded. Lee and Huang note that many parents place significant pressure on their children to pass the entrance examinations necessary for both (p.7).

Recent education reform is dominated by the introduction in 2001 of a new Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum for Elementary and Junior High Schools that reassigned subjects into nine new learning areas. Schools are now encouraged to develop their own curricula, within guidelines, and teachers are required to make cross-curricular connections between subjects. The changes included moving dance from under the aegis of physical education to a new arts and humanities learning area.

Despite the reforms, what Taiwanese scholar Huang Yi-ling (2004) refers to as “authoritarian education mechanisms” continue to pervade the system. General education remains characterised by centralised curricula, with schools following goals and policies laid down and centrally monitored by the Ministry of Education, including guidance as to the amount of time devoted to each learning area; and competitive national and local examinations, on which entry to senior high school and university depends (Chou and Ho, 2007). Most teaching remains focused on the transmission of skills and knowledge, which restricts the development of creative, analytical and critical skills, focusing instead on the use of memory and regurgitation of facts (Guo, 2005, 132).

The importance of entry examinations to parents, students and teachers is reflected in the nature of curricula, the pedagogy employed, and the classroom environment (Yang,

Huang and Aldridge, 2002). Taiwanese classrooms tend to be highly ordered and teacher-centred. Students are well-behaved and respect the institution, and teachers' authority, knowledge and teaching.

While the education system provides great incentive to learn facts, it is difficult to argue with Lee and Huang (2001) who consider it does so at the expense of creativity, the opportunity to learn practical skills and social manners, and pursuit of the arts. They go so far as to say it is a system that "suffocates independent thought" (p.8). Average classes of 27 students at elementary school, 34 at junior high school and 39 at senior high school also impact on the type of teaching that is possible (Ministry of Education, 2009). The evidence indicates that, while the view of learners is slowly changing, in general, the logic of the system remains that the learner conforms to the system with little recognition that individual learners are different with diverse needs, strengths, interests and abilities that need to be fostered if they are to reach their full potential.

My experience, watching senior high school or university dance classes, reflects that of earlier studies of dance teaching in Taiwan by local researchers Liu Li-yun (2002) and Chen Sheng-mei (1997). The teacher is usually the sole source of information or instruction, which students receive or follow without question or comment, although, as Gibbons (2007, 14) observes, such an approach in codified technique classes is common worldwide. When teaching or addressing senior high-school, undergraduate and postgraduate students in Taiwan, or choreographing with adult dancers, I have found them equally reticent to ask questions or offer suggestions in creative dance sessions or academic classroom settings, whatever their age. On many occasions I have asked for an opinion or comment, only to be met with a wall of silence. A further difference I have observed in Taiwan is that individual praise is rarely heard.

The family, parenting and play

In Taiwan, the family provides significant financial, emotional and moral support for their children's education (Chou and Ho, 2007; Jose *et al.*, 2000). The prestige placed on academic achievement, the status of examinations and progressive selection for

higher levels of education, all exert influences on parent-sanctioned activities. For many parents, enrolling their child in a kindergarten is regarded as essential, since it gives them a head start (GIO, 2004, para.10). For older children, a number of authors (for example Newman *et al.*, 2007; Chou and Ho, 2007; Lee and Huang, 2001; Jose *et al.*, 2000) report that Taiwanese children's after-school free-play time is substantially replaced by home study, attending cram schools³, or participating in extra-curricular activities, including music or dance.

Taiwanese dance educator Liu Shu-ying (2009) believes that after-school arts activities are often seen as particularly prestigious, including attendance at the Cloud Gate Dance School. She considers that middle-class parents sometimes believe enrolling their child at the School reinforces their social status. Neighbours see the child in the easily recognisable uniform, which makes that status public.

These activities take place after a long school day. Taiwanese elementary pupils attend school from approximately 8.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday, with a half-day on Wednesday. The average junior high school day is even longer. Most students do not leave school until at least 5.00pm (Chou and Ho, 2007, 365). The journey from home to the activity location, often at the height of the evening rush hour, can also be difficult. The Taiwanese education system is charted in Appendix 1, and a typical elementary school timetable is shown in Appendix 2.

Chang Pei-yu (2003, 277) observes that, although Taiwanese education scholars accept the importance of play, the pedagogy of learning through play, or using play as a diagnostic tool, is not widely adopted or accepted by teachers or parents. She adds that, for many, learning means only acquiring knowledge and skills from structured textbooks (p.294). Even at young ages, playtime often does not appear on school timetables. In the elementary school timetable in Appendix 2, for example, the only significant break from classes occurs at lunchtime.

Play time is also restricted by the significant amount of homework received by students of all ages, which most parents believe should always be finished before playing. In their study of practices and values of Taiwanese parents of 5 and 6-year

olds, Jose *et al.* (2000, 690) found the children were also engaging in an average 30 minutes additional practice daily, most commonly in drawing, mathematics and music. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that when compared to Americans of the same age, researchers have found that Taiwanese children spend significantly less time playing, reading for fun, or participating in sports or self-chosen activities (for example, Newman *et. al.*, 2007; Jose *et al.*, 2000).

Studies by Haight *et al.* (1999) and Jose *et al.* (2000) confirm my observations that most Taiwanese children's play takes place at home. Both studies found that play tends to be pretend in nature, with Jose *et al.* finding that many parents discourage rough-and-tumble play (p.689). Haight *et al.* (p.1485) found that children tend to play with their parents more than with other children, something parents said they viewed as appropriate and desirable. They add that such play is highly social, and that parents are consistently more responsive to, and supportive of, young children's social exchanges in pretend play, especially than are other children. Such play is often initiated by parents, and functions as a way of demonstrating or practicing proper conduct and effectively passing on social norms and cultural values. This may account in part for the ease with which, in my experience, most Taiwanese children associate even with non-kin adults.

It is important to recognise that cultural factors do not work in isolation from other constraints. Play takes place almost exclusively at home and the discouraging of rough and tumble play could simply reflect that most Taiwanese live small apartments in areas of high population density with few suitable open spaces for play in the immediate locality. Taiwan's city neighbourhoods also tend not to be segregated by class or ethnicity. Expensive apartment blocks are often found adjacent to older, less well maintained and much cheaper housing. Haight *et al.* (1999, 1482) suggest that one consequence of this is that families do not have extensive contact or friendships with neighbours, despite close physical proximity.

Parental control not only includes directing children to activities deemed appropriate. In another study of parenting practices in Taiwan, Chen and Luster (2002, 413) found a common view that, if a child misbehaves in public, it reflects badly on the parents

who are criticised for not being able to teach their child correctly. Liu (2009) confirmed this view, adding that parents feel responsible for their child's behaviour and try hard to fulfil society's expectations of them. So socialised are children to what is acceptable and expected, I have never witnessed them being disruptive in public, and only on very rare occasions have I seen them even running around or shouting.

The above suggests that Taiwanese parents and teachers are authoritarian. Yet my experience is that their control and directness is embedded deeply in a climate of care and love, and concern that children perform well, not one of hostility or rejection. Liu (2009) observes that parents increasingly respect their children's decisions. From my observations, parent-child disputes are most commonly solved through dialogue and reasoning rather than scolding or measures such as withholding privileges. Jose *et al.* (2000, 695) and Chen and Luster (2000, 426) similarly concluded that Taiwanese adults tend to deal with problems by drawing didactic lessons from previous transgressions; and explain rather than punish. As Chen and Luster add, this suggests that the meaning and effect of parental control differs with cultural context.

Chen and Luster also found that parents also regard child self-esteem and independence as important (p.426). One way the latter is evidenced is that even very young children in central Taipei usually travel to school without their parents. It is commonplace to see older children unaccompanied by parents in the evening, often socialising with friends following after-school activities. Parents appear quite content to allow their children such freedom and autonomy.

The workplace

The values and structures discussed above are frequently also seen in the Taiwanese workplace, where a family culture often also exists. Hui, Lee and Rousseau (2004, 232-3) and Zhu, Chen and Warner (2000, 32) observe that people in organisations tend to have personal, close face-to-face relationships, but as in the home, within a hierarchical and power-oriented culture that also features interdependence, reciprocity, trust; and in which the leader is regarded as a caring individual. Both studies found that the Taiwanese tend to relate to the workplace through personal loyalty and

attachment to the people in it, rather than to it as some impersonal other. A school's leader, for example, will offer direction and paternal support to teachers in the same way as teachers do to students or parents to their children. Similarly, as I have witnessed, teachers are very reluctant to challenge the organisational hierarchy in any way.

Confucianism

Underpinning values prevalent in education, parenting and the workplace is Confucianism, which Tu (1998, 3) describes as a combination of worldview, social ethic, political ideology, social tradition, and a way of life. Although not an organised religion, he considers that it exerts a profound influence on political culture and spiritual life throughout East Asia, in government, society, education and family. Many authors have linked the commonly held beliefs and values discussed above to Taiwan's Confucian heritage, including Lee and Huang (2001), Hsieh (2004) and Chou and Ho (2007) in education; Chen and Luster (2002) and Kim and Wong (2002) in the family and parenting; and Zhu, Chen and Warner (2000), and Hui, Lee and Rousseau (2004) in organisations.

Although the manner in which Confucianism is expressed varies from society to society, and from one historical period to another, common themes are the importance of education and the family-social hierarchy, the latter really being an expression of respect for persons in their respective place in the social network that dictates proper attitudes and behaviours (Huang and Wu, 1994, 76-79). One of the first things that struck me about Taiwan when I first visited in 2003 was that interpersonal relationships tend very much to be based on mutual respect.

While the influence of Taiwan's Confucian heritage on society cannot be ignored, there is debate about the extent to which the economic and social restructuring that has occurred since the 1980s, and increasing American influence, has reduced its impact. Some Taiwanese authors such as Chou Wen-chi (2003, 215) and Chen Sun (1994, 106) argue Confucianism can no longer be categorised as a core value system. Chou believes this is particularly true in management, where she says paternalistic

management styles are increasingly less common, not least because of the increasing number of managers educated or trained in the USA or elsewhere in the West (p.225). Others, including Chou and Ho (2007) and Hsieh (2004), consider Confucianism still underpins society's values, including in education, parenting and the workplace.

I consider that Taiwan today features an interplay between Confucian and modern values in a continual process of negotiation and change. There is an emphasis on accepted norms that reflects Confucianism's highlighting of group values over those of the individual (Hsieh, 2004, 314). Family, community or organisational membership is important. Collective activities such as flag-raising and flag-lowering ceremonies and lining-up for home are common in schools. Teachers also frequently pay attention to the whole class rather than to individual pupils. Yet, as previously noted, parents regard child autonomy, albeit within guidelines, as equally important. This suggests that, in contemporary Taiwanese society, interdependence and independence, collectivism and individualism, and control and freedom, are not dichotomised or mutually exclusive but exist in a subtle relationship, a point that was to become important in this study.

1.3 Dance education in Taiwan

As with general education, the status of dance and dance education rests on its place in society, its perceived functions and significance, and is the result of historical and cultural experience (Adshead, 1981, 3; Press and Warbuton, 2007, 1273). Although dance education in Taiwan has a long history, it has been, and continues to be, affected by social attitudes and the changing political face of the country (Wu, 1997, 232). The focus of most public and private dance education is on performances at special events, ceremonies or celebrations, with little allowance for students' own understandings to be heard or personal discoveries to be made. Dance teachers in Taiwan have even been referred to as "dance trainers" (Ni, 1993, 8). Taiwanese dance educators Chou Su-ling (2005) and Chang Chung-shiuan (2007) both observe that dance in Taiwan is generally seen as an essentially female activity, and as Chang said previously, one that is primarily for "recreation and decoration" with "little meaningful application to daily life" (1991, 77).

Historical overview

Although dance has long been used in Taiwan as part of celebratory events, some non-performance-based dance education was introduced into public schools during the early days of the Japanese occupation that began in 1895. Isawa Shuji, the first Japanese Minister of Education for the island, had previously studied education in the United States and introduced movement education as part of the curriculum. Dance was essentially taught for health and fitness, although there were student performances, most commonly as part of celebratory events. There was little concert dance until towards the end of the occupation. In common with the other arts, dance followed developments in Japan, where there was a policy of encouraging artists to visit Europe in search of techniques that would help Japanese art break away from tradition (Chen, Y-P., 2003, 16). European art forms were introduced into schools, with dance education taking the form of large group rhythmic exercise, primarily for girls. There was some creative dance, with a Japanese manual for teaching in circulation as early as 1911.⁴ According to Tsai Juei-yueh, a first generation Taiwanese dance artist, this creative dance followed modern dance of the time in emphasising individual self-expression to music (in Chen, Y-P., 2003, 18). It should be noted that, even at this time, most dance education took place in clubs outside schools and was performance-oriented (Chiang, 2006)

It is often political structures that determine the nature of art that is promoted, and the shape a nation's culture will take (Sporton, 2004). Although an occupying force, the Japanese never actively tried to use dance or dance education for propaganda purposes. That changed following the move of the Chinese nationalist government under Chiang Kai-shek to Taipei in 1949 following its defeat by Chinese communist forces under Mao Tse-tung. Chiang's KMT party saw itself as the true bearer of Chinese heritage and, feeling threatened by the mainland, consciously followed a policy of 'official nationalism' (Anderson, 1983, 86). The arrival of the new regime sparked a lengthy period where the arts and education were used to foster a strong sense of social cohesion and political identity (Wu, 1997, 232). Such use of the arts is common

among nations such as Taiwan where there is or has been a real or perceived threat to their national identity or survival (Morris, 1996, 107).

KMT policy included actively promoting a revival of Chinese culture that, until almost the end of the twentieth-century, was used for social and political control and to some extent propaganda purposes. One of the nationalist government's prime aims was to re-Sinicise Taiwan and to build a Chinese national identity, to which Chinese cultural traditions were integral (Kuo, 2000, 6). In 1952, Chiang Kai-shek set out ideological guidelines for the arts and stated that the focus of arts policy should be to extol national, by which he meant Chinese, culture (Wu in Chen Y-P., 2003, 39). A central goal of all schooling, including in dance, was to promote patriotism, a national identity and encourage support for national advancement (Morris, 1996, 106-107). This did not mean Western influences were completely suppressed, American dance companies and teachers, for example, being regular visitors to the island (Copper, 2000, 9).

In dance education, the primary effect of these policies was felt through *minzu wudao*. This is a rather ill-defined term. Its literal translation is 'people's dance.' Essentially it encompassed all dance with Chinese themes including Chinese classical and folk dance, ethnic dance from regions including Mongolia and Tibet, sword and other military dances. Taiwanese indigenous dance was specifically excluded until the early 1980s, its inclusion coinciding with a growth in Taiwanese consciousness. The KMT previously attempted to force the integration of the indigenous peoples and to subsume their culture within the larger, predominantly Han Chinese culture (Chen Y-P., 2003; Lin, H-M., 2005).

It should be noted that the idea of a single Chinese culture is misleading (Tu, 1991). Regions such as Mongolia in the north or Tibet in the west have always been peripheral, autonomous and incorporated selectively in any construction of Chinese-ness (Levinson, 1970). *Minzu wudao* never was a true representation of Chinese dance, let alone Taiwanese dance, but had rather more to do with what government and teachers perceived Chinese themes and dance to be (Lin H-M., 2005). It was

simply another way in which the government encouraged common participation in a shared, imagined culture.

The emphasis in *minzu wudao* was very much on performance and competitions were established throughout Taiwan from 1954. Private dance schools flourished, and along with public schools and colleges at all levels, enthusiastically embraced the form at the expense of other dance genres. Training was through drill, and performance and winning was all-important. For public schools it could lead to promotions for principals and teachers, while it allowed private schools to attract more prestigious teachers and thus more students (Lin H-M., 2005). The *Minzu Wudao* Committee did allow choreographic creativity, but only within specific guidelines. This was in sharp contrast to the freedom Taiwanese dancers, choreographers and teachers previously enjoyed, even under the Japanese.

Apart from *minzu wudao*, other dances created for specific celebratory events and the vocational Talented Student Programme (see below), dance in schools remained marginalised. In Taiwan, successful academic study not only gives a high social status but higher academic qualifications are often essential for advancement in employment and thus higher lifetime earnings; important in a society where public provision for the disadvantaged is minimal compared to that in most Western countries (Morris, 1996, 105).

According to Taiwanese author Wu Wen-chi (1997, 234), the “tenet of preserving our Chinese culture” emphasised by *minzu wudao* was imprinted on people’s minds and prevailed until the 1980s. Since then, she observes, there has been an increasing fusion between Chinese, Taiwanese and Western cultures throughout public life. Inevitably, dance has been part of that changing image. As increasing numbers of Taiwanese dancers studied abroad and returned to teach, Wu notes that issues of cultural identity started being discussed and investigated, and attention drawn to a perceived deficiency in creativity among Taiwanese dance students (p.235).

Although all arts education in Taiwan has historically focused on professional and vocational studies, increasing attention is being paid to their role in general education

and the community, with the government supporting a number of projects connecting arts organisations with schools (Jung, 2000, 269). In 1997, Lee Teng-hui, then president of Taiwan, decreed an Arts Education Constitution that looked to the future of arts education and focused on three strands: universal and fundamental arts education in mainstream schools, professional arts education, and social arts education. Cloud Gate contributes to the final two of these areas, mostly through Cloud Gate 2 and the Cloud Gate Dance School.

Public schools

As discussed in the previous section, and as British scholar Janet Adshead (1981, 22) observes with specific reference to dance, notions of what it means to be ‘educated’ influence the choice and nature of curriculum activities. Although creative dance was included in the standard curriculum prior to the 2001 reforms, it was often not taught. Long-standing issues were the lack of suitably trained teachers and appropriate space (Chang, 1991, 76). These problems were increasingly resolved in elementary schools, where dance mostly focused on group-based, often aerobic dance, Chinese dance or folk dance, but in junior high schools dance was often replaced with additional lessons in subjects related to high school entrance examinations (Lin H-M., 2005; Chang, 2007).

The arts and humanities learning area in the 2001 curriculum, which includes dance, accounts for 10-15% of total lesson time (Ho, 2006). National standards do not specify the curriculum content in as much detail as previously, although they do stress the importance of creativity and the value of integrating dance with other curriculum areas, and echo the Cloud Gate Dance School philosophy in asking dance teachers to draw on life experiences in their classes. This is also the stated guidance for dance teaching in kindergartens (Liu, 2006, 3). Dance is also now required to include technical skills, appreciation and some theory (Ministry of Education in Lin C-M., 2005, 47). Individual schools are required to establish committees to design and produce their own detailed curriculum content, as with all the domains (Liu, 2006, 3).

The 2001 curriculum clearly provides opportunities for dance education to be promoted. However, Taiwanese early childhood dance educator Liu Shu-ying (2008, 181) considers the theory and practice of dance education, in general, remains insufficiently developed. Although a number of conferences and workshops have been held to explore ways dance can be advanced within the new structure, there is an absence of guidelines for teachers that translate government policy into practice. There is also a continuing lack of qualified dance teachers and facilities. Taiwan has no specialist dance education or teacher training course at tertiary level. Dance teachers in public education are usually vocational dance graduates who have then taken a general teaching qualification. The six universities with specialist dance departments, all focus on vocational training for professional artists. While some offer dance education modules, none are officially recognised for teacher certification (Liu, 2008, 182).

Dance education in public schools remains inextricably bound up with an education system that is meritocratic, competitive and highly instrumental. Where dance is taught, it continues to be an isolated product of the curriculum and focuses on aerobic, folk dance or taught choreography, mostly based on folk or Chinese dance. Improvisation, creative dance, choreography, history and aesthetics are rarely touched upon (Chang, 2007). Liu (2008, 182) observes that many specialist and generalist teachers of young children typically take steps and sequences from commercial publications and teach dances to children by rote. While the new curriculum also offers opportunities for increased co-operation between professional dance and education, I consider it debateable whether these will be taken up, given that the national system of assessment that plays a critical role in selecting students through highly competitive and norm-referenced public examinations remains *in situ*. It is a system in which dance has no place.

Teacher attitudes to dance also appear unchanged. A survey of 132 specialist and non-specialist dance teachers in Taiwanese elementary schools by Hsu Shu-ting (2003) revealed that while 88% felt that all children should have the opportunity to learn dance from early childhood and 84% thought it should be promoted in schools, only

15% thought it should be a subject in its own right in the regular curriculum. Of the remainder, 24% felt it should be an extra-curricular activity only, and 9% that it should be restricted to selected talented dance students. It should be noted that this was a purely statistical survey conducted by questionnaire and reasons for teachers' responses were not investigated.

Talented Student Programme

The Talented Student Programme was established in 1981 and now acts as a feeder for dance courses in higher education, which predominantly focus on vocational training for future professional dancers in ballet; modern dance, primarily Graham technique; Chinese dance and Chinese opera movement. The programme begins at third grade in elementary school (age 8-9) and continues through to senior high school (age 17-18) with separate programmes for each art form at selected schools across Taiwan. Each school designs its own curriculum, based on goals published by the Ministry of Education. These include, "to develop [students'] talent, to improve [their] knowledge, technique, creativity and appreciation of dance" and to promote "an elevated standard of dance and establish a strong basis of the culture in Taiwan" (Chou, 2005, 413). While the guidance refers to creativity and appreciation, Chou Su-ling, head of dance at Tsoying Senior High School, which is part of the programme, emphasises that the primary goal is to train students with a view to their becoming professional dancers (Chou and Liang, 1996).

A major focus of each school's activities is an annual performance that features American modern dance and Chinese dance works, and, depending on the school, ballet, jazz and aboriginal dances. This is a prestigious event, often held in a major theatre, and sometimes featuring new works by choreographers hired from abroad. Fan Ching-wen (2005), a dance teacher at Zhong Zheng Senior High School in Taipei, also in the programme, explained that these choreographies are almost always made by teachers on the students, with little or no dancer input. Chang (2007) believes such strategies considerably restrict the development of dance since students have little opportunity to engage their creativity or study dance aesthetics, criticism, history or theory.

The extent to which the programme focuses on developing children's technique with a view to their subsequent professional career was shown in a survey of school curricula by Chou and Liang (1996). In junior high schools, they found that students spent between 30 and 45% of their school time in dance-related classes, almost all of this devoted to technique training. The position in senior high schools was broadly similar, with the time spent in dance classes rising to 50% in the final year. For both types of school the survey indicated no time was made available for choreography or creative dance, and very little for improvisation. Fan (2005) and Chang (2007) confirmed the survey findings remain broadly valid.

To enter the programme students must pass a dance examination showing the necessary physical ability, and an aptitude test. All the schools in Chou and Liang's survey emphasised technical training in modern dance, Chinese dance and ballet. Student choreography and creative dance does not appear at all, and improvisation only rarely. Just as in regular public schools, this was because there were few with the necessary knowledge or skills to teach it (Chang, 1991, 70; 2007). At junior and senior high schools Chinese opera movement and fighting are also included. From my own observations and conversations with teachers the situation today is little changed.⁵ The view of dance as a primarily female activity is reflected in the programme's student population. At Zhong Zheng Senior High School for example, in 2003 and 2004 there were no male students, and in 2005, just one. Males account for fewer than 10% of those auditioning (Fan, 2005). At Fuxing Senior High School in 2005 there were just three male students. Both schools have approximately sixty students in the programme. Most other senior high schools have similar percentages.⁶

Private dance schools

Away from public schools there are a large number of private dance schools in Taiwan, almost all small, with a sole teacher-owner and catering exclusively for children. Most teach Chinese dance and ballet with a few also teaching other Western dance forms such as jazz and hip-hop. Only a very small number of larger dance schools teach contemporary or American modern dance techniques, generally exclusively to adults. Although teachers such as Liu Feng-xue used creative dance in

the 1960s as a means of exciting and inspiring students, it is rarely taught in private dance schools today (Chang, 2004, 5). The Cloud Gate Dance School is unusual in having a curriculum that emphasises creative movement exploration.

Almost all private dance schools follow the professional model of dance education, mostly following the American system in that each devises its own curriculum and system of assessment.

The boundary between dance company education and private schools is somewhat blurred by the existence of a number of schools that act as either or both a physical and financial base for a company. Chang Shu-ru (2005), Artistic Director of Kaohsiung City Ballet, freely admits that her company can only exist because of the school. It is the dance education activity that allows the company to exist rather than vice-versa. Other examples of well-known companies that operate on this basis are Tai-Gu Tales Dance Theatre and Capital Ballet Taipei.

Dance company education and outreach

No Taiwanese dance company has a separate education department. Most companies are small and education programmes that do exist are usually managed and delivered by artistic staff. Only Cloud Gate has a large-scale programme, but even here it is delivered primarily through Cloud Gate 2 and the Cloud Gate Dance School.

Dance company members' perceptions of the purpose and value of education vary considerably and are often determined by their own experience of the process (Castle, Ashworth and Lord, 2002, 82-83). Given the background, it is not surprising to find that outreach activities by dance companies in Taiwan are often art-centred (Owens, 1998). While some events such as post-performance discussions are aimed at helping audiences interpret and understand works by giving them a greater critical awareness, most focus on encouraging the development of technical and performance skills with personal creative exploration rarely to the fore. Indeed, when I introduced such an element into a repertory workshop based on a piece of my own choreography in Hsinchu in 2003, several participants commented afterwards that they had never experienced such an approach.

For many years after its establishment in 1973, Cloud Gate's education activities similarly focused on evening technique classes for children. Training can be defined as the introduction and development of "specific, limited practices [for] the development of particular activities," (Hirst, 1992, 11). This concept of training remains commonplace in Taiwan, despite being disparaged by many local scholars (including Chang, 2007), although I agree with Stinson (2000, 147), who argues that there is an important place for it in the enhancement of any physical skill. In dance in Taiwan education and training are often seen as one and the same with the two terms used interchangeably. This is not surprising when one considers that an emphasis on training can be found in many aspects of Taiwanese education and child upbringing (Chen and Luster, 2002). Although it was not part of the initial rationale for the Cloud Gate Dance School and is not part of the initial Life Pulse levels that form the core of the School's activities, even here codified dance technique forms part of the overall programme, mostly through the Pre-professional course. The School's courses are outlined in Chapter 2.

In Taiwan there has been little attempt to use what Owens called 'institution-centred justifications' for designing and delivering education programmes. Although more attention is now paid to dance education for society as a whole, government funding continues to focus on allowing companies to create and stage new works and promoting the island through overseas tours. There is no concept of regular funding and allocations are made on a project by project basis, thus making any long term education activity difficult to programme. Cloud Gate's present extensive education programme has largely been made possible through corporate sponsorship and making the Cloud Gate Dance School a commercial organisation

Arts for life

The concept of leisure education, including lifelong learning in the arts, began to develop in Taiwan in the 1990s. This was reflected in the social arts education strand of President Lee's 1997 Arts Education Constitution that emphasised adult continuing learning in the arts for enjoyment, health and recreation, and which sparked administrators into actively trying to find other ways to educate people in theatre arts

(Jung, 2000, 271). Since the late 1990s, there has been an increase in the promotion and sponsorship of a wide range of arts activities or workshops for young people, adults and amateur arts groups by the Ministry of Education, Council for Cultural Affairs and the National Culture and Arts Foundation. As a result, some small and unpaid community dance groups have been able to expand their activities.

The focus continues to be on performance, evidenced, for example, by the Council for Cultural Affairs' support for the National Dance Organisation's annual National Creative Dance Competition. Begun in 1996, this aims to encourage innovation, experimentation and the development of new choreographic talent. Until 2004, the competition included a section for dances created for community performers, specifically with the aim of popularising the art form. For most groups though, the focus continues to be very much on performance of choreographies by specialist dance teachers or choreographers with little dancer input.

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre and the Cloud Gate Dance School are thus located in a society which has a history of dance education, but where dance is seen as an essentially performance-oriented activity for females. With the exception of selected, talented students, dance in schools is marginalised, and in all contexts is focused almost entirely on technique and the dancing of teacher-created works with very little attention paid to student individualism or personal creativity.

1.4 Why the Cloud Gate Dance School?

The locating of this study at the Cloud Gate Dance School in Taiwan stems from my experiences as a dance professional. I have a broad range of experience in, and knowledge of, a range of dance education contexts. I have taught in community settings, and primary and secondary schools in England; and worked with Birmingham Royal Ballet's education team on major projects at home and during a tour to South Africa. My Masters Degree dissertation focused on dance company education and outreach, the research for which included surveying activities across a range of UK companies and interviewing a number of directors of dance education departments. As a participant, I have attended many courses, workshops and been

involved in several large scale performance projects. Although never having danced full-time, I also have a lengthy performance history, and have worked with many choreographers.

My experience made me aware that there were multiple approaches to creativity that often appeared not only to be connected with the context in which the activity was taking place, but also with the cultural background of the individual choreographer, workshop leader or participant. These differences were brought sharply and personally into focus in 2003 when I led a three-month choreographic project involving experienced non-professional dancers for Bamboo Sheath Dancers in Hsinchu, Taiwan, that culminated in the creation of a 25-minute dance work, *Glass (1914)*. As is my usual practice, much of the movement material was created from dancer-improvisation. I quickly became aware that the dancers appeared much less willing to make suggestions or present their own ideas than was my experience in the UK. This was particularly so where wide parameters were given for tasks or, for example, where they were asked to express a personal feeling in movement. They were, however, much happier to adapt an existing movement phrase.

The differences in, and approaches to, dance education were further highlighted during an open repertory workshop at the end of the project. This followed the standard format of teaching a small section of repertory, then asking participants to create their own small section based upon it. The feedback indicated that, for almost all the participants, being given freedom to create their own material, even within what I considered narrow guidelines, was a new experience. One participant went so far as to say she felt as if she had been “set free.”

Drawing on Maslow, British researcher Anna Craft (2005, 113) considers that creativity is “an everyday phenomenon of everyday people.” While creativity may be democratic, a number of scholars have highlighted the importance of cultural influences (for example Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Lubart, 1999; Weiner, 2000; Niu and Sternberg, 2001; 2002). The nature of creativity and the way it is evidenced can vary according to context and the social groups of which an individual is a member. This often means that certain activities will be highlighted more or less, and that certain

people will receive more or less encouragement in their creative endeavours. This does not necessarily mean that creativity is recognised differently. In Niu and Sternberg's (2001) study of creativity in the visual arts by American and Chinese college students, American and Chinese judges adopted similar criteria to judge the artworks, suggesting that people in different cultures have a similar understanding of artistic creativity. However, they found a significant difference between the creativity of the two groups of students, notably that American students showed more ease and spontaneity, and were more likely to break through constraints. This reflects the view that education in each society expresses and inculcates different conceptions and values of creativity, at least to some degree (Weiner, 2000, 229).

Several months earlier, a fellow dance educator had mediated access to the Cloud Gate Dance School, where I interviewed Chief Executive Officer Wen Huei-wen and observed two lessons for young children. It was immediately apparent that the School is unique both in terms of its relationship to the two performance companies and its curricula and pedagogy. I had long been uncomfortable with the lack of connection between creative dance and basic dance skills and knowledge, and creativity and ballet or contemporary dance technique in the UK. The Cloud Gate Dance School appeared to place creativity, individuality and personal exploration at the heart of its activities while linking them with skills and technical dance training. The presence of apparently highly prescribed teaching strategies however, raised questions about the approaches to creativity taken by and for teachers and students.

While wishing to extend and deepen my studies of dance education, I felt it was important to do so in a non-British and, indeed, a non-Western context. According to a Chinese proverb, the last creature to discover water would be the fish. Sometimes we become so immersed in our own culture that we become blind to other possibilities. We forget to question our understandings, what we do, why we do it, or how else it might be done. My experiences at Bamboo Sheath Dancers and the Cloud Gate Dance School made me reflect that stepping away and researching or working in a different cultural context would not only allow for understandings of that context to be built, but for different perspectives to be gained on one's own beliefs, conceptions and

practices. By immersing myself in the environment of the School, I hoped to broaden my horizons and deepen my knowledge of dance education, and specifically to attempt to understand notions of creativity pertaining in a society with different historical, social, political, and cultural dimensions from my own.

No study such as this is value-free. Qualitative and interpretive researchers are always limited by their own frame. Whether complete objectivity can ever be achieved is questionable in any event. As American social scientists Lofland *et al.* (2006, 83) note, “Human perception is always human conception” and what we choose to see, whether consciously or subconsciously, is invariably shaped by who we are. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) observe that while even the most competent observers can report events with clarity and precision, they cannot help but observe and speak, to some degree, from a particular class, gender, racial, cultural and ethnic perspective. They add, “There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the world of - and between - the observer and the observed” (p.21).

In their cross-cultural study of classroom learning environments in Australia and Taiwan, Jill Aldridge and Barry Fraser (2000, 116) rightly observe that all researchers not only bring bias and assumptions to studies, but that these can become increasingly significant the further away from the researcher’s home cultural background and context the study takes place. These biases and assumptions affect what is observed, how observations are interpreted, and can colour what is perceived as important. My biases embraced what I thought of as good dance teaching, including how a teacher should communicate with children, and my perception of a lack of focus on basic skills and knowledge in some British dance education.

To address this potentially significant issue, and the potential problem of differences in understanding, it was important to engage in self-critical introspection and analytical scrutiny of my own thoughts. I was able to draw on previous formal training and over ten years’ professional experience as a workplace process analyst and procedures designer. This post involved substantial qualitative research and observations of people in a range of jobs and workplace cultures.

As a workplace analyst I was always aware of the value of asking apparently obvious questions and informally discussing thoughts and findings with others not immediately involved in a project. It is sometimes only through such discussions that personal biases become apparent. However, I needed to avoid taking for granted or believing actions, comments or values if they agreed with my own.

During this study I therefore took every opportunity to discuss my research with local scholars and dance educators unconnected with the Cloud Gate Dance School. Some had deeply held opinions about the School's processes and its position in the Taiwanese dance education market. They did, however, provide another lens through which my observations could be viewed, occasionally opened up new channels of thought, and allowed deeper reflection than may otherwise have been possible.

I was also able to develop my knowledge of the Taiwanese context in advance of the research. As both Kaeppler (1999, 18) and Kemper *et al.* (2003, 276) observe, it is essential that the researcher understands the frame of events or actions with confidence if meaning is to be derived from them. This study took place from 2005 to 2008, but as part of my preparations, I spent six months in Taiwan in 2003-4, followed by month-long visits in November 2005 and May 2006. During the first of these trips, I studied Chinese and began to develop my knowledge and understanding of the social, cultural, political and educational context in which the School operates; and established relationships with the Cloud Gate Dance School and other local dance educators at all levels.

Other experience also proved valuable. In 2003, I led the choreographic project for Bamboo Sheath Dancers referred to above; and in 2004 assisted the Artistic Director of Tai-Gu Tales Dance Theatre, a noted Taiwanese professional company, during a tour of Eastern Canada. When in Taipei, I also participated in dance classes regularly at two dance centres. Living in the city for extended periods, attending classes, leading workshops, choreographing, and talking to other dance educators, all helped me cross cultural borders to understanding and recognise widely held Taiwanese beliefs and values, and some of the difficulties and pressures under which teachers in Taiwan work. While not claiming this gave an intimate knowledge of Taiwanese

dance and dance education, by the time of the study, my world was not wholly situated in the UK.

1.5 Research questions and aims

In this study, the formulation of questions and the analysis of data were not distinct and separate stages of the research. Questions started to arise from my very first encounter with the School in 2003, and were clarified, developed, added to and rejected as the study progressed. The study took on what Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, 206) call a ‘funnel’ structure, as it became progressively focused over its course. Analysis of the data gathered was similarly ongoing. Although, as Hammersley and Atkinson observe, this formally takes place in analytic notes and in the thesis, informally it was embedded in my ideas and thoughts, and fed into the research design, development of research questions and data collection (p.205).

Many issues and potential avenues of enquiry arose from the preliminary interviews and class observations that took place at the Cloud Gate Dance School in January 2003 and May 2005. These covered a range of topics, mostly general in nature, which included the nature of dance outreach in Taiwan, the differences in approach between Cloud Gate 2 and the School, to more specific aspects of the latter’s practice.

It was quickly apparent that it was impractical to attempt to investigate all of what Malinowski called these “foreshadowed problems” (in Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, 29). The focus on the School, rather than the whole of Cloud Gate’s education activities, emerged as these problems were refined and focused during the pre-fieldwork phase of the study. As the process of honing down continued, it became apparent that many questions centred around the issue of creativity. In particular, there appeared to be a paradox in that while creativity was stressed as being important and encouraged for students, teachers were operating within highly structured curricula and apparently prescribed pedagogy.

By the time of my next visit to Taipei in November 2005, the questions were:

- How is creativity constructed at the School?

- What values and associated concepts of creativity are manifested in practices and why are apparently paradoxical positions taken up by and for students, teachers and management?
- How does creative teaching and learning connect to the teaching and learning of dance technique?
- How important is the ethos of the School and what is its relationship with creativity at the School?

These were still quite general in nature. If sufficient in-depth data was to be collected during the planned fieldwork, specific questions needed highlighting with more precision. Even though the study was now solely located at the School, it was important to avoid the situation of having a significant amount of data, but which was not sufficiently focused or in-depth to allow for meaningful analysis. It was also during this pre-fieldwork stage that I determined to focus primarily on children aged 6 to 8 years, which was agreed with the School during the visit in May 2006. The final questions for the fieldwork were:

- How is creativity conceptualised at the Cloud Gate Dance School, and how important does the School consider it?
- What is the primary focus of each of the School's courses?
- What role does creativity play in the Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes?
- How, and to what extent, is student creativity encouraged or discouraged in those classes, and how is this manifested?
- What factors affect students' creative processes and outputs in classes, and to what extent?
- To what extent does student creativity develop or change over a semester?
- How important does the School regard teacher creativity in classes?

- How, and to what extent, is teacher creativity encouraged or discouraged in those classes, and how is this manifested?

Appendix 3 details how each of these was addressed.

Almost immediately the fieldwork began (see Chapter 4), a number of specific aspects of the School's and its teachers' practice came into sharp focus. These led to the formation of the following questions that subsequently formed the basis for the data analysis in Chapters 5 to 7:

- To what extent is the acquisition of certain knowledge and skills regarded as a requirement for creativity, whether that is specific skills for students or for teachers?
- What is the role of affective factors, intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in the creative process at the School, both for students and for teachers?
- How is novelty (originality) and appropriateness (meeting task constraints) recognised and judged by teachers and leaders at the School?
- What is the relative importance attached to the individual versus the group in relation to creative activity.
- To what extent, and how, can teachers teach creatively within the School's highly structured curricula and apparently prescribed pedagogy?

The idea that creativity is constructed is crucial for this study. Contemporary literature from sociology, psychology, education and the performing arts displays a common understanding that ideas such as creativity do not emerge irrespective of culture or the immediate lived environment. People do not find, discover or passively receive such ideas, but rather they invent concepts, models and schemes to make sense of experience. As Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 127), writing from a social psychological perspective but typical of many disciplines observes, "Even the most abstract mind is affected by the surroundings of the body." No-one, he adds, is immune to impressions that impinge from outside. Understandings are acquired

through actively being in and being part of the world. Knowledge and conceptions are constantly in the process of being created and mediated through experience and against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, rules, roles and status (Swingewood, 1984, 271; Schwandt, 2000, 196). Teachers' conceptions of creativity in dance education at the Cloud Gate Dance School are built over time and through their historical social experiences and present practices that evidence the School's teaching philosophy, curricula and policies. Their understandings are thus conceptualised according to the needs and context in which they are framed (Buckland, 1999, 200).

While it is more usual to associate creativity in dance with the performer or student than with the teacher, in this study I examine constructions of creativity at the School as a whole, including how its specialist dance teachers approach creativity in their practice, and how its leaders approach it through policy and the curriculum framework. While theoretical education texts tend to be universal in nature, constructions of creativity and practical dance teaching are subject to contextual variables that teachers deal with on a daily basis. By connecting daily practice in creative dance and technique teaching, and the School's curricula and policies, with theoretical discussion and existing academic research, I aim to bridge the gap that can exist between theory and practice (Anttila, 1994; Lord, 1997; Buck, 2001). Finnish dance education scholar Eeva Anttila argues that while theoretical and philosophical discussion is crucial for dance education, this must be linked to real-life practice (p.3). Canadian dance educator, Madelaine Lord, considers that while there is a body of literature giving pedagogical guidance to dance teachers, what happens in dance studios suggests these are not sufficient to ensure implementation and renewal of coherent teaching practices related to creativity (p.202).

The aim was neither to develop a new theory of creativity in dance education; nor to set out a formula for understanding, encouraging or teaching for creativity; nor to develop a new model of dance education in which creativity is to the fore, and that others should follow. Without passing judgement on the School's practices and values, I wanted to explore and determine understandings of creativity as they had

been shaped in that context in relation to management and teacher practice, student experiences, and the existing literature about creativity.

This study aims to contribute to increasing dance educators' understandings of creativity in dance as a culture-specific construct, and to elucidate strategies used to encourage it. It enables a Taiwanese perspective to be brought to the field of dance education in the UK, and a British perspective to that in Taiwan, both at the School and more widely through discussion with, and presentation of, findings to other local dance educators.

Such cross-cultural dialogue and the opportunities it provides for exchange are a valuable part of the process. As Wong Chin-chu (2007), Minister of the Taiwan Council for Cultural Affairs, said, "Outsiders are sometimes more able to provide fresh perspectives, which often make such studies more valuable and perceptive." While being aware of the dangers of paternalism or colonialism, the very act of an outsider observing and researching practice at the School, and discussing it with teachers and leaders, may have the effect of revealing actions or prompting thoughts of which they were previously unaware, and thus allow reflection on their own policies and practice.

1.6 Methodology

This study investigates creativity as it is actively constructed and grounded in the actions and perceptions of the participants; and the documents, languages and practices of the Cloud Gate Dance School. The study stresses meaning and tries to remain faithful to experience in the real, lived world. Those constructions cannot be quantified by verifiable facts. Rather, they are illustrated by how the teachers and leaders apply strategies, enter into relationships, and innovate, which are evidenced by their words and actions.

Those being studied can rarely give full explanations of their actions or intentions, and no single research method can grasp all the variations in human experience (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, 21). To counter this, a range of interconnected ethnographic data collection and interpretive methods was used, as I sought to understand the world of

the School. Such an approach was not only appropriate given the deductive and interpretive nature of the research questions, but also allowed me to use observation, interview, textual data collection and data analysis skills previously acquired. Fieldwork techniques employed included collection of textual data; observations of classes; and informal discussions and formal interviews with teachers, leaders and curriculum consultants at the School, the School's Chief Executive Officer, Wen Huei-wen, and Cloud Gate Dance Theatre Artistic Director, Lin Hwai-min. I also discussed the research with other Taiwanese dance educators whenever opportunities arose.

My experience as a dancer and dance educator, in particular my consideration that creativity could be manifested in many different ways, led me to look beyond dance education texts in the literature review. The literature about creative dance teaching and learning tends to be embedded in ideas about doing; and why and how original form is developed in practice. While there are many teaching handbooks, there are few academic studies or texts focused on creativity and pedagogy. Almost without exception, such handbooks suggest a universal approach to creativity based on modern dance, with no acknowledgement made of cultural or other factors. Typical are Joan Russell's (1965, 1969) texts for primary and secondary school teachers, which were influential in Britain for many years. Later publications (for example, Shreeves, 1990; Lynch-Fraser, 1991; Hobba, 1995) commonly detail numerous ideas for activities and lesson plans, and focus on completed, reproducible work, whether that is a single movement, a dance phrase or a completed choreography.

Although a number of papers focusing on creativity have recently appeared in publications such as the *Journal of Dance Education*, there have been few attempts made systematically to explore questions about sources, context, processes and outcomes in an embodied art form (Press and Warburton, 2007, 1274). There remain relatively few texts focusing on constructions of creativity, especially for young children, who are the focus of this study. This may be due in part to the perception of dance primarily as a performance art, and to the fact that many texts focus on dance in

education, where final, visible, repeatable dances are required for assessment. As is shown later, this is not the case at the Cloud Gate Dance School.

Hence, much of the literature that underpins the study comes from psychology and general education. In psychology, I searched particularly for texts that focused on cultural aspects of creativity. In education, I turned to those studies that investigate and theorise creativity and connect it with daily classroom practice.

Although I draw on texts that focus on creativity in ethnically Chinese societies where possible, much of the review is grounded in American and British literature and conceptualisations of the topic. Lau (in Lau, Hui and Ng, 2004, 6-7) notes that even in Asia, theorisation of creativity is heavily dependent on such concepts and theories. Although some East Asian constructs and instruments have now been developed, they have not yet been published or accepted by scholars. There is, therefore, little choice but to use these Western approaches as the starting point for this study, even though it is located in Taiwan. As already noted, I am, however, awake to the dangers of resorting to simple concepts and presumptions in explaining behaviours and when comparing differences between societies and an over-reliance on traditional ideological frameworks such as Confucianism and views of individualism versus collectivism.

The nature and timing of the fieldwork was agreed with Wen in May 2006. It took place over four months from October 2006 to January 2007, and focused on dance and movement classes for children aged 6 to 8 years, in both the Life Pulse and Pre-professional courses. I considered it essential to observe lessons for a prolonged period so as to understand events fully, the setting and teachers' practice in depth. It also allowed time to build relationships with teachers, and for teachers and students to get used to my presence, thus minimising my effect on events. Lessons were observed from the beginning of the semester so that a base line was established for comparative purposes should it be required. Some lessons in both courses for children aged 10 to 11 years were also observed to help contextualise the primary observations and to allow me to develop a deeper understanding of the School's activities.

The study developed a pluralistic, open-ended interpretation. My task was one of making sense of the participants' actions and statements and the local situation. My voice was not privileged and I was not the sole arbiter of knowledge about the society or group being studied. It was accepted that the study would not establish a single stable and overriding interpretation or an objective truth (Buckland, 1999, 197). Indeed, it was likely that the fieldwork would reveal conflicting events and the voices in the field reveal different understandings. To a significant extent, the final account is, therefore, an "interpretation of interpretations" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, 15).

The properties and qualities of dance and dance teaching are located in the object of attention itself, but only as it is actualised or valued in the experience of the perceiver. Interpretation is not a one dimensional act, but is a bringing together of various threads, discerning and describing properties and qualities, comparing and relating them to other events, and considering the political, historical and social context (Horton Fraleigh, 1999, 188-9). What was important in that process was that I was aware of my subjectivities and ensured any analysis took account of them. One way I ensured this happened was to discuss regularly my thoughts with other local dance educators, who could bring other points of view to bear.

The study, therefore, departs from what Eisner (1981) terms a scientific approach to qualitative research whereby a theory is tested, hypotheses validated or conclusions produced that are grounded in reality, and that can be generalised to dance educators or dance education in other places and contexts. Rather it takes what he calls an artistic approach, more concerned with how meaning is constructed by individuals, and the meaning their actions have for themselves and others, than with the discovery of some single truth.

1.6 Generalising from the study

This is a study of events at the Cloud Gate Dance School in Taiwan. It is linked intimately to a unique time and place. The local context is deeply ingrained in the analysis and findings, which, therefore, should not be transferred directly to other contexts. All dance education is constrained by the sector in which it takes place

(Adshead, 1981, xi). Furthermore, Posey (2002, 43) tells us, the public's perception of dance education determines in what they will participate. This is especially true in the private sector where a commercial transaction takes place, and does impact on curricula. Economic and cultural reality intrudes on dance education, and influences both its artistic and educational values.

Although the teachers and leaders at the School effectively became co-researchers, and the findings of the study draw on and are mediated by their comments and opinions, my stories and conclusions represent my version of events. Although I was a non-participant observer in the studio, I was not fully outside what happened. I have already noted that our own histories mean there are no such things as objective observations, but this moves still further the act of writing from a distanced, objective account, towards a personally evolved, evocative act. The knowledge presented is therefore qualified (Gallas, 1994, 8).

However, while the findings do not set out a new theory of creativity in dance education, or even a guide to understanding creativity in all contexts, they are of value to dance educators. Dance educators can make comparisons with their own beliefs, conceptions and practices; and with other contexts, cultures or types of dance organisations. I argue that the study conveys insights that exceed the limits of the setting in which they occurred, and extrapolations or generalisations can be made (Eisner, 1981, 7).

For any extrapolation, generalisation or even transfer to be valid, there must be a process of active reflection in which people decide individually whether the knowledge makes sense in another context. As with any research, there should not be reliance solely on scholarly theories or research findings, or on personal experience as reference points when attempting to understand teaching and learning processes. It is important to look both in and out and recognise the inherent contextualisation of knowledge (Gallas, 1994, 8). If readers of this qualitative and illustrative study are to be able to see generic applications of the findings and validly extrapolate them to their practice or dance studio, they must be conversant with, and have confidence in, their understanding of the context or research setting. Only then can they understand the

consequences of applying the knowledge in the new context (Greenwood and Levin, 2005, 55). Key to this process is the use of contextualising descriptions. Hence, background to the formation of the School and a description of its curricula are given in Chapter 2, while events in lessons pertinent to the analysis are described in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

1.7 Overview of the chapters

The study is documented in the following chapters. In this chapter I have discussed the wider Taiwanese social, cultural and educational context, and considered the historical and present day nature and status of dance education in Taiwan. To further contextualise the study, in Chapter 2, I focus on Lin Hwai-min, the institution of Cloud Gate and the Cloud Gate Dance School itself. In doing so, I highlight the atypical approach to dance education taken by the School to that taken elsewhere in Taiwan.

In Chapter 3, I discuss aspects of creativity pertinent to this study, and that informed the research and the development of more detailed fieldwork questions. Given the multifaceted nature of the creativity, I draw on a wide range of sources including psychology, dance education and general education texts. Most of the literature referred to is from American and European texts reflecting the fact that, until recently, this was the location of almost all published research.

The fieldwork is then recounted in Chapter 4, which includes a description of events that led up to the period of intensive class observations in Taiwan, and some reflections on the process.

The data gathered is interpreted in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, with the conclusions and implications drawn out in Chapter 8. The analysis does not cover every possible aspect of creativity within the School, but rather aims to examine the most salient aspects of the teachers' and leaders' perceptions of the concept through studying their actions and words within and without the dance studio.

In Chapter 5, I focus on the foundations for creativity, specifically the importance attached to positive affective factors and the role of play in creating them, and the building of a personal knowledge base.

In Chapter 6, I move on to consider the creative process in the Cloud Gate Dance School studio, in particular showing that while children are encouraged to use their imagination, engage in divergent thinking and produce multiple outcomes, great importance is placed on appropriateness, which in turn has consequences for novelty.

In Chapter 7, I turn my attention to the teachers and leaders. I investigate how, and the extent to which, teachers can sustain and effectively take a creative approach to teaching within the highly structured framework that governs their practice. In this chapter, I also consider management policies in relation to creativity for teachers.

Finally, in Chapter 8, I examine how the School's curricula, practices, and beliefs about creativity are underpinned by its ethos. I then consider how this allows creativity to play a role in the teaching and learning of dance technique. Following this, I set out the conclusions of the study and consider how the research may be taken forward.

Notes

- ¹ The Council for Cultural Affairs is the primary central government agency in charge of cultural affairs in Taiwan, including the arts. It plays a significant role in promoting and funding arts events and organisations at all levels from major companies such as Cloud Gate Dance Theatre to local community groups.
- ² The main company's official name is Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, thus emphasising its Taiwanese origins, especially when touring abroad. For succinctness, in this thesis I have used 'Cloud Gate Dance Theatre' when referring to the main company, and 'Cloud Gate' when referring to the wider Cloud Gate institution.

- ³ Taiwan has a flourishing cram school industry. Known as *buxiban*, these commercial cram schools exist in limbo, heavily hinged on officially defined knowledge, but without a place in the official education structure. Taiwan has approximately 3,500 such establishments registered with the Ministry of Education covering all academic subjects, business, sports, the arts etc. Approximately 50% are academic-based. Students attend them with the aim of improving school grades or their chances in senior high school or university entrance examinations (Zeng, 1999, 153-4).
- ⁴ During her 2006 Taiwan Dance Research Society conference presentation, Chiang showed a photograph of a book written in Japanese titled *An Alphabet for Creative Dance Teaching*. The author is unknown. The photograph is known to have been taken in Taiwan and is dated 1911.
- ⁵ Over several years at Zhong Zheng and Fuxing Senior High Schools in Taipei, and Tsoying Senior High School in Kaohsiung.
- ⁶ According to Chou Su-ling in response to a question at the Asia-Pacific Dance Conference, Kuala Lumpur, 2005; and based on my own observations of classes at schools, conversations with teachers and annual performances.

CHAPTER 2

LIN HWAI-MIN AND THE CLOUD GATE DANCE SCHOOL

2.1 Lin Hwai-min and Cloud Gate

As observed in Chapter 1, attitudes to dance education are the result of historical and cultural experience and meanings; and, in any given school, the founder's values impact on curriculum design and pedagogy, and school management and organisation. While a number of scholars (for example, Chao, 2001; Lin, 2004) highlight the relationship between Lin Hwai-min's choreographies and movement vocabulary, and Taiwan's changing cultural and political identity, the Cloud Gate Dance School, with its curriculum grounded in principles of child development, and concerns with family involvement, similarly has roots in Lin's personal experiences and beliefs.

Lin is a national figure in Taiwan. Sporton (2004, 284) describes him as a "cultural icon." His standing is demonstrated by the fact he was one of six figures chosen by the Discovery TV channel for a series of programmes featuring leading contemporary Taiwanese figures. In 2005 a dance conference was devoted to his work, but his influence extends beyond the arts and education. For example, in the elections of 2000 he advised the then opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in their campaign against the Kuomintang (KMT) and thus contributed to the first democratic transfer of power in Taiwan's history. In a national address, President Chen Shui-bian (2003) later cited both Cloud Gate and *Legacy*, one of the company's signature works, as examples of the Taiwanese national struggle, although, in a reflection of wider attitudes to the arts and arts education, he then set out a vision for the future in which culture and the arts was not mentioned once.

Lin was born into a well-known family in Chaiyi, Central Taiwan in 1947.¹ Like many of his generation, he competed in government sponsored *minzu wudao* competitions while at elementary school, competitions he says he hated, and memories of which had a bearing on the approach he wanted to take with the Cloud Gate Dance School in the 1990s (Lin H-M, 2005). He attended ballet classes as a teenager but his first exposure to modern dance came when he saw José Limon's *The*

Moor's Pavane during the Limon Company's 1963 tour of Taiwan. However, it was another four years before he took his first modern dance classes with Huang Zhong-liang, a Taiwanese dancer temporarily returned from studying in the United States, at Tsai Juei-yueh's dance school in Taipei (Chiang, 2005, 82).

Lin first made his name as an accomplished writer of fiction, his works including *Cicadas* (1969), a best-selling collection of short stories. This and several other of his works have been translated into English and published in the United States. It was not until he was studying for his MFA at the Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa that his thoughts turned to dance as a career and he first choreographed for public performance. After completing his Masters degree in 1972 he moved to New York to continue his dance training, primarily at the Martha Graham School. On returning to Taiwan later that year, Lin taught modern dance at the Chinese Culture University in Taipei (Chiang, 2005). In mid-1973 he and a group of dancers, most of whom were his students, accepted an invitation to perform in Taichung, and Cloud Gate Dance Theatre was born.

The name 'Cloud Gate' (*yun men*) has its origins in Chinese mythology. It was one of the highest order of *da wu* (Great Dances), a category of ancient ritual dance, and is often associated with the *Huang di* (Yellow Emperor), who ruled at the beginning of Chinese civilisation and who, in Han mythology, is the single ancestor of all subsequent dynasties (Chao, 2001, 174). There is documentary evidence of the *yun men* from around 500 BC. It appears as one of the *liu wu* (six dances) set out in the *Zhou li* (Rites of the Zhou), a compilation of writings from the late Warring States period (481-221 BC) that describes the rites and administrative practices instituted shortly after the Zhou dynasty came to power in 1045 BC (McCurley, 2005, 146-7).

Lin's decision to call his company 'Cloud Gate' reflected the nationalist sentiment prevalent in Taiwan in the early 1970s, a time of considerable diplomatic and political turmoil. Taiwan had been a member of the United Nations since 1949, but was expelled in 1971 when the China seat was given to the People's Republic of China. Then, in February 1972, the United States switched its support from Taiwan to China adding that it did not challenge Beijing's position that Taiwan was part of China.

Other countries quickly followed suit, leaving the country diplomatically isolated (Copper, 2000, xxii). These events impacted on the political, social and cultural realities of Taiwan. The increasing political isolation led to a reconsideration of many people's admiration for and moves towards Western culture and values seen in the previous decade. Chang Sung-sheng (1993, 148), notes how this resulted in a growing consciousness by many in Taiwan that their Chinese identity was endangered and a resurgence of Chinese nationalism, albeit a very different nationalism from that promulgated by the KMT.

Lin's nationalist passion, stimulated by those diplomatic defeats was a prime factor in his wanting to establish a Taiwanese company. He said, "The nation needed a dance company" and, referring to yet another diplomatic defeat, "Maybe it was a different form of Tiao-yu Tai protest"² (both in Chao, 2001, 178). Lin's choice of the name 'Cloud Gate' was not only an expression of his own sentiments but also symbolised the relationship between dance, culture and nationalism that can be seen in many of his early choreographies. His feelings were further expressed in the programme notes for the company's first performance on 29th September 1973, which described the event as being, "Composed by Chinese, choreographed by Chinese, and danced by Chinese for a Chinese audience." In the programme, Lin said that the company's mission was more than artistic and they had a "certain responsibility for Chinese culture."

In the years since, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre has become *de facto* the national dance company. 'Of Taiwan' was added to the company's formal name, thus further emphasising its origins and Taiwan as a discrete entity rather than as part of China. While the dancers and staff are very aware that they are representing the country when on tour, Lin is equally keen to protect the company's independence (Lin, 2005). An expression of interest in sponsorship from the KMT was refused, Lin fearing it would become a "government company" rather than a "people's company" (Lawson, 2000).

Although Lin (2005) claims never to have deliberately set out to make political statements in his work, his choreographies and educational activities have been shaped by the changing political and social context. His early commitment to dance

education for young people and non-professional adults was demonstrated by the establishment of the Cloud Gate Dance Studio in 1975. As with other dance schools in Taiwan, a professional model of education was adopted, with a focus on codified technique. Classes were offered in Chinese dance, American modern dance and ballet. This reflected most of his choreography of the period which blended American modern dance techniques, notably Graham, with Han Chinese or Taiwanese themes and movement. Han Chinese is the dominant ethnic culture in Taiwan and often referred to as 'traditional Chinese' especially when compared to cultures of other ethnic groups. Such works include *Revenge of the Lonely Ghost* (1974) and *Tale of the White Serpent* (1975), the latter becoming one of the company's signature works.

During this time Lin also choreographed a number of works for children including *The Little Drummer* (1976), for which he received a special award from the Ministry of Education, *Wu Sung Kills the Tiger* (1976) and *A Dance for the Earth* (1991), the latter for 200 children from Guangfu Elementary School (Chiang, 2005, 89). The Studio was the only part of Cloud Gate to remain functioning during the company's temporary closure due to financial difficulties between 1988 and 1991.

In the 1990s, Lin moved away from American techniques and returned to a more Asian body aesthetic. Taiwanese dance scholar, Chen Ya-ping (1998, 43), says he attempted to "exorcise the codified Western techniques imposed upon Taiwanese dancers." In 1997, he introduced *tai-qi dao yin*, into the dancers' daily training. This is a variation on traditional *tai-qi* specifically developed by Hsiung Wei for Cloud Gate. Another Taiwanese scholar, Lin Ya-tin (2005, 96), describes *tai-qi dao yin* as a means of channelling breathing and using release to improve the circulation of internal energy in the body (*qi*).³ She adds that it can be viewed as embodying the flexible nature of Taiwan's increasingly hybrid society. Like other forms of *tai-qi*, it has an inward focus and requires the practitioner to keep hips loose and feet firmly on the ground, in contrast to the outward physical exertion of most Western dance, including the contraction and release of Graham technique. Lin's first major work to incorporate *tai-chi dao yin* directly into the choreography was *Moon Water* (1998). Lin often refers to such technique as "dancing from the inside out" (for example in

Lin, H-M, 2005). This is, however, far from a new term, Doris Humphrey having described her ideas as “moving from the inside out” in a letter to her mother in 1927 (in Jowitt, 1988, 164). Even more recently, other martial arts training was added, the results of which can be seen in *Cursive* (2001) and subsequent works.

Lin’s turning to a more East Asian aesthetic in his choreography coincided with his questioning the focus and direction of dance education in Taiwan, especially for children. By the mid-1990s, Cloud Gate had become the professional dance model for Taiwan. Yet the company’s very success had only served to increase the public perception of dance as essentially a performance art with little connection to ordinary people. Lin considered that health and the quality of life could be promoted through recreational dance education; that dance was for all, not only the gifted or talented; and that there did not always have to be a link to performance. Why, he asked, should there be such a focus on technique and why were children being trained as if they were going to be professional dancers, when clearly they were not (Lin H-M., 2005). Writing about the formation of the School, Chang Chung-shiuan (2004, 6) echoes him, saying that people, including specialist educators, had forgotten that dance has a role to play in developing the whole person and that professionally trained dancers can connect dance and education. Taiwanese art historian Jason Kuo (2000, 175) identifies that a similar debate occurred in visual art in Taiwan from the late 1980s, which included questioning the role of art galleries and museums.

Connections can be seen between Lin’s movement aesthetics and the Cloud Gate Dance School curricula. Although *tai-qi dao yin* is not taught at the School *per se*, some elements, such as the importance of breath, focusing on the whole body rather than on external positions and meditation at the start of class, can be seen in the curricula. More recently, use of martial arts in the company has been reflected by the introduction in 2003 of a martial arts course, with a curriculum designed by Chi Hsu, the company martial arts master.

An outline history of the Cloud Gate companies and School is shown in Appendix 4.

2.2 Cloud Gate Dance School

When organising a dance education programme within an existing educational or dance organisation, programme designers are always constrained by existing structures. As an anonymous respondent to a survey about dance department structures observed, the result is an uneasy compromise between ideals and what is viable (in Adshead, 1981, 39).

Cloud Gate had long undertaken educational activities, but by the mid-1990s Lin faced a dilemma. Cloud Gate Dance Theatre was under ever-greater pressure to tour abroad. Most of the teachers at the Cloud Gate Studio were company dancers, and they would no longer be available to teach if touring commitments were to increase. Lin recognised that major change was needed if he was to continue to take dance to all parts of Taiwan and pursue his dance education goals. His refocusing of Cloud Gate's educational activity, the separation of most of it from the main performance company, and the formation of the School not only resolved the tensions between the company's artistic and educational functions, but was a unique solution to his concerns. No other Taiwanese company had attempted such a division of roles.

After three years of planning, discussion, modification and extensive piloting in local kindergartens, the first branch of the School opened in Taipei in 1998 (Chang, 2004, 3; Wen, 2003). Cloud Gate 2 was founded the following year (Cloud Gate, 2005b). By the end of 2007, the School had twenty branches throughout Taiwan and over 11,000 registered students of all ages (Wen, 2007a). Although Lin undertakes occasional pre and post-performance talks and the company holds a limited number of lecture-demonstrations and workshops, especially when touring abroad, Cloud Gate's education functions are now primarily shared between these two new organisations.

While it is effectively part of Cloud Gate's outreach programme, the School is financially, legally and managerially independent. It receives no external funding, deriving most of its income through student fees. It made its first operating profit in 2005. A small number of branches are operated as franchises financed by the franchisee, although the School retains control of training and standards. Lin is not

involved in the day to day running of the School, but is a member of the executive board and meets regularly with Wen to consult on the underlying philosophy and curriculum (Wen, 2007a).

Although movement is core to teaching at the School, Lin is adamant that the purpose of the School is not to train dancers (Lin H-M, 2005). According to Wen (2003), the aim is to change perceptions about dance and dance education and realise Lin's belief that everyone should be a dancer or at least have the chance to dance. Later, during a conference presentation with American scholar Judy Van Zile that followed the latter's research at the School, she commented that it is also to contribute to the development of a positive self-image in each student, so they become comfortable with his or her body (Van Zile and Wen, 2006).

The School has three curricula, Life Pulse, Pre-professional, and Martial Arts, the first two of which form part of this study and are detailed below. They are also mapped against each other, ages and public school grades in Appendix 5. Life Pulse especially is child-centred and based around personal experience, exploration and expression.⁴ At all times, the School aims to give a physical and psychological experience, and to use dance as a tool to extend children's abilities while simultaneously respecting the artform's heritage (Chang, 2004, 11). All the curricula have specific content. Associated teachers' manuals detail suggested lesson plans, goals for each activity, notes of any special equipment required and music examples.

While drawing on the Taiwanese experience, the Cloud Gate Dance School also has roots in similar events and philosophy that underpinned modern dance in early and mid-twentieth century America. Modern dance, and then in the 1960s, postmodern dance, emerged in America as artists confronted questions about the function and role of arts in life and society; precisely the questions Lin was raising about dance education in Taiwan (Foulkes, 2002, 2-3). Although it was similarly born during a time of rapid economic, social and political change, the School was not born out of modern dance as such. As Van Zile (2005, 201) observes, the philosophy behind the School and its curricula reflects Lin's thinking about his own identity, and the development of his movement philosophy and vocabulary for his company. This is

evident in the three curricula, in which Lin and the curriculum designers draw on their experiences in the modern and Western worlds, and their Taiwanese roots.

As in America, Lin found the answers to his questions about the function and role of dance in an approach that proclaimed the worth of each person, and heralded the individual and the possibilities of mass participation. At the School, dance is seen as a means of exploring, developing, elaborating and shaping the self through personal movement experience (Press, 2002, 24). Reflecting Rudolf Laban, Joan Russell and Margaret H'Doubler, the School's publications and website exude a concern and respect for the creative potential of each student with sources of movement found within the body. Within these documents, and as Russell (1965, 32) advocates, the stated and express concern of the curricula is to provide students with activities and opportunities that encourage experimentation, and allow them to discover their own capacities. Echoing the thoughts of Laban (1948, 12), the focus is on making children conscious of the principles of movement, with spontaneity encouraged as a way of avoiding habitual movement, and improvisation and the creative use of personal movement as a means of discovery. The approach resonates with that of Hanya Holm, who said, "Your body is your language. Cultivate your language" (in Brown, Mindlin and Woodford, 1998, 81).

Although expression of feelings is part of some Life Pulse lessons, intense connection between emotion and form as practiced by early modern dancers is avoided. There are, however, similarities with what American scholar Margery Turner calls nonliteral dance that characterised modern dance from the late 1940s, and which she defines as the "art of movement and motion," concerned with attitudes, images, relationships, shapes and forms, rather than thoughts or ideas. (1971, 3).⁵

As shown in Chapter 5, many of the lessons observed during the fieldwork focused on the construction of personal knowledge. The approach taken by the School is aligned with that of Doris Humphrey (1959, 46), an advocate of the emphasis on the individual, who said dancers should first learn the principles of movement in terms of design in space, relationships with other objects, dynamics and rhythm, and be encouraged to expand on them in their own way. Although the children at the School

are guided in their learning of these principles, and to become aware of the expressive potential of the body, they are then encouraged similarly to expand on them as they seek to discover dance for himself or herself in terms of its basic materials.

Lin's belief that everyone can be a dancer raises still more parallels with modern dance. Jowitt (1988, 308) observes that radical notions about who was a dancer, and even what constituted a dance, emerged in America during the 1960s. The choreographers and dancers of the Judson Dance Theater, such as Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer and David Gordon showed that dancing could equally consist of movements drawn from everyday life. They used untrained performers to demonstrate dance was accessible to all and challenge the elitist conception of art embodied in the demands of classical ballet or much expressionist modern dance (Foster, 1986, 169). As in 1960s America, the School demonstrates that dancing bodies can look everyday. They do not have to be slim, lithe and well-proportioned, as invariably seems to be the case in performances in Taiwan, including children.

The process-oriented, non-vocational, non-competitive nature of the School's curricula, and the encouragement of personal creativity and exploration, is in direct contrast to that in most Taiwanese dance education, which has a narrow conception of the field in which performance is prioritised. In Owens' (1998) model of arts organisation education and outreach, the School takes very much a people-centred approach, where the justification is to take art out of the theatre and impact on individual lives and communities. According to Owens, such an approach is about personal development, access, social education, cultural equity and inclusion (p.24-26).

The School has broken down the authoritarian model of teaching and learning usually found in Taiwan, and in codified dance technique learning elsewhere. Again echoing the modern dance conception of relationships, teachers are facilitators rather than 'teachers'. While students at the School are guided, they are not passive receivers of information but bring forward their own voices and movement vocabulary, and become more active and creative. The School takes the view espoused by American dancer and teacher Elizabeth Hayes (1964, 4), who writing specifically of modern

dance, comments that it is the responsibility of the dance educator, above all else, to see that dance is a pleasurable, satisfying activity, for its participants; with physical, aesthetic and social enjoyment as outcomes.

Emphasising the enrichment, personal and social benefits that participation in dance can bring to people's lives is unusual in Taiwan, although a number of studies elsewhere have identified that specific habits and skills of value throughout life can be developed through arts education. One such research project was conducted at Project Zero⁶ at Harvard University in the USA by Ellen Winner and Lois Hetland (2006, 2007). Their evidence-based study of arts classes at Boston-area schools identified three 'habits of mind' developed by participating students: persistence, expression, and making connections between school and the world outside. Alongside these, they observed the development of four kinds of thinking: observing, envisioning, innovating through experience, and reflective self-evaluation. Psychologists have identified that all these play a role in creative thinking, as discussed in the next chapter. Observing includes looking beyond one's preconceptions and expectations. Envisioning is the formation of mental pictures as a guide for actions and problem-solving. Innovation includes experimentation and risk-taking. Reflective evaluation includes stepping back, analysing, judging and sometimes reconceiving problems as a result. Although their study focused on visual art classes, Winner and Hetland concluded that all the arts, including dance, are likely to teach a set of thinking skills rarely addressed elsewhere in the curriculum, and that far from being irrelevant in a test-driven education system, as in Taiwan, are even more important since standardised tests exert a narrowing influence over what schools teach.

A final contrast to other dance education in Taiwan is that formal recitals, competitions or examinations have no place in student learning. American Anne Green Gilbert (1992, 47) believes these have little value for dance students, especially those under age 8, adding, "Dance is not a competitive sport, but an expressive and transformational art form." British writer Peter Abbs (1989, 206) takes the opposite view, saying that arts created in lessons should be displayed or performed in public, even if only for the rest of the School. In *Life Pulse*, the children only occasionally

watch each other. Such sharing is often cited as important in learning in dance; and can help with expression, collaboration and persuasion. While Runco (2003, 323) notes observation and sharing can be useful, he cautions they can lead towards conformity and away from personal interpretations.

The School does hold demonstrations of class activities and exercises for parents. Green Gilbert (2002, 47) calls these ‘informances’. Although sometimes held in specially-hired conventional theatres, everything demonstrated is from regular lessons. Nothing is specially choreographed.

Life Pulse

Life Pulse for children has 18 levels, each taking one semester to complete. The School has two semesters per year, each 22 weeks long. Classes last 50 minutes at level 0 (usually age 3), increasing to 60 minutes at level 5 (age 6), and 90 minutes from level 11 upwards (age 10). Each child takes one class per week and enrolls on a per semester basis. Although outside the scope of this research, there are also Life Pulse courses for adults and older people aged 55 and over, who together comprise some 10 to 15% of the total student roll (Wen, 2007a).

The overall objectives for Life Pulse levels 5 and 11, focused on in this study, are set out in Appendix 6. These are made available to parents and students via the parent-student booklet distributed at the beginning of each semester. For level 5, each lesson has specific objectives, again set out in the parent-student booklet. Complete, translated parent-student booklet pages for this lesson are shown in Appendix 7.

Life Pulse is a meaningful title. It came from a desire to broaden people’s perception of dance and to give children space to explore different concepts in such a way that dance became as natural as life itself. The title reflects the way activities in lessons draw on the daily life experiences of each student. ‘Pulse’ symbolises the fact that the curriculum stresses the internal, harmony between body and mind, and the connection between the person and their environment, “where so much happens naturally” (Chang, 2004, 6).

Life Pulse bears a likeness to Green Gilbert's conceptual approach to studio dance, pioneered at her Creative Dance Center in Seattle, which rejects the traditional studio approach to dance teaching, based on learning steps, and competition or examination. In her concept-based model, students learn the elements and principles of dance through perceiving, understanding, doing, creating and valuing dance. The approach draws on Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, using all in different ways so that each student's strengths can be nurtured and engaged. Green Gilbert (1992, 43) observes that when dance is taught conceptually, students not only become dancers, are not only able to be creative and expressive at the same time as learning new skills, but grow as collaborative workers, critical and creative problem solvers, articulate communicators, and involved members of the community. As previously observed, while Life Pulse focuses on using creative motor experience as the basis of teaching and learning, the course is not centred in performance for others, whether on the stage or in the studio.

There are also commonalities, especially in Life Pulse levels 1 to 10, with 'Creative Educational Dance' and 'fundamental dance education' as detailed by Austrian dance educator Barbara Haselbach (1971, 16). Creative Educational Dance is closely related to Laban-based Modern Educational Dance as practiced in the UK, especially between the 1950s and the 1970s (Russell, 1958, 1965). The main emphasis is on children's individual experiments in movement and the extension of their capacities for expression through reference to Laban's sixteen movement themes (Laban, 1948). At the Cloud Gate Dance School these themes are used in many of the lessons as a key element in the children's creative dance. Further parallels between the model and the School can be made through the subordinate role of traditional dance and the close relationship between dance, drama and dance-drama.

Figure 1. A Life Pulse level 5 lesson
(photo: Cloud Gate Dance School)

Like Life Pulse, fundamental dance education is also child-centred and uses experience, exploration and expression, as its basis. The course documentation indicates that education in music and movement are intimately connected, with personal creative activity again of prime importance. It provides creative, musical and physical knowledge, as well as understandings for a transition to other disciplines such as ballet or modern dance (Haselbach, 1971, 16).

Chinese culture traditionally refers to *yue wu*, literally ‘music dance’, as a single form. Life Pulse follows this philosophy and draws on Dalcroze Eurythmics by making musical elements integral to all activities. Throughout the levels, students are encouraged to develop an understanding of pulse, tempo, rhythm, and duration, and to explore aspects of the relationship between sound and movement. Although using music and dance as the basis for personal development and exploration, the curriculum also aims to integrate other arts domains where possible to give a complete experience, for example drama and poetry, from level 5 (Chang, 2004, 10; Wen, 2005).

World dance is introduced in Levels 11 to 13, for children who have completed their 4th grade in school (aged at least 10). The countries studied in level 11 are shown in Appendix 6. Dance from elsewhere in the world is included in subsequent levels. These lessons include significant time reading and in discussion about the country

whose dance is being learned. Lin (in Van Zile, 2005, 194) explained the main aim of these levels is for the students to develop interpersonal skills and that authenticity is not important.

Figure 2. A Life Pulse 'world dance' lesson
(photo: Cloud Gate Dance School)

Wu Wen-chi (1997, 237) considers that Taiwanese students learning about other cultures, their values and how they are different, can prompt increased appreciation and comprehension of one's own culture. Lin (2005) explained this is why foreign dances are learned before those of China or Taiwan, which, with Chinese opera, are introduced in Levels 14 to 16. To enter Level 11 and beyond, students must have completed their 5th grade in school (aged at least 11). Wu adds that dance education in Taiwan has practiced multiculturalism for years. However, while the teacher teaches the dance, it is rarely placed in its appropriate socio-cultural context. "A sound education in a multicultural context would prepare students to understand other cultures and find their [own] cultural identity," she says (p.237). David Best (1986,

41) similarly observed that engagement with the arts of other cultures stimulates a process of “dialectical interaction.”

Relationship building extends beyond the School. Students are not only encouraged to bring past experiences into the studio but also to take studio experiences and ideas home and relive them with other family members. In Life Pulse level 5, the parent-student booklet includes suggestions for activities students can do with their families after each lesson (see Appendix 7 for an example). The skills and knowledge the children learn are thus integrated fully into their lives as advocated by Dewey (1934).

In addition to the suggested activities with the family, two lessons in each Life Pulse level are set aside for parents’ to join in with their children and share in their learning processes. Parents may watch other lessons via a one-way window. Bonding and family building is encouraged further by the students being encouraged to organise their own group activities away from the School, which are accompanied by teachers wherever possible (Wen, 2003).

The parent-student booklet also sets out the goals of each lesson and provides space for parent and student comments. The youngest children are asked only to draw pictures or colour in a happy or sad face to show how they thought they did, while older ones are asked for written comments. Similar booklets are used in Taiwanese public schools to improve and sustain contact between parents and teachers.

Communication with parents is regarded as very important. While feedback on lessons is garnered through the parent-student books, the School also publishes a quarterly parents’ magazine containing examples of activities they may do with their children, news from branches and dance activities in the community. In 2003, the School also produced an award-winning book giving ideas and tips for parents with young children, including how to turn regular household jobs into fun activities.

Pre-professional

Echoing American dance educator Alma Hawkins’ (1988, 18) view that the study of movement as dance must parallel rather than precede the creative experience, the Pre-

professional curriculum is closely linked with that of Life Pulse. Although the course is open to all, without audition, students may usually only enrol once they have completed two years of Life Pulse, and if they are continuing to take Life Pulse classes. Pre-professional is divided into three sections, Basic, Senior and Intensive, each with four levels, each taking one semester to complete.

Figure 3. A Pre-professional Senior level 1 class
(photo: Cloud Gate Dance School)

The demand for the course came initially from parents (Lin in Van Zile, 2005, 198). This can be seen as a reflection of the conventional, product-oriented approach prevalent in Taiwanese dance education, and expected of dance schools by them. Despite its name, the course is not pre-vocational training. Rather, it is seen by the School as a preparation for studies in any form of dance or movement and suitable for anyone. Students take one lesson per week. All three stages begin with the students stretching, followed by set exercises that include walking, skipping and clapping around the room in time to music.

In the Basic course, lessons focus on natural physical skills such as running and jumping, acquiring stamina and an understanding of how to hold and use the body. Lessons are 60 minutes in length. There is no barre, all the exercises being conducted

in the centre, and no allegro section. Students learn a series of exercises which are repeated to the same music each week in a way not dissimilar to the way a dance examination syllabus might be learned, although there is no end of course examination or test. From my observations, teaching and learning focuses more on how and why exercises are done, rather than the movements or positions themselves. This is reflected in the parent-student booklet, which for the Basic level 1 Swan and Ball exercise explains how “muscles stretch like elastic,” and that exercises such as this can “make the body become flexible and help us not to get injured,” rather than detailing the exercise itself. Translated pages from the parent-student booklet for the Swan and Ball exercise are shown in Appendix 8.

Identifiable dance technique is visible in exercises by the time students begin Senior course classes, where the emphasis is on alignment. Students in these classes are usually aged at least 11, which Lin believes is the earliest children should be taught formal dance technique (Ashley, 2000). After the stretching and warm-up, lessons include simple Graham floor exercises and a barre featuring traditional ballet exercises such as pliés and tendus, before moving on to petit allegro and simple travelling exercises that cross the studio. Intensive course lessons follow a similar structure but with more emphasis on freely using the body and advanced sequences that cross the floor. Lessons in both these levels are 90 minutes in length. The objectives of Pre-professional Basic level 1 and Senior level 1 are set out in Appendix 6.

The emphasis throughout the Pre-professional course is as much on attending how movement or steps might be accomplished as it is with repetition of the steps themselves. Even from my initial observations, there appeared to be a view that embracing ballet or modern dance technique does not have to submerge or negate the self as students attempt to embrace the forms and traditions of those techniques. Rather, as Donald Blumenfeld-Jones argues should be the case, students are encouraged to develop “a self which encounters, not a self which disappears, and the experience can become a dialogue” (in Bales, 2008, 72). In lessons, there is a focus on “breathing while moving” and using the “inner flow of energy to create

movement” rather than using muscle and joint action to create traditional dance positions or movement. This is a reflection of the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre training following the introduction of *tai-qi* and other Asian forms in the 1990s.

Although the policy of dance for all remains firmly in place, the presence of talented children among the student population was recently recognised by the School’s leaders. In what is effectively an extension of the Pre-professional course, separate specialist classes in ballet and Graham technique for selected students were started in 2007. Entry is on the recommendation of the student’s regular Pre-professional course teacher.

Martial Arts

The Martial Arts course, which does not form part of this research, has 12 levels. Classes are much more mixed in terms of age and gender. The only requirement to enrol is that students must be aged 12 or over. Life Pulse attendance is not a prerequisite.

Figure 4. A Martial Arts class
(photo: Cloud Gate Dance School)

Fees and access

Fees at the School are substantially higher than at other local dance schools, although they are comparable to those for after-school music, painting or English lessons. Demand for places remains high. The cost of classes means most students come from middle or high income families. In an attempt to return to Lin's original aim of reaching out to all, the School now offers occasional free lessons and workshops away from the studios.

The table in Appendix 9 details the numbers of branches and students from 2000 to 2006. Lin regularly says he hopes there will be 200 branches by the time he dies (for example in Shi, 2003; 154; and Lin H-M., 2005).

Although social inclusion is not an argument heard often for dance education in Taiwan, in 2006 it was embraced by Lin and the Cloud Gate Dance School with the inception of a project that offers free classes, mostly in the Martial Arts course, to young people at risk. I believe that, while the disciplines and challenges of dance can help such participants build their self-esteem and tackle other challenges in life with renewed belief in themselves, care should be taken. Such projects often have value, but the aims must be stated clearly. Others question their place in dance education. For example, Kevin Finnan (2003, 7), Artistic Director of Motionhouse Dance Theatre considers that, while education and outreach should cater for all, the artform should be seen as an essentially aesthetic and artistic discipline, with outreach similarly focused, rather than being some kind of social dance or exercise in social relations.

Pedagogy, teacher training and professional development

Pedagogy at the School observed during the fieldwork is discussed in detail in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Even from my introduction to classes in 2003 though, it was apparent that learning by doing is paramount. In Life Pulse, teachers only demonstrate when they consider it absolutely necessary, preferring students to discover movement for themselves. Students are constantly asked how movement feels, to suggest ideas and experiment. This is equally true in Pre-professional

lessons, where students are only shown exercises briefly before attempting them, thus encouraging them to problem find, think critically and problem solve as individuals.

The School's philosophy is in contrast to teaching practices prevalent elsewhere in Taiwanese dance education, where pedagogy reflects that in general education, with learners essentially seen as receptors of information (see Chapter 1). In general, the professional model of dance education is followed with the emphasis on motor learning and doing by imitation, with relatively little attention paid to creativity and appreciation (Lin, H-M., 2005). Most teachers teaching dance in general education have little arts related dance knowledge or skill, and often teach existing works from videos (Chang, 2001, 2007; Merhof and Ermler, 1992). Whether in general education or the Talented Student Programme, local dance educator Chou Su-ling (1993, 69) considers that, "for Taiwanese dance students, discipline is achieved, but enjoyment and creativity may be sacrificed". Although her comments were made 16 years ago, my experience suggests little has changed.

Lin Hwai-min (in Van Zile, 2005, 196) said, "A good curriculum relies on good teachers to deliver it." Where an institution has a specific pedagogical approach and values, however, teachers also need to understand them. American theatre arts scholar Edward Warburton (2008, 10) observes that teachers' beliefs derive directly from personal experience, and that such inherited practice provides a form of road map for teaching dance. At the Cloud Gate Dance School, 88% of teachers are graduates direct from university dance departments that emphasise technique and vocational training. The remainder are retired Cloud Gate Dance Theatre dancers and child education graduates. Almost all are female and, given the nature of dance in education in Taiwan, almost none will have significant creative dance experience.

Personal learning experiences play a role in a teacher's approach to teaching. Grenfell and James (1998, 14) observe that, in Bourdieu's theory of practice, individual action is constituted through a dialectical relationship between their thought and activity, their habitus, and the objective world. Kruger and Tomasello (1998, 370) emphasise the significant role of structures in individual development. Those structures may include institutions, cultural models, rituals and communal activities, which they

consider can be viewed as cultural habitus. They add that the versions of structures experienced encourage some forms of development, and constrain or disallow others. Although culture can be imposed through intentional instruction, people develop ways of acting they do not specifically set out to learn, and that no-one specifically sets out to teach. As Warburton explains, through their education, the daily practices new teachers' dance training has incorporated will have become anchored in their bodies and minds. These methods will have become the norm and accepted unquestioningly, alongside the skills and other aspects of their education. As such they will have become part of their personal habitus.

With the School adopting different teaching and learning strategies from those most new teachers will have previously experienced, its founders determined to invest heavily in teacher education and training. In a study of ballet dancers, Wainwright, Williams and Turner (2007, 308) observe that what dancers learn in their vocational training is developed and modified by what they learn when they become part of a company. Similarly, the disposition of the new teacher, his or her individual habitus, is modified by the embodiment of the School's institutional habitus.

The training programme is intensive with new trainees receiving 160 hours tuition over two months. It includes teaching and communication skills, and modules covering child psychology, art and aesthetics, and children's cognition (Wen, 2007a). Bonbright (1999, 35), in a paper considering the status of and challenges for dance education in the United States, suggests just such an approach saying that dance teachers should be both artists and educators, and should be trained in dance as a creative art form and in education. As artists, she considers they should understand the process and methodology of creating, performing and responding to dance as an art form, while as educators they should understand the process and methodology of developing and delivering curricula.

After the initial training, new teachers undertake extensive practice teaching, including daily placement in a kindergarten during which they are observed and critiqued. If they then pass a second audition they become 'apprentice teachers' with further evaluations after three and six months. Special arrangements are made by the

company and School for retiring Cloud Gate Dance Theatre dancers who wish to qualify (Wen, 2003). Trainees have to deposit NT\$10,000 (£200) with the School before they can begin, which is only refunded if they are subsequently offered and accept a contract, or perform well but are not offered a contract (Van Zile, 2005, 196).⁷

For Lin Hwai-min, life and art are inseparable, and life experiences are essential for all dancers or teachers. As such, he has always believed in continuous professional development, and this is carried through in the School's policies. Once fully-qualified, teachers participate in a mandatory programme, including 100 hours formal training annually, mostly during the School's Lunar New Year and summer vacations. The programme includes a range of workshops and speakers, sometimes in and from other art forms. Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, Cloud Gate 2 and the Cloud Gate Dance School also allow dancers and teachers to take advantage of external educational opportunities, sometimes on funded extended sabbaticals at foreign universities, most commonly in the UK or USA.

2.3 Cloud Gate 2

Although outside the scope of this study, Cloud Gate 2 has a significant education remit. The company tours almost exclusively in Taiwan with a programme that features lecture-demonstrations, workshops and other outreach activities in a range of community settings, alongside its in-theatre performances. Its performance repertoire usually features works by emerging Taiwanese choreographers. Corporate sponsorship allows many shows to be put on free of charge (Chung, 2003, 55).

The company is also known for its campus residencies at high schools, colleges and universities. Aimed at all students, not only dance or physical education majors, these usually last approximately two weeks during which the students attend lectures, learn about aesthetics, choreography, technique, exchange views and attend lecture-demonstrations to enhance their understanding of dance (Lo, 2003). Since 2001, funding for this programme has come from financial services company Cathay Life.

Although Cloud Gate 2 does not offer regular vocational training, its education activities do extend to aspiring professional dancers and choreographers. *Dance with Cloud Gate* is a biannual event held at the National Chung Cheng University in Chaiyi. Aimed at students throughout the Asia-Pacific region, in 2004 it attracted 170 participants and visiting choreographers. It has also connected to emerging choreographers through the annual *Asia-Pacific Young Choreographers' Workshop*, originally held at the National Taiwan University of the Arts in Banqiao, but which moved to Chung-hwa High School for the Arts in Kaohsiung in 2004. The company's first resident choreographer, Bulareyaung Pagarlava, originally came to notice through this event in 2000.

2.4 Blue Skies Project

Similarly outside the scope of this study, Lin and Cloud Gate's belief that dance can have a major impact on people's and communities' day to day lives, and their commitment to the Taiwanese people as a whole was demonstrated by the *Blue Skies Project*⁸ of 1999-2003.

Figures 5 (left) and 6. Lessons during the Blue Skies Project
(photos: Cloud Gate Dance School)

On 21st September 1999, what became known as the '921 earthquake' shook Central Taiwan, causing the loss of 2,000 lives and destroying many homes and buildings.⁹ The project was Cloud Gate's response. Funding was obtained from central government (25%) and corporate sponsorship (75%), allowing Cloud Gate Dance

Theatre, Cloud Gate 2 and the Cloud Gate Dance School to send dancers and teachers to the affected area. Lin said that he felt he had to do something and that the project was a “great priority for him” (Ashley, 2000).

In manpower terms the School provided most resources, their teachers putting in 11,215 teaching hours over seven semesters (3½ years). The project involved 115 kindergartens and elementary schools in 14 towns, reaching 333,600 students (Shi, 2003, 153). At its peak, over 5,000 children per week in the affected area were benefiting (Cloud Gate Dance School, 2005). The intent was to try and bring some semblance of normality back into the children’s lives. Although the School’s usual curriculum was taught, it was adjusted to suit local circumstances (Wen, 2003).

Cloud Gate 2 gave a benefit performance shown live on television followed up by an extensive programme of free lecture-demonstrations and other performances between April and June 2000. Meanwhile, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre gave free outdoor performances in Dongshu and Chaiyi, Lin’s home town.

2.5 Conclusions

Although the establishment of the Cloud Gate Dance School resolved the increasing strain between the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre’s performance and education programmes, it highlighted other tensions inherent in the Taiwanese situation. Lin and the School’s curriculum designers’ view that dance should be for all, and play a role in whole-person development, resonated with approaches in America and Europe. In Taiwan, however, where dance continues to be perceived as a performance art primarily for the talented, it called for a new approach to teaching and learning. The School has been forced to address the paradoxical position that its teachers are mostly vocationally trained as professional dancers to a high standard of modern dance technique, but are expected to teach creative dance to young children. Even in the Pre-professional course, teachers are asked to teach in a manner vastly different from their own experience; in a situation where students do not simply acquire technique through imitation and repetition but rather have a dialogue with it, and are allowed to extend and change it, such that knowledge and learning becomes personal.

The focus on the individual raises a number of questions about creativity in teaching and learning at the School. Creativity in Taiwanese dance education has traditionally been the province of the choreographer, and, as in many other contexts, has been based on finalised dance products, whether choreographies or shorter dance phrases. Here, the emphasis is on the dance teacher as creative facilitator and on the student's personal creative exploration. The nature of the courses further highlights an apparent paradox between the individual approach taken for students and that for teachers, who work within highly structured curricula using School-provided teacher manuals as the basis of their practice, which raises questions about how their individualism can be reflected in that practice while respecting the ethos and traditions of the School.

The following chapter addresses issues of the nature of creativity, its assessment, the factors affecting it, and the basis for it, which with my knowledge of the School formed the basis for the research and fieldwork questions.

Notes

- ¹ Lin's father was a senior member of the Kuomintang, the governing party. He was appointed governor of Chaiyi county during Lin's early years and was later Minister of Transport and Communication, Minister of the Interior and Deputy Minister of Examinations in the national government (Chiang, 2005, 82).
- ² The Tiao-yu Tai islands lie 120 miles north-east of Taiwan. They were uninhabited and had been controlled by the United States since the end of World War II but were regularly used by Taiwanese fishermen. In 1973 the US ceded them to Japan, despite the rival claims of China and Taiwan, resulting in large demonstrations in Taipei (Copper, 2000, 190).
- ³ *Tai-qi dao yin* comprises 12 exercises, six *yin-ti* (drawing out the body) and six *dao-qi* (channeling energy). In traditional *tai-qi* some turning is involved in every move. In *tai-qi dao yin*, joint rotation has been separated out to form new exercises that begin from the ankle and spread up through the whole body. This emphasis on rotation is designed to loosen up the whole body. (Chen, 1999, 129)
- ⁴ 'Life Pulse' is used as a noun by the School, and that convention has been followed here.
- ⁵ Turner (1971, 3) defines movement as "the fact of bodily action." Motion is "the illusion and residual action resulting from the kind of movement produced."

- ⁶ Project Zero is an educational research group at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education whose mission is to understand and enhance learning, thinking, and creativity in the arts, as well as humanistic and scientific disciplines, at the individual and institutional levels.
- ⁷ Based on an exchange rate of NT\$50 to £1, which was that applying on 31st March 2009.
- ⁸ The Chinese name for the project, *lan tian jiao shi*, literally translates as ‘blue sky classroom’ reflecting that fact that many lessons had to take place outdoors as school buildings were destroyed or unsafe.
- ⁹ The earthquake registered 6.9 on the Richter Scale, with its epicentre near Puli, 120 miles south-west of Taipei. It was the largest in modern Taiwanese history and caused widespread destruction. Some of those affected were still living in tents over a year later.

CHAPTER 3

APPROACHING CREATIVITY

3.1 What is creativity?

The arts, including dance, are often considered inherently creative. Indeed, Alma Hawkins (1988, 11) said “creativity is the heart of dance.” Yet, creativity is also a term constantly encountered in everyday life and that takes on a multiplicity of meanings in different contexts. Making any satisfactory general definition is inherently difficult, although this has not stopped many theorists, especially in psychology, from trying to do so. It has been described in many ways and from many perspectives, and there remains much disagreement among creativity researchers on precisely what creativity is, what it does, how common the capacity for it is, the effects of various factors external to the individual, and where it can be found (Morris, 2005, 82).

The issues have been compounded by the way the term has been freely appropriated by governments, industry and the media. The term, ‘creative industries’, for example, is frequently taken to embrace an eclectic grouping of disciplines including not only design, fashion, film, music, the performing arts, publishing, software, and television and radio, but has also been taken up by other self-styled creative industries including marketing and public relations” (Pope, 2005, 40).

Some politicians have even suggested creativity is a particularly national characteristic. In the White Paper of Creative Education, the Taiwanese government refer to Taiwan as a ‘Republic of Creativity’ (Ministry of Education, 2002).¹ They are not alone. Other governments have made similar claims, including the UK (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2008, 1). It was such actions and statements that caused Tusa (2003, 5) to remark earlier that ‘creative’, ‘creation’ and ‘creativity’ are among “the most overused and ultimately debased words in the language”, lazily used as “political margarine” by everyone in politics and business alike.

In the arts too, creativity has many faces. American author John Morris (2005, 83) observes that in creating any artwork, the artist makes choices. Morris and two further American scholars, Carol Press and Edward Warburton (2007, 1273) identify three such areas of choice in dance: dance making in terms of creating finished choreography; dance performance in any context including on stage, in class or socially, including potentially both choice of movement and choice of expression; and dance improvisation, which includes any situation in which movement is made as it is performed. Press and Warburton add that creativity can be a means to an end, and an end in itself; a skill that balances imagination and analysis, and a process in which new knowledge or ways of doing are pursued. This list is by no means exhaustive, and could be extended to include dance writing, criticism, teaching and curriculum design. Furthermore, as noted in Chapter 1, creativity is often conceptualised differently in different dance forms. A dancer regarded as creative in ballet may not be regarded as such, or to the same extent, or in the same way, in modern dance.

In dance, most ideas about creativity are embedded in texts about the practicing of the artform, and especially in biographies or autobiographies about, or interviews with, well-known choreographers, dancers or teachers. Only towards the end of the twentieth-century did a research tradition focusing on the nature of creativity in dance begin to emerge as the field responded to the wider creativity in education agenda (Morris, 2005; Press and Warburton, 2007). Even so, in dance for young children, most texts continue to focus on practical creative dance strategies for the classroom or studio. As previously observed, they speak of creativity primarily in choreographic terms and the creation of visible products that are refined and repeatable, whether a single movement or position, a dance phrase, or a short composed dance; and often include examples of personal approaches and lesson plans (for example, Shreeves, 1990; Lynch-Fraser, 1991; Hobba, 1995; van Papendorp and Friedman, 1995; Kassing and Jay, 2003).

In dance education, creativity has influenced the forming of philosophy, the writing of goals and objectives and the design of many lesson plans. While there is a wealth of theoretical literature within psychology that deals with creativity as a concept, and a

growing body of work that focuses on creativity in general education, until recently relatively little has been related specifically to dance education, especially for young children, who are the focus of this study.

Despite the problems highlighted above, there is a consensus among scholars about some of the features of creativity. Press and Warburton (2005, 1273) observe that, if there is one thing dance researchers agree on, it is that “if it moves you, there is a good chance something is being created.” In the specialist psychology literature, notions of creativity almost all revolve around conceptions of producing ideas or products that are new and of value (Pope, 2005, 57). Phrases such as “novel and appropriate” (i.e. original, unexpected; and useful, adaptive concerning task restraints) (Sternberg and Lubart, 1999, 3) or “new and given value” (Gruber and Wallace, 1999, 94) abound. The UK National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (1999, 30), in an oft-cited definition, described it as, “Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value.” Implicit in all the above is that outcomes can be assessed, at least to some degree.

American psychologist Robert Sternberg (2006, 2) draws three further generalisations that most researchers agree on: creativity is neither wholly-domain specific nor domain-general; it can be developed; and it is not as highly rewarded in practice as it is in theory. It is also universally regarded as a positive construct (Lubart, 1999, 340). A domain is a body of knowledge about a specific topic, but is usually much smaller than an academic subject area (Craft, 2000, 34). Dance is far too large to be described as a single domain, whereas any of the sometimes overlapping areas detailed previously and in which creative choice might be made, such as ballet, modern dance, dance-making, performing, teaching or criticism, would all be domains. All require different, although sometimes overlapping, skills and knowledge (Adshead, 1981). The topic of domain-specificity is returned to later.

Novelty can be defined in a number of ways. Sternberg (1999), two further American psychologists Gerard Puccio and David Gonzalez (2004), and British education scholar Anna Craft (2000), all highlight that creativity occurs along a continuum from a more adaptive style, where individuals tend to accept the existing framework and

respond by doing things better, to a more innovative style where they prefer to do things differently. In his propulsion model of creativity, Sternberg outlines no fewer than eight kinds of creative contribution, each having a different relationship to the domain. The first four all stay within the existing paradigm: replication (keeping to the status quo; reproduction), redefinition (looking at the domain from a different perspective), forward incrementation (moving the domain forwards by making a slight change in what already exists) and advance forward incrementation (making a greater change in what already exists). The remainder all attempt to reject the existing paradigm and replace it: redirection (pushing the domain in a new direction); reconstruction (moving back to a previous position so that it may move ahead from there in a different direction); reinitiation (moving the field to a new start point) and integration (merging two existing domains to create a new idea). Puccio and Gonzalez stress that unless this continuum is recognised, there is likely to be a devaluation of some people's inclination to be creative. Paradigm-changing contributions are rare. In most contexts, including dance education, creations will generally be new in some small way.

'Big-C' and 'little-c' creativity

Empirical studies of creativity, especially those that have emphasised personality factors, have tended to focus on high-level creativity and be primarily concerned with carefully selected populations of creativity-rich people. American Beth Hennessey (2007, 39) observes this is particularly true of East Asian research, which is often based on populations of students identified as gifted and talented. This is reflected in some definitions. For example, Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi and Gardner (1994, 1) say creativity is "the achievement of something remarkable and new, something which transforms and changes a field of endeavour in a significant way," while Ryhammer and Brolin (1999, 261) see it as, "Exceptional human capacity for thought and creation."

This focus on paradigm-shifting outcomes and highly talented people is inherently problematic, not only for this study but in any educational context. In reality there are different levels of creative achievement that have their own time, place and value

(Joubert, 2001, 19). Comparing outcomes with those of a historic creative genius or with someone exceptionally skilled at a particular activity or task is inappropriate in studies such as this that consider creativity in respect of specialist dance teachers and their students.

Since the mid-1990s there has been an increasing trend towards distinguishing between high and democratic creativity, more commonly known as ‘Big-C’ and ‘little-c’ creativity (Gardner, 1993; Craft, 2000, 2001b; Plucker, 2003, Piirto and Starko, 2006). The differentiation comes from an acceptance that creativity covers a range of processes and outcomes. ‘Big-C’ creativity is paradigm-shifting in nature and characterised not only by novelty, but also by excellence and unambiguous, eminent creative contributions recognised as such by the field in which it takes place. ‘little-c’ is creativity in everyday life, solving everyday problems, and is based on the assumption that creativity can be exercised, fostered and developed to a greater or lesser extent by everyone (Piirto and Starko, 2006).

This was taken up by the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (1999, 32) who followed up on their definition of creativity by making it clear they saw and valued originality as existing at three-levels: in relation to the individual and their own previous work, as relative to their peer group or others of the same age, and as historic and original in terms of anyone’s previous work. Their definition thus covers creativity at child, school, community and societal level. In dance, however, the idea that creativity is a capacity of all is far from new. It is a theme throughout D’Houbler’s *Dance: A Creative Art Experience* (1940), in which she says, “Everyone has intellect, emotion, spirit, imagination and ability to move,” and adds, “Anyone can dance within the limits of his capacities” (p.65).

‘mini-c’ creativity

Focusing on ‘little-c’ creativity is appropriate for educational settings since it recognises there is a continuum of adaptive behaviours and that what is creative in one context does not necessarily have to be considered creative in another. As with other forms of creativity, most conceptions of ‘little-c’ in the literature emphasise the

creative product over the creative process. Creative products are important since they evidence the ability to be creative or the creative act. They do not have to be physical or visible, but must be capable of external expression. So, for example, a creative product could be an idea for a dance or mental image of a movement, which although not yet physically realised, can be explained verbally. While public products are extremely helpful for judging creativity, solely focusing on them may undermine creative potential by diverting focus from the accompanying private processes (Beghetto, 2007).

Appraisal of a product is usually a social judgement made through consensual assessment. In these terms, something is creative to the extent that appropriate observers independently agree that it is creative. American scholar Teresa Amabile (1996, 42) defines appropriate observers as people sufficiently familiar with the domain to have developed “implicit criteria for creativity, technical goodness, and so on.” Despite the subjective nature of the approach, numerous empirical studies show a high degree of agreement between assessors, including some of those focusing on children’s art.

Although consensual assessment is primarily used to determine whether individual outcomes are creative, the concept can be extended to the construction of creativity itself. The values of a social group are determined by its members, albeit with reference to external cultural, historic, political, professional or social influences. Teachers and staff at a school are such a group, and although management can be proactive in determining values, they are only effective if accepted by the whole group. At the Cloud Gate Dance School, the teachers and leaders can be seen as a consensual team that determines how creativity is conceptualised within the organisation. This is an area little explored in East Asian creativity research, where the focus of attention has generally not been on the social psychology of creativity (Hennessey, 2007, 38).

In developing their concept of ‘mini-c’ creativity, American scholars Ronald Beghetto and James Kaufman (2007) argue that students should not be seen as uncreative given the domain or task constraints, conventions or standards, just because their contributions do not make sense to an observer. Piaget (1972, 20) considers that to

understand is to invent, and thus the construction of personal knowledge results from a creative interpretation of experience rather than imitation or repetition. ‘mini-c’ creativity is the novel and personally meaningful interpretation of experiences, actions, and events (Beghetto and Kaufman, 2007). It differs from ‘little-c’ or ‘Big-C’ creativity in that it highlights the creative process inherent in learning, personal knowledge and understanding; and the way in which students interpret and make sense of new information. Beghetto and Kaufman (2007, 78) go on to consider that ‘mini-c’ creativity not only represents the “most ubiquitous form of creativity given that learning and interpretations are part of most everyone’s experience,” but that it is likely to be the starting point for higher levels of creative expression.

Adopting Bergmann Drewe’s (1992, 104) view that creative dance is personally expressive (discussed in Chapter 1), the concept of ‘mini-c’ creativity provides a framework in which student creativity can be understood. The personal nature of the construct equally implies it is subjective. Teachers cannot view or experience students’ dances from the inside, so they must access the inside by taking time to hear and attempt to understand students’ ‘mini-c’ interpretations.

Although the idea of ‘mini-c’ creativity was specifically developed with reference to educational settings, it does remind us that creativity anywhere may be different from traditional conceptions. The placing of the focus on the process of construction of personal understanding may make ‘mini-c’ creativity a particularly appropriate tool for cross-cultural studies of creativity. This is especially true in contexts where appropriateness may not be immediately apparent, as in the East, where, according to Zhu (1995, 319), particular importance is placed on the similarity in spirit between the creators and their actions or what is created.

3.2 Aspects of creativity

For many years, creativity research in psychology focused on cognition or personality factors. The cognitive process has been emphasised in some dance research too. American dance educator Mary Brennan (1982, 1989) studied the relationship between creative ability in dance, cognitive style and personal creative characteristics.

More recently, in Australia, Shirley McKechnie collaborated with cognitive psychologists to investigate the kinds of creative thought and cognitive processes that underpin the creation of new contemporary dance choreography, although the dynamic systems that emerged have connections to other systems approaches discussed below (Grove, Stevens and McKechnie, 2004).

Dance has increasingly followed psychology in broadening the focus away from relating creativity solely to cognition, personality, or debates about content versus form and the following, or not, of so-called choreographic rules. Today, researchers in dance, psychology and education, see creativity as a multifaceted concept influenced by a range of factors including the extent to which motivational variables and the prevailing socio-cultural environment emphasises individuality and tolerates divergence.

A number of such systems approaches to creativity have been proposed, including by psychologists Amabile (1983, 1996), Csikszentmihalyi (1988, 1996), and Sternberg and Lubart (1991) in America, and Shi (1995) in China; in dance by Press (2002) and Gibbons (2007); and in education by Craft (2000). Although varying in emphasis, all hypothesise that creativity occurs as the result of the confluence of factors, including those noted above, along with personal dispositions, and attend to their complex interactions and feedback cycles throughout the creative process (Amabile, 1995, 425).

Craft and Press both see their frameworks as prisms, although there is a difference in emphasis. Craft (2000, 34) explains how the prism allows observers to see clearly the three different elements of people, process and domain from the single beam of creativity that enters it. Press (2002, 2) focuses more on the interaction between the elements, writing, “subjectivity experienced within the context of individuality, relationships and culture functions like a permeable prism, each face refracting light, receiving light, creating light for each other.”

Writing for dance teachers, American dance educator Elizabeth Gibbons (2007) considers that creativity can only be understood by reference to what she calls the artistic process, which operates at a higher level and within which individual

processes take place. Although not describing it as such, her's is a systems model of creativity comprising the person, dance and environment, which, as she makes plain, applies equally to performance as choreography, and to creative dance for children as vocational dance in colleges. Although never stating it explicitly, she appears to view creativity more as a personal approach to dance, rather than as a means by which specific problems are solved.

Gibbons visualises her model as four concentric circles with 'disposition to act', or motivation, at the core (p.196). Next is 'schema', which is the manner in which the dancer conceptualises dance and linked to his or her training (p.198). Third is 'strategies' or rules for acting, which she considers are self-imposed by the dancer and tacitly imposed by the dance genre (p.200). Although she does not refer to it, similar tacit rules are likely to be imposed by the dance institution via its artistic and educational policies and social rules, a topic I return to later in this chapter. Finally, and embracing everything, is 'training and temperament', not so much in terms of technique, but how the dancer conceives the act of moving and initiates movement (p.202). For example, while ballet dancers are commonly taught to see a port de bras in geometric terms, it can be visualised equally in terms of initiation and control by breath.

Motivation

In Taiwan, Wu Wen-chi (1997, 236) considers that only when students find their inner motivation to engage in meaning making through movement can they express themselves as creative individuals. Such disposition is at the heart of Gibbons' artistic process model. Without it, she says, one simply dances steps or reproduces movement (2007, 196). Press (2002, 88) cites analyst Charles Kligerman's similar claim that the most important part of the motivation to create is an "intrinsic joy in creating," which is related to "functional pleasure." She suggests that, in dance, this intrinsic joy derives from the capacity to experience sensual pleasure and explore sensory awareness, and the competence to create. That pleasure is in turn fortified by the making of dance. She further indicates that such motivation cannot solely be provided

through creating an empathetic environment but comes through qualitative experience and subjectively engaging in the act of teaching and learning (p.184).

Morris (2005, 83) similarly sees attentiveness and engagement as essential for creativity in dance to take place. Attentiveness includes paying attention on many personal levels including real-life experiences, sensory information and emotions. He considers it is engagement, which may include motivation, interest or connection, which “leads to true discovery by the creator.” The need to engage students in activities is a feature of many texts for teachers.

That creativity is based on intrinsic motivation is a widely-accepted position among theorists. It is one of the cornerstones of Amabile’s (1996) model of creativity, the others being domain-relevant and creativity-relevant skills, and the culture or environment, discussed below. It arises from a positive reaction to the task itself, such as interest, involvement, curiosity or challenge, perseverance, a passion for and enjoying what one is doing (Amabile, 1996, 115).

While not denying the importance of intrinsic motivation, psychologist Arthur Cropley (2001, 62) highlights research by Eisenberger and Armeli (1997) that showed extrinsic rewards can have a similar effect. Their study, of children in music lessons, suggests that rewarding specific creative actions such as producing many possible outcomes for a task, can lead to enduring improvements in creativity. Although acknowledging the findings have been criticised, Cropley considers it does show that teachers and children need to know what it means and what behaviours are necessary to be creative.

There is some debate about whether the principle of intrinsic motivation holds across cultures. Singaporean and American psychologists Ng Aik Kwang (2001) and Richard Nisbett (2003) both argue that the psychological make-up of Asians and Westerners is different, especially when it comes to a sense of self. Hennessey (2004) draws on her own empirical studies in the Far East and the work of Ng to agree with Amabile about the value of intrinsic motivation but concludes that it may operate differently in different societies. Hennessey makes similar comments about external

motivation, and in particular observes that while a reward contingency is an accepted inhibitor of creativity among American children constantly striving for independence and autonomy, this might not be the case among Asian students who view themselves as a part of a larger web of social relations. For this study, this raises questions about the extent to which intrinsic motivation and other positive affect factors are seen as important and how they are developed and encouraged in studio practice.

Skills and knowledge

Wu (1997, 235) observes that creativity in the arts in ethnic Chinese societies is closely related to the learning and practicing of a particular art form, the artist developing creativity gradually within the form as his or her artistry develops. The acquisition of basic skills and knowledge is prioritised, which cognitive psychologist Howard Gardner considers true of Chinese societies generally (1989, 154). A similar approach is taken in highly codified dance forms, for example classical ballet.

Amabile (1996, 85) differentiates between creativity-relevant and domain-relevant skills and knowledge. Creativity-relevant skills are cognitive abilities that transcend domains and contribute to creativity in any and all domains such as divergent thinking, and which depend on training, experience and personality. Domain-relevant skills include technical skills or other special talents that pertain to the domain. These depend on innate cognitive abilities, perceptual and motor skills, and formal and informal education, and determine the appropriateness of outcomes. Creativity differs in each domain because each has a different body of knowledge and uses different concepts and behaviours, and changes over time. Some researchers, such as Sternberg and Lubart (1991) acknowledge Amabile's differentiation but propose certain skills and knowledge are neither wholly domain or creativity-specific, and that some abilities and attributes may apply more to some domains than to others, for example to improvisation in creative dance rather than ballet.

Referring to the arts, David Best (1982, 284) similarly argues that that knowledge of the disciplines, techniques and objective criteria of an activity are crucial preconditions for creativity. For the student dancer in a dance education context,

Adshead (1981) and Smith-Autard (2002) in the UK, and McCutcheon (2006) in the USA, among others, consider that the acquisition of knowledge, in terms of basic dance technique, motor and kinaesthetic skills; and history, culture and context, are cornerstones that cannot be ignored if creativity is to take place.

While dance-relevant skills are important, this does not imply that there should be a reliance on elements of external form and convention at the expense of personal expression. This has been the subject of debate over many decades. Press (2002, 162-3) highlights a number of articles presenting different points of view in interviews with Martha Coleman, published in *Dance Observer* in 1949 and 1950. Louis Horst, Martha Graham's music director, insisted that the use of accepted rules was primary, and went so far as to say that the choreographer should not be concerned greatly with expressive content. Choreographers Alwin Nikolais and Jean Erdman, on the other hand, both considered choreography should come from an external idea, which form must serve.

Although her view does not reflect most approaches to dance education in Taiwan, Wu (1997, 235) argues against such polarisation, and that knowledge of form, skills and creative expression can be developed simultaneously, and can enhance each other. A dance educator's role, she continues, is to develop students' consciousness of possibilities to "transcend forms and traditions and to become a creative agent" (p.235-6). Doris Humphrey (1959, 19) similarly suggests both are important, but states ideas need to be "supported and informed by know-how," reflecting the content of her book, *The Art of Making Dances*. Along with similar texts, this focuses on the craft of choreography. In many contexts this is important, since, as I believe Morris correctly observes, form is a primary means by which audiences make assessments (2005, 96). Other texts, however, focus on the self and the subjective dance experience (for example, Press, 2002), or emphasise the role of improvisation in developing movement (for example, Blom and Chaplin, 2000).

Piirto (in Piirto and Starko, 2006) makes the point that a person can also be creative while gaining knowledge or learning skills, and that many disciplines, especially in the performing arts, are never truly mastered. In a creative dance class, 'little-c'

creativity occurs as part of the ongoing learning process as students experiment with and learn about movement, discovering problems and solutions along the way.

The idea of domain-specific and creativity-specific skills has two implications for dance education. It means that at least some skills and personal attributes developed through participation in dance are indeed transferable to other curriculum learning areas, work or life as is often quoted. Further, it suggests that findings from dance-related creativity research, in particular that concerning dance educator practice, may be transferable to other areas of education. Specifically for this study, if domain-relevant skills are truly essential, it suggests creativity can only emerge when students have a certain level of dance or movement skills. This raises questions about the extent to which the Cloud Gate Dance School sees the acquisition of skills and knowledge as a precursor to creativity.

Culture and environment

Taiwanese dance education demonstrates convincingly that dance, creativity and culture are deeply intertwined, and that creativity cannot be understood without grounding it in its socio-cultural context. Both dance and education reflect, interpret, recreate, and render meaningful key values of the culture in which they occur (Foster, 1992, 362). For example, my experience of dance performances in Taiwan, especially the annual National Creative Dance Competition for new choreography organised by the National Dance Association, suggests that audiences expect new works based on Chinese dance forms to retain a traditional format and appearance, often seeming very similar at first sight; whereas the culture and society accepts more radical creativity in modern dance works.

In an interview with Wu Wen-chi (1997, 235), Yu Jin-wen, a former Cloud Gate dancer and now a US-based dance scholar, appeared to see it less clearly when he said, “deforming and reforming the form” is where creativity takes place. Wu adds that “creativity unfolds when an artist exceeds the limitations of the form” (1997, 235). Chinese art scholar Chen Wang-heng (1995, 339) appears to echo this when saying that traditional Chinese opera is highly patterned, outstanding creative artists “always

manage to go beyond such stylised pattern in order to express their unique individuality.”

The link between creativity and culture is reflected in many models of creativity. In Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) conceptualisation, for example, creativity is seen not only in terms of the creator's product, but as determined by the domain, the creator and others within it, in time (pp. 93-95). The temporal factor allows for creativity to be repeatedly socially constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed over the course of time (Ng, 2001, 9). Hennessey (2004, 221-2) stresses that the connection with the socio-cultural context goes beyond the individual's impersonal interaction with it and must also include interaction with and between all those who populate it. The socio-cultural environment exists at multiple levels. Not only are there cross-national differences but the picture can be further complicated by differences within an apparently single cultural context.

The level of creativity permitted by a society is often inversely related to its role in the maintenance of cultural patterns. It may be restricted by government as in *minzu wudao* in Taiwan, one means by which the Chinese-ness of the people was officially reinforced (see Chapter 1). Such patterns can also be socially defined. Morris (2005, 85) describes how, in dance of the Tewa peoples of New Mexico, creativity is expressed through unison, and simple, repetitive choreography that emphasises contained movements and gestures close to the body. From my observations, much Taiwanese aboriginal dance takes a similar form. Morris observes that while the movement style and vocabulary might lead to such creativity being judged as lacking by Western standards, it can be seen as transformative and affirming, and the connection made with historical roots a deeply creative act.

Lubart (1999, 343-4) gives several examples of how culture and social structures restrict creativity in certain ways but encourage it in others within the Asia-Pacific region. For example, musical innovation in composition in Bali is regarded as solely a group endeavour. While groups are expected to differ in style from each other and create new forms, individuals are expected to be stereotyped and anonymous. Among

the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea, men and women can both be creative, but only in different musical genres.

Li (1997), Lubart (1999), Weiner (2000) and Leung, Au and Leung (2004) all consider that the ability to produce novel and appropriate objects and ideas that dramatically depart from existing ones, or radically change aims and methods, is a particularly Western view of creativity. Furthermore, American and much Western culture often tends towards individualist values with creative domains structured so that the credit for a piece of work goes only to one person, regardless of any group involvement. Weiner links this to a socio-political perspective that protects freedom; and encourages, values and rewards diversity.

This is in contrast to East Asian societies historically grounded in ideals of interdependence, cooperation and authoritarianism, where the focus is more on interdependence with group interests stressed over individual concerns, and where self-expression that neglects others for the sake of excessive individualism is frowned upon (Chen, 1995, 336; Rudowicz, 2004, 71). Such societies have also developed a different perspective on the meaning inherent to novelty and originality. Li Jin (1997), a researcher at Project Zero, highlights the fundamentally different traditions of artistic creativity in Confucian societies that have a horizontal tradition where creativity is usually expressed as a reinterpretation of the past, compared to the vertical tradition of the West where radical change to aims, methods and in outcomes is more highly valued. Gardner (1989, 155) similarly sees the Chinese concept of creativity as “neither a massive dislocation nor a radical reconceptualisation, but rather as a modest alteration of existing schemes or practices.” This echoes Li (1997), Averill, Chon and Hahn (2001) and Rudowicz (2003), who consider most Chinese artists still manage to find their own style and express their individuality while simultaneously working within tradition, adhering to socio-cultural norms and remaining committed to the socio-cultural system. For the fieldwork, this highlighted that creativity can manifest itself within existing structures, and does not have to be overtly radical in nature.

The Chinese also continue to take a different approach to aesthetics. Chinese author Yie Lang (1995, 253) notes that while the Western approach focuses on form, Chinese aestheticians “refer to the ‘visual image’ or ‘sensory view’,” adding that Western theories stress objective reality, but that for the Chinese, the subjective is more important. Literature scholar Zhu Li-yuan (1995, 319) agrees, and specifically referring to the arts, says that Chinese artists pay more attention to the internal spirit of objects, their inner life, vitality or characteristic nature. Weiner (2000) observes the prominence and value of ‘empty’ space in Chinese art as an example of this. The emphasis on the internal is also a feature of many recent Cloud Gate Dance Theatre choreographies and company practice (Lin H-M, 2005).

These distinctions serve to further highlight that creativity may be conceptualised differently in different places, by different social groups, and by those with different histories. This is an important consideration when analysing the data for this study, which is set in a specific time and place. Taiwan may appear a singular context, but this study is very much located at the Cloud Gate Dance School, where education practices are atypical of those in the country generally, in turn indicating that constructions of creativity can and do differ within a society. Hong Kong researchers Leung, Au and Leung (2004) go so far as to argue that it is hard, perhaps even impossible, to measure creativity objectively, and that to some extent it is in the eyes of the beholder. For the fieldwork, detailed later, this highlights the dangers of looking for creativity in purely American or British terms, or those of a single research tradition.

It should be noted at this point that differences in the conception or shaping of creativity do not mean it is ethnically defined; only that it may be constructed and manifest in different ways. Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 331) notes that although certain ethnic traditions, including Chinese, are often cited as having influenced the motivation to achieve, they do not affect individual creative ability.

The creative process

Although there are different degrees of novelty, creativity involves bringing something new into being. A number of theorists in psychology, education and dance have attempted to articulate the process by which this occurs, each breaking it down into specific stages. Drawing on the work of self-psychologists Heinz Kohut and George Hagman, Press (2002, 91-8) sees creativity as a three-phase process. Initially there is a 'precreative' time when energies remain in suspension. That such a phase occurs resonates with the idea of 'incubation', a period in which the problem is put to one side but in which ideas continue unconsciously to develop, which appears in a number of descriptions of the process in psychology, including in Wallas' (1926) model, still cited in many texts. Press also suggests this can be a time of anxiety about how to proceed, something suggested by a number of choreographers including Michael Corder (2008). In Press' second stage, those energies are transferred into the emerging artwork, before a final, quieter phase in which the work is finalised.

In her *Art of Dance in Education* model, Smith-Autard (2002) breaks the overall process down into the three broad sub-processes of creating, performing and appreciating. Creating includes translating themes into symbolic action, exploring ideas, selecting movements, and an understanding of formal choreographic devices. She sees the performing process as especially important to creativity as it provides the means for others to view the finished dance. She sees appreciation as ongoing, by the creator as well as others, and not solely a post-performance activity, whatever form that performance may take. In the USA, Anne Green Gilbert (1992) places equal emphasis on dance problem-solving and training through the same three strands. British dance educator Marion Gough (1999, 59) similarly lists the components of composing dance as imagining, researching, exploring, improvising, developing a dance vocabulary, problem-solving, decision-making, selecting, repeating and refining; adding that it is the teacher's task to ensure students encounter all the components.

Many models of the creative process in psychology and education similarly set the process out as a series of defined stages that culminate in a final, refined product. Craft's (2000, 2005) five-stage model, for example, consists of 'preparation', when

the stimulus for the process occurs; 'letting go', which involves playing with ideas; 'germination', when the idea is conceived; 'assimilation', a usually invisible process when ideas are finalised; and finally, 'completion' when the product is objectified or articulated (Craft, 2000, 32-33). She emphasises that creativity increases and multiplies, the process becoming a spiral, creativity leading to more creativity as the creator becomes dissatisfied with the new present.

While identifying individual elements to be noted when observing lessons at the Cloud Gate Dance School, setting out the process in this way implies each step occurs in turn. Discussing the 'creating and composing' cornerstone of her *Dance as Art in Education* model, American Brenda Pugh McCutcheon (2006) insists this does not have to be so. Although similarly setting out the process in dance as consisting of problem solving and movement exploration; experimenting, which involves trying out an idea or concept, then focusing on it; improvising, spontaneously creating on a theme; composing; and editing and refining; she makes it clear that the creator can, and often does, revisit previous stages in the cycle (p.174-5). As is the case at the Cloud Gate Dance School, she further observes that not all creative activity in dance need result in choreography or a refined dance product, but that when it does, the process will have been creative long before it is translated into final form (p.178).

The idea of revisiting stages also appears in Alma Hawkins' (1991) description of the creative process in dance. Hawkins explained that the dancer, likely unconsciously, engages in what she calls 'feedforward' and 'feedback' (p.41). She says that movement is created in response to the original stimulus from outside the self, such as an instruction from a teacher. The movement created provides immediate feedback to the dancer that in turn sets off revised feelings and images that are externalised through new movement (p.42). This parallels McCutcheon's idea of exploring as seeking all the options, and Craft (2001a, 57), who implies imagination is essential to creativity, the creator not being satisfied with what exists and considering other possibilities, including those not immediately thought of. The notion of creativity as problem finding as well as problem solving also resonates with Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 363). Both divergent thinking that uses imagination to resolve problems by

posing questions and being open to possibility, and the discovery of a range of possible solutions; and convergent or critical thinking which is analytical and evaluative, and in which possible outcomes are weighed, are central to the process.

Hawkins' model focuses on the connection between mind and body, with kinaesthetic and visual imagery an important part of the process. She considered that, before a dancer can create a movement in outward form, he or she must imagine the sensory experience in the body. Visual imagery is important because as dancers create movement, they simultaneously imagine what it looks like. She believed this requires a state of mind she called 'relaxed concentration,' that involved separating yourself from the outside world so attention can be paid to sensations in the body (p.45); an idea that parallels Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow. Hawkins' description is valuable since it gives an insight into how movement itself is created, while her indication of the state of mind required points to the type of studio environment that might be best suited for creative work in dance.

The link between mind and body is also highlighted by Bannon and Sanderson (2000), who argue for the development of more aesthetically significant dance education using active exploration that incorporates the consciousness of improvisation, with the aesthetic being understood as the simultaneous engagement of body, mind and sensibility. This, they argue, empowers the individual and makes him or her interested rather than distanced.

The above discussion highlights that there are different ways in which creating, performing and appreciating in dance might take place (Chappell, 2005, 33). For the fieldwork, it raised questions about the nature of the creative process in the Cloud Gate Dance School studio including the extent to which and how different steps within the process were emphasised by teachers; the extent to which and how students were encouraged to make, assess, revise and retest movement; and whether and how a state of flow or relaxed consciousness was promoted. This called for careful observation and discussion of the process with teachers. Improvisation is central to many lessons, and as Blom and Chaplin (2000, 8) observe, can make consideration of process problematic since it can be difficult to see how each stage manifests itself,

assuming that they all do, whether they follow each other almost instantaneously, or whether they are simultaneous. The different phases are also not necessarily conscious to the creator or the observer (Press, 2002, 99).

Self and relationships

Craft (2000, 21) indicates the creative process involves people having agency over their environment that allows them to make choices and achieve their full potential. Drawing on the Italian psychiatrist Assagioli, she sees 'self' as being divided between 'I', that which is rational and conscious, and 'Me', which is unconscious, intuitive, impulsive and emotional. Craft (2000, 28) goes so far to wonder if the unconscious mind, the source of the non-logical, should be a ninth multiple intelligence but stresses that intuitive and unconscious aspects of the process are always balanced by rational and conscious creative impulses. Blom and Chaplin (2000, 10) make a similar distinction with regard to dance improvisation in their differentiation between focused consciousness and diffuse awareness.

American dance educator Sherry Shapiro (1998, 9) emphasises the body as part of the self that holds the memories of one's life including one's historical and cultural grounding. She sees it not so much as an object in dance but more as a site for reflection on life and experiences. Imagination is not constructed solely in terms of artistic ability but in a much broader sense as the "underlying power to re-envision and recreate the world in which we live," that allows for "expressions of who we are and what we want to become" (p.11). Laban (1948) similarly suggested that creativity was a process of self-realisation, while McCutcheon (2006) and Hanna (1999) are clear that dance can provide a means of exploring feelings, values and associated expression.

Social systems theories of creativity emphasise the interaction between individuals and the world they inhabit. While people have relationships with oneself, they also have them with others, the domain and the environment. Many authors (for example, McCutcheon, 2006, 132; Blom and Chaplin, 2000, 22-5) observe that dancers practice relationships by moving with others; relating to others in space, consciously or

subconsciously; or relating to the space itself. In all of these the body relates to something broader than its own self.

For this study, there are questions about the role of improvisation, self-exploration, the unconscious and intuitive, and the extent to which students are encouraged to act on impulse. As noted previously, such notions sit uncomfortably in most Taiwanese education contexts where children are traditionally expected to honour, obey and respect teachers, and convergent thinking is dominant. Thoughts about relationships, meanwhile, lead to considerations of those between students, between teacher and student, and what effects the class group as a whole may have on individual members. Such relationships also potentially extend beyond the studio itself, and raise questions about the effect, conscious or unconscious, of others and the dance organisation, of those within it.

3.3 Dance, play and creativity

It is generally agreed that play makes a positive contribution to children's development and creativity (for example, Craft, 2000; Howard-Jones, Taylor and Sutton, 2002; Russ, 2003, 2004). Swedish education researcher Gunilla Lindqvist (2001) and American dance educator Diane Lynch Fraser (1991) similarly emphasise the relationship between play and dance. Both Lindqvist's study and Lynch Fraser's book, *Playdancing*, focus on children up to age 8, making them particularly pertinent to this study.

Lynch Fraser observes that movement is the foremost means by which children communicate feelings to others (p.2). Both Lindqvist and Lynch Fraser consider that dramatic play is important in children's dance. Drawing on Vygotsky, Lindqvist says, "Play is imagination in action," adding that, as in dance, "thought and imagination come into being through the expressive acts of the body in play" (p.50). While noting Laban's (1948, 32) view that dramatic elements should be used sparingly in dance for young children, and that the "experience of movement imagination and memory of movement is a stimulus strong enough to make longer combinations of themes," she rather considers that play and dance should be linked, and that dance for children

should start in and emphasise the dramatic in their play, only later differentiating from it (p.51).

According to Lynch Fraser (p.47), linking dramatic play and dance can help children differentiate between reality and fantasy, without having to reject make-believe. She specifically sees a value in it developing each child's notions of self-constancy, the self is permanent; self-differentiation, one's ideas can be different to others; self-identity or uniqueness; and self-esteem. While other creative dance texts for teachers include dramatic strategies and imply similar outcomes, they are rarely so explicitly stated. Life Pulse teacher manuals at the Cloud Gate Dance School similarly suggest the use of drama and role-play in many early years lessons; a strategy followed by teachers.

Although Hanna (1999, 134) observes that children can often be found dancing as part of playground activities, and that play has implications for dance teaching and learning, she restricts herself to viewing play as a diagnostic tool. She notes that by observing children's dance at play, teachers can learn how a child thinks, feels and moves, and adapt teaching strategies accordingly. She further states that because children learners construct their own knowledge, and fundamental learning takes place in the absence of formal teaching, children's play evidences their natural movement competencies (p.135).

The act of play should be distinguished from the idea of playfulness, often cited as a trait of creative individuals. According to Rubin, Fein, and Vandenburg (1983), play has three dimensions: behaviour, context and disposition. Behavioural characteristics focus primarily on the cognitive or social level. Context is important, since while an activity may have the behavioural characteristics of play, the same activity at a different time or in a different place may take a different meaning, although that does not mean a sense of playfulness may not be retained. The dispositional dimension equates to playfulness, and reflects how the player feels about the activity. It is an internalised construct, albeit evidenced by external actions, comprising qualities brought to the activity by the player, including physical spontaneity, social spontaneity, cognitive spontaneity, a sense of humour and joy (Lieberman, 1977).

While certain activities may appear play-like, it is never possible to be certain the individual is feeling playful, although engaging in play is likely to encourage participants to be playful (Howard, Bellin and Rees, 2002).

Although most studies of play and playfulness are located in the West, a study by Li, Bundy and Beer (1995) found that American and Taiwanese attitudes and values towards the constructs were broadly similar. The main difference was that the Taiwanese place less emphasis on cognitive spontaneity, physical spontaneity, and sense of humour, although still attribute importance to social spontaneity and outward joy.

Playfulness, in the sense of exploration, letting go or openness to playing with new ideas and possibilities, features in many conceptualisations of the creative process. In a study of 6 to 7 year olds in the UK, Howard-Jones, Taylor and Sutton (2002) found that the less structured an immediately preceding task or activity, the more creative are children's outcomes in that which follows. It was uncertain, however, whether the effects were due to a more relaxed mental state, or the transfer of a playful mind set, or the intrinsic motivation they were experiencing in free play. The nature of that play, dramatic or rough and tumble, is unclear. Craft (2000, 50-1) draws on a number of earlier empirical studies to similarly conclude that although play is not the same as creativity, there is evidence that it facilitates it, that social play is more conducive to creativity than solitary play, and that a predisposition to fantasy in particular may contribute to a child's future creative abilities. Russ (2003) disputes this final point, arguing that, while there is a relationship between play processes and creativity, there is no evidence that play facilitates increased levels of divergent thinking over time.

This discussion raises questions about the role teachers at the Cloud Gate Dance School see for play, both as a precursor to creative activity and within activities themselves; the extent to which that play is dramatic or rough and tumble; and the effect it has on creativity in subsequent activities.

3.4 Creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning

This study focuses not only on students, but also on how teachers at the Cloud Gate Dance School are creative within their practice. The English report *All Our Futures* defines creative teaching as “using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting and effective” (National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, 1999, 103). Both English educator Susan Halliwell (1993) and American educational psychologist R. Keith Sawyer (2004) see a more improvisational aspect to it, reminding us that no two classes are the same and describing creative teachers as having inventive flexibility, the ability to read a situation, a willingness to take risks, and the ability to monitor and evaluate events.

The idea of volition is similarly found in British authors Peter Woods’ (2004) and Bob Jeffrey’s (2006) descriptions of creative teaching as involving innovation, ownership, control and relevance. Such concepts are also implicit in many dance teaching texts. Woods is clear that teachers should have some autonomy, and that innovation and thus control of what methods to employ and when should come from them. In dance, Gough (1999, 2), who often uses the term ‘good teaching’ when discussing teacher creativity, similarly comments that good teachers have the ability to apply competencies selectively and differentially.

Ownership for Woods has both teacher and student dimensions and involves teachers producing and constructing knowledge so that it is incorporated into students’ own lives as applied to those students’ social worlds at home, school and beyond. Again, this resonates with Gough (1999, 1) who observes that knowledge is a social product, created as the result of interaction between people, including teacher and student, and their environment. Equal emphasis is thus placed on teacher behaviour and teacher action, an important consideration for the studio observations in this study. Gough also makes the point that creative teachers seek to find new material and methods and so keep their teaching alive and fresh (p.116). Jeffrey (2006) further emphasises the student-centred nature of creative teaching and its connection with personal, social and emotional development of learners as well as their intellectual development. He

adds that only if teaching is relevant to the child can knowledge learned become personal (p.410).

Teaching for creativity on the other hand, is about learner empowerment. It aims to encourage students' own creative thinking and behaviours; self-belief, self-confidence and independence of mind; and foster abilities and skills such as curiosity, memory and awareness (National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, 1999, 106). Gough (1999) intimates that teaching for creativity is as much an attitude of mind as about specific strategies, and suggests teaching and learning should be a joint "voyage of discovery" in which student and teacher "creates a world of which they are a part" (p.2). Lynch Fraser (1991, 24) sees specific roles for teachers in encouraging student creativity including providing the initial experience, materials to begin the investigation, information in response to questions, and reinforcement. Craft (2000, 117), writing from a general education viewpoint, echoes this saying it is about "making space for creativity" and "valuing it in as many different ways as children express it."

In contrast to creative teaching, teaching for creativity has been directly addressed by a number of dance education researchers. In Finland, Soili Hämäläinen (1997) considered craft-oriented and process-oriented approaches to movement creation and composition. In Canada, Madelaine Lord (2001) studied teaching strategies to generate movement through improvisation, while in the UK, Kerry Chappell (2005, 2007) investigated approaches to creativity taken by teachers working within the National Curriculum in primary schools.

While there is plentiful research on teacher attitudes towards creative students, there is relatively little comprehensive knowledge about their attitudes towards and conception of creativity *per se*. In a study of over one thousand British teachers conducted in the late 1980s, Marilyn Fryer found it was perceived primarily in terms of imagination, self-expression and originality. Over 70% also thought it was rare in students, although it should be noted that this was before ideas of democratic or everyday creativity were widespread. The study also found that few teachers considered themselves creative, a point echoed by the participant teachers in this study,

and that many saw creative development as something over which they have little influence (Fryer, 1996). More recent British research such as Odena's (2001, 2006) study of music teachers and Sanders (2005) study of secondary school teachers across disciplines indicate a change in perceptions, with both sets of participants supporting the idea of creativity as a general capacity of all students, and of the teacher's role as one of facilitator, nurturer, and helper in terms of the activity, process, and environment.

Creative Learning involves students using their own experiences to enhance learning contexts, using imaginative links to aid conceptualisations, creating social learning opportunities with peers, and adding their perspectives to teacher-led sessions (Jeffrey, 2004, 15). Strategies allowing such opportunities are common in creative dance teaching. Shapiro (1998, 10) particularly supports pedagogy that allows students to reflect on and use their own experience. As such, it involves similar concepts of innovation, ownership, control and relevance as creative teaching.

Craft (2005, 23) sees creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning as different aspects of the same process, which has teacher behaviour and strategies at its heart. Teaching for creativity may arise spontaneously but is most likely to arise in creative teaching contexts. While neither necessarily leads to development of learners' creative abilities, these are most likely to be developed in an atmosphere where the teacher's creative abilities are equally properly engaged (Craft, 2005, 44; National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, 1999, 103). Similarly, where teacher creativity is stifled, it seems unlikely that learner creativity could be effectively fostered (Craft, 2001a, 26).

The above discussion raises questions about how and to what extent creative teaching and learning can take place in environments dominated by prescriptive pedagogy and curricula, fixed goals; standardised testing; and market forces including competition for students; which, apart from testing, apply at least to some degree to the Cloud Gate Dance School. The atmosphere and comments made in discussions during initial visits to the School indicated that the presence of such factors may not be as creativity inhibiting as some indicate, although the extent to which this was due to context was

unclear. In any event, Woods (2004) observes that, while creativity can be squeezed in such circumstances, it rarely expires altogether.

3.5 School ethos and climate

Although creative teaching involves personal innovation, ownership and control by the teacher, and teaching for creativity is about learner empowerment, any dance institution performs a double function in the lives of people. As Finnish dance and theatre scholar Teija Löytönen (2001, 188) observes, they not only supply the precondition for dance activities but simultaneously restrict the possibilities through artistic and educational decisions, and social practices rooted in a deep-seated system of shared values and beliefs. Although not immediately apparent, the School's ethos, reflected in these shared values and beliefs, was to become an important factor in this study.

In her study of schools in Northern Ireland, Caitlin Donnelly (2000, 151) identifies three dimensions of ethos.² The 'aspirational ethos' is the formal expression of the aims and objectives of an organisation. The 'ethos of outward attachment' is manifested in organisational structures, the physical environment, and the behaviour of individuals. Finally, the 'ethos of inward attachment' is found in individuals' deep seated thoughts, feelings and perceptions.

In an educational context, Ekvall (1996, 105) and Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Ouston (1980) both see ethos in terms of the conglomerate of observed and recurring attitudes, values and sentiment characteristic of the school as a whole. These inform the customs and practices of everyone at the school, and are manifested through visible and audible behaviour and published documents. Ethos affects the operation of the school and influences the teaching, learning and creating processes; motivation and commitment; and the way problems are solved and decisions made (Ekvall, 1996, 106). Ethos is durable but not eternal, with any change always slow and over time (Moorhead and Griffin, 2001, 448).

Central to determining the ethos of any organisation are its vision and core values and the beliefs, history and traditions on which they are based. At a school, the vision and

core values are shared by all staff, and permeate and show themselves through the attitudes and procedures of the school and those within it. As such, ethos has been likened to institutional habitus since it is similarly constructed through experience and history (Smith, 2003; Reay, David and Ball, 2001). It can be seen as ‘the way things are done’, which at the Cloud Gate Dance School includes ways of thinking and acting, and the part played in producing and renewing professional practice (Tranter, 2006, 8).

Closely associated with behaviour and the idea of an ethos of inward attachment is Organ’s concept of organisational citizenship (in Hui, Lee and Rousseau, 2004, 232). Organisational citizenship is behaviour that is discretionary; not formally rewarded, either directly or indirectly; and that in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organisation. It includes an affective commitment, which is the extent to which individuals identify with the goals of an organisation, and strive to achieve those goals to the best of their ability. Reflecting the importance of relationships in Confucian societies referred to in Chapter 1, Hui, Lee and Rousseau observe that Chinese people tend to relate to organisations through the people in them, and that their behaviour is not a consequence of job satisfaction or organisational commitment, but a kind of service that is linked to personal loyalty and attachment to specific others (p.233).

School climate is similarly a rather nebulous, internal concept. In the literature it is often used interchangeably with ‘atmosphere.’ If ethos has its roots in sociology, climate is based in psychology. Halpin (1966, 133) describes it as the personality of the organisation. Climate points to the current situation in a school, whereas as culture is more historically based (Moorhead and Griffin, 2001, 448). It reflects the level and type of interaction between leaders, teachers, other staff, parents and students.

Neither ethos, nor climate, should be confused with environment, which in this study is taken to mean the totality of the surroundings and externalities of the School and those in it. It includes not only the physical environment and working conditions, which in a dance school would include the non-studio spaces as well as the studios

and fixtures and fittings therein, but also the array of social and cultural factors affecting the whole school community.

Ethos and climate can both foster or inhibit teachers' and students' propensity to be creative. The teachers in Fryer's study of attitudes to creativity in British schools overwhelmingly felt that a whole school commitment to creativity was invaluable if it was to be developed (Fryer, 1996, 70-3). Yet, as Maisuria (2005) observes is often the case in Britain, standardisation, centralisation and vocationalisation of education can lead to a subordination of creativity and indicate to teachers and students that it is better to conform.

Although there is no desire to measure student achievement through formal assessment at the Cloud Gate Dance School, as is the case in most educational contexts, the school's curricula are similarly standardised. In my initial visits, the presence of teaching manuals, and the emphasis placed on them, suggested that the pedagogy was similarly inflexible and prescriptive. Furthermore, research by Baer (1997) suggests there are gender differences in the degree of negativity caused by external constraints, which may be significant for teacher creativity in female-dominated dance education contexts. It should be recalled, however, that the negative effects of extrinsic motivators may not be universal, and in some societies, including some in East Asia, they may even have a positive effect on task interest and creativity.

Yet this was a school where, it was claimed, creativity was encouraged and valued, both for teachers and students. This raised numerous questions for this study. How was this apparent paradox resolved? To what extent and how were teachers truly empowered, or more pertinently, did they feel empowered, to take initiatives and innovate in lessons? To what extent does the ethos of the School affect creativity and negate the supposedly creativity-inhibiting effects of the highly structured curricula and teaching practices? The answers may indicate ways in which creativity can be encouraged without jettisoning values a society continues to hold dear, whether in Taiwanese dance education settings or elsewhere. Given the deep-rooted nature of ethos and culture, these questions could only be answered by long-term observations of the School's vision and core values both within and without the studio.

3.6 Conclusions

The above demonstrates how difficult it is to arrive at a single definition of creativity that includes all the possibilities. As David Best (1978, 89) observes, “Being clear about meaning is by no means the same as being able to produce a verbal definition.” British scholar Rob Pope (2005, 52) considers it is better to recognise immediately the potential multiplicity of creativity, and conceive it functionally in terms of what it does, or socially in terms of who, where or how. This is particularly true of studies such as this where localised constructions of the concept are being sought.

As Plucker and Beghetto (2004, 156) state, creativity is an interplay between ability, which is a function of personal experience, knowledge and skills, and includes personal traits; and process. It is ability that makes creativity personal, since different people will have different levels of ability and experience. This allows creativity to be both extraordinary, the prerogative of a few exceptional individuals; or ordinary, a commonly available and latent capacity in us all. There must be an outcome that is observable or tangible in some form, whether an observable process, a finished product, or the expression of an idea.

The idea of ‘little-c’ creativity has value in educational contexts. Not only does it balance process and product, but also recognises everyday creativity and its relationship with an individual’s knowledge, skills and experience. In doing so, one accepts that there is a continuum of creative achievement. Creativity and conceptions of creativity also have a personal dimension as recognised by Beghetto and Kaufman’s concept of ‘mini-c’ creativity, important in creative dance where personal expression is to the fore. As Rudowicz (2003, 85) points out though, this means manifestations of creativity should be studied from the perspective of the individuals in the process regardless of context. This was an important consideration when planning the methodology fieldwork for this study.

The creator always works in co-operation with others and the environment, albeit sometimes unconsciously. Creativity has individual and communal dimensions, with appropriateness, at least in part, socially and contextually determined. Whatever an

individual's particular skills, talents and creative thinking abilities; and whatever the relationships or the domain; the environment they are working in will significantly impact on their creativity just as they will impact on the environment. What is creative at the Cloud Gate Dance School is bound by the community of practice, values and norms of the School, its curricula and pedagogical frameworks. Constructions of creativity at the School are shaped by the people within it, who in turn are shaped by the wider Cloud Gate institution, Taiwan's dance education environment, dance education beyond Taiwan, and Taiwanese culture, history and politics.

Creative expression is a universal human phenomenon. Yet, as emphasised in social systems approaches, the impact of culture and domain cannot be ignored. Culture can channel creativity, promoting it only in certain forms, domains or parts of the population; and provide a set of inhibiting and facilitating conditions that influence the general level of creative activity (Lubart, 1999, 347). Furthermore, while there are commonalities, there are real differences in how it is perceived, expressed and nurtured in different domains and in different dance forms. It must not be assumed that creativity in educational dance for children manifests itself, or is judged, in the same way as creativity in other dance forms.

The issues and specific questions raised above were brought together to formulate the fieldwork questions set out in the following chapter.

Notes

- ¹ This is a play on the initials R.O.C., which stands for Republic of China, Taiwan's official name.
- ² 'Ethos' is often used interchangeably with 'culture'. While the latter is often used when describing non-educational organisations, 'ethos' is more commonly used in the literature when referring to educational organisations (Smith, 2003).

CHAPTER 4

IN THE FIELD

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is an account of the fieldwork that took place at the Cloud Gate Dance School in Taiwan between October 2006 and January 2007. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 detail the events that led up to it, including the design process and how access to the School's leaders, teachers and studios was granted and relationships developed, most of which took place during two preparatory visits in November-December 2005 and May-June 2006. The fieldwork is then described in detail, with separate sections looking at studio observations, interviews and meetings, the collection of textual data, and a questionnaire to parents. Following this, the final two sections offer some reflections on the overall process and initial comments on reporting and analysis.

As described in Chapter 2, planning for the School began in 1995, when Lin Hwai-min decided to separate most of Cloud Gate's education and outreach activities from the main company by establishing Cloud Gate 2 and the Cloud Gate Dance School, the first branch of which opened in 1998. According to the School, its present 20 branches aim to "introduce the joys of movement" to people and to assist children in particular to "release their emotions through dance and cherish their precious childhood memories" (Cloud Gate Dance School, 2006a). However, Chief Executive Officer Wen Huei-wen (2006) sees it as not only as a dance school, but also as a "community cultural centre."

4.2 Research questions and design

Initial visits to the School in 2003 and 2005 revealed a range of issues, most of which related to teaching and learning, and the content and structure of the curricula. It was following the visit in late 2005 that the focus of the study narrowed to the construction of creativity by the teachers and leaders at the School, in particular asking, 'What values and associated concepts of creativity are manifested in practices?' and 'Why

are apparently paradoxical positions taken up by and for students, teachers and management?’

As noted in Chapter 3, the creativity literature indicates that the development and application of multiple theoretical perspectives is now accepted and encouraged. Although authors such as Craft (2000, 2001a) have extended this approach to creativity in educational contexts, most previous studies focused on one aspect, whether the creative product (for example, Runco, Johnson and Bear, 1993; Beetlestone, 1998), environment and process (Fryer, 1996; Stoycheva, 1996) or personality (Rudowicz and Yue, 2002). From the cited responses in Fryer, most teachers focus on the first of these, at least in the UK. However, given the questions this study aimed to address, it seemed appropriate to focus equally on process, person, environment and product, rather than restricting myself to one approach.

Given that I was seeking to understand and interpret social phenomena from the perspectives of the participants, it was determined very early in the research that a qualitative study using ethnographic techniques including observations and interviews in the field was most appropriate. It was also considered that a lengthy period of fieldwork would be required if I was fully to understand the setting and the data to be collected (Schwandt, 1994).

The fieldwork questions were finalised following the visits to Taiwan in November-December 2005 and May-June 2006. However, my first contact with the Cloud Gate Dance School had been two years earlier in February 2003, when I had the opportunity to observe two classes at the NanJing Road branch in Taipei, for children aged 5 and 6 respectively. Later the same day I met and interviewed Wen Huei-wen for the first time. This initial access was negotiated and mediated by a fellow dance educator who had formerly been a dancer with Cloud Gate Dance Theatre.

Although many questions sprang from that first encounter and subsequent conversations with local dance educators, they were very broad, focused to a large extent on the understandings of outreach and dance company education generally, and covered all three Cloud Gate organisations: Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, Cloud Gate 2

and the Cloud Gate Dance School. Following the second round of meetings in December 2005 it became increasingly apparent that the research focus should be narrowed, and should be only on the School. Much of Cloud Gate 2's outreach takes the form of residences, most of which are away from Taipei and at certain times of the year. In purely practical terms it would have been impossible to observe and research them, while simultaneously observing and researching classes at the School. There were many aspects of the School's practices that were of significant interest but it was important to have a plan that was achievable within the given timeframe. By May therefore, the research focus had narrowed to aspects of creativity and the links between the curricula.

Repeated here for ease of reference, beneath the broad question, 'How is creativity constructed at the Cloud Gate Dance School?', the final fieldwork questions were:

- What are the primary foci of each Cloud Gate Dance School course (for example, personal development, personal fitness, dance training, acquisition of skills and knowledge, dance education, creative dance, creative movement, or life skills)?
- What role does creativity for students play in Life Pulse and Pre-professional lessons?
- How, and to what extent, is student creativity encouraged or discouraged in Life Pulse and Pre-professional lessons? How is this manifested?
- What factors are important in the creative process for students?
- How is student creativity recognised and assessed?
- To what extent does student creativity develop or change over a semester in the Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes?
- How important do the School's leaders and teachers regard teacher creativity in Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes?
- How, and to what extent, is teacher creativity encouraged, discouraged or inhibited in the Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes? How is this manifested?

As the fieldwork progressed, a number of themes emerged for later analysis from these questions, as detailed in Chapter 1.

Although each participant would help in the development of theoretical insights into creativity at the School, the intention throughout the study was not to ask them directly about their understanding of creativity or the theoretical constructs of it in the literature. Instead, the focus in my dealings with them was on the representations of creativity, primarily through my direct experience of their words and actions, supplemented by the collection of artefacts, and historical and contemporary texts and productions.

The fieldwork was, therefore, designed to collect a variety of diverse empirical materials in a systematic manner for analysis. American education researcher Valerie Janesick (2000, 379) likens good qualitative research to choreography in that it should use various techniques and methods to capture many nuances and complexities of the topics and setting being studied. I adopted a multi-method approach to ensure an in-depth understanding of creativity at the School, its curricula and other aspects of its operations. Although observations were core to the fieldwork and the emphasis varied at different times, the methods were very much seen as complementary with no single practice privileged over another, something considered important by Denzin and Lincoln (2000, 6).

Using a range of data sources and methods of collection allowed for triangulation to be used (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, 198-200; Lofland *et al.*, 2006, 91-5). Triangulation is often seen as a tool whereby data can be verified or as a means of reducing the possibility of undetected errors or bias that might make subsequent analysis incorrect. However, I believe that viewing it purely in these terms is dangerous in that it can condition one to look for points of agreement, with the potential consequence that areas of disagreement are missed.

It is quite common for people at different levels or with different roles in an organisation to have different understandings and place varying levels of importance on actions and constructs. Thus, a range of people at the School were interviewed.

Additionally, as American anthropologists Michael Angrosino and Kimberley Mays de Pérez (2000, 689) point out, the ethnographer needs to be aware that what he or she observes is conditioned by who he or she is, and that different researchers, equally well trained in theory and method but of different race, age or gender, may well stimulate different interactions. These will result in different observations, leading to different conclusions. Triangulation does not so much minimise such observer effect on data, as to make it visible so it can be accounted for in the written representation.

Chinese artist and writer Lu Ch'ai¹ (1677, in Sze, 1957, 17) said, "To be without method is deplorable, but to depend on method is entirely worse." Although referring specifically to painting, the philosophy is equally applicable to other areas of life. While I had a plan and set of procedures, especially for observations, methods were amended and the study recontextualised and refocused as my experience and knowledge of the setting grew, even during the fieldwork itself. As Janesick (2000, 381) notes, good qualitative research is not only rigorous and does justice to the complexity of the topic and social setting under study, but is like improvisation in that it relies on preparation, exploration and a willingness to change, as well as illumination and formulation.

4.3 Opening doors and relationships

The essential foundation for the viability of any ethnographic project is to gain access to the field and the people therein (Frosch, 1999, 263). Once in, it is important that initial relationships with those who control access, as well as the day to day participants, are maintained and developed if the fieldwork is to be successful. As Andrée Grau (1999, 166) observes correctly, both access and relationships are intimately connected with the relations of power. Although not conceiving of events in those terms at the time, from the moment I first approached the School there was a constant negotiation between the participants and I as we made sense of each other.

Looking back, my approach to Lin Hwai-min in late 2004 for permission to undertake the study acknowledged tacitly the hierarchy within Cloud Gate. Although Lin is not directly involved in the day to day running of the School, he is a highly influential

figure and I considered his support to be essential if the study was to be successful. His agreement to the study was received by e-mail on 5th January 2005.

My previous experience as a workplace analyst demonstrated that even the most senior manager's approval for a project is no guarantee of good relationships. Furthermore, gatekeepers exist at different levels. While participants are rarely able to block research once permissions have been granted, I have been in situations where they have made it difficult to gather reliable data. Even though I had Lin's support therefore, I was fully aware that I needed to develop relationships with those at the School. Consequently, I made two preparatory visits to Taiwan in November 2005 and May 2006, which also facilitated detailed planning.

Meetings were held with Wen and Lin on 5th and 14th December 2005 respectively, primarily to gather background contextualising information about the School, its history, purpose and place in Taiwanese dance education. A verbal account of the purposes and procedures, risks and benefits of the research was given to both (Lofland *et al.*, 2006, 43-6). At my meeting with Wen, she gave her agreement to the data gathering techniques proposed. She also considered there was no need to put this agreement formally in writing at that time, although it was audio-taped. We also agreed that my point of liaison at the School should be Chu Kuang-chuan, a senior teacher at the School whom I had previously met while she was studying in the UK.

As the research focus narrowed, the second preparatory visit in June 2006 helped focus the research questions. Besides a further meeting with Wen, I was able to observe four classes at the QuanQian Road, Taipei branch of the School on 8th June, primarily to help determine the courses and levels most appropriate for observation. Following this, I held a meeting with Chu at which the classes to be observed in the fieldwork proper were agreed.

It would have been possible to undertake much of the planning by telephone and e-mail. Hopkins (2007, 387) observes that a researcher's own life experiences, biographies and identities are important in fieldwork and affect how researchers are read and interpreted by participants. These visits allowed bridges and understandings

to be built, besides providing opportunities to further my knowledge of dance education in Taiwan. I was able to make Wen and Chu in particular fully aware of my background, credentials and competencies. My knowledge that comes from my biography gave rise to shared understandings. I consider that demonstrating my legitimacy, and giving Wen and Chu increased opportunities to get to know me as an individual, allowed genuine relationships to be built. They became fully aware of my experience in dance education, considerable practical knowledge of the subject in a range of contexts, and professional contacts with leading figures in the industry, both in the UK and overseas, many of whom I have come to know on a personal level. The preparatory visits helped reduce any power imbalance that might exist. By the time of the fieldwork I was a known quantity; plausible; trusted; and was cognisant and accepting of the complexity of the situation I was entering. I was sensitive to the School's values.

While many texts discuss such strategies and associated behaviour for fieldwork, only sporadic mention is made of the impact of one's personality. I am naturally easy-going and open. My experience has shown, for example, that participants are often more comfortable talking about their lives, actions and values if I am willing to talk about mine. Most texts also speak of strategies in global terms, but it is important to recognise that all researchers, and all participants, are different. In this study, I had no issues, and so far as I am aware, the participants had no issues, regarding gender, ethnicity or any other aspect of our orientations. While I ensured I fitted in to the School in terms of demeanour and dress, and my time in Taiwan made me aware of local sensibilities, I made no other conscious concessions. Others may have done so, and may have felt or reacted differently to events and circumstances.

My relationships with all at the School developed as the research progressed. That with Wen was not the static relationship often described in the literature where dealings with the gatekeeper are rarely mentioned after access has been granted. The increasing trust, for example, was demonstrated by being allowed to film some lessons, observe classes other than those on the original observation schedule, and gather data from parents via a questionnaire.

The developing trust with Wen and Chu was matched with an increasing element of mutuality to the fieldwork. I was aware that having a foreign researcher investigating practice could be seen as adding legitimacy to the School. Although I was never directly asked for anything in return for the privilege of being given wide-ranging access at the School, I was occasionally engaged in discussions about the School's curricula, specific actions, and dance education practices in the UK. Wen and I also discussed possible future uses of the study at the School. However, I was always careful to protect my integrity and that of the study in any responses.

While I considered it important to engage fully with, and get as close as possible to, the research context and those in it, it was a relationship based at the School. The teachers and leaders became participants, even co-researchers as they worked with me to articulate their experiences and beliefs. As Loftland *et al.* (2006, 16) observe, it is important to become involved and intimately familiar with the setting, and engage in behaviours relevant to the context and face-to-face interaction with participants, if the richest possible data is to be collected. As they add, correctly in my experience, a failure to get close is likely to lead to a failure to collect much data worth analysing. I am aware, though, that a lack of distance between the researcher and researched can imply a lack of objectivity. Having over ten years experience researching workplaces, I acknowledge that over-closeness can lead to a failure to critique working methods or be as objective as possible in project conclusions. For that reason, I have always made a separation between time in the immediate research context, and that away from it. In this study, I did not, for example, meet the participants socially unless by chance at a performance.

Ethics

As Loftland *et al.* (2006, 28) note, ethical issues are integral to the research experience, and it was in May 2006 that I raised the subject of participant consent. Fine *et al.* (2000, 113), discussing a project they had conducted, note how consent forms intended as a mechanism to protect participants can also become a barrier that highlights differences between academic institutional needs and systems of trust and mistrust in studies. While I wanted the emphasis to be on informed consent, I did,

therefore, have some concerns about the response to the formalities of my university's approach to consent in the School's context.

The issues were resolved by my drawing up a document for Wen to sign that would give written permission for the study from the School. In the UK, it would be normal practice also to obtain separate written permissions from each teacher and parent. However, in this context, different protocols applied and the School's consent form also covered the teachers, explicitly stating that Wen undertook to inform them and gain their consent. I later confirmed with Chu that this had happened and that the teachers were indeed aware of the nature and purpose of the observations before they began. Since the specific classes to be observed would not be known until almost the day observations were due to start, Wen said that the purpose and nature of the research would have to be explained to parents at the first class. I was present when this occurred, the parents being given the opportunity to ask any questions they had about the study and to transfer their child to another class if they had any concerns. None did so. Wen insisted that individual written parental consent was not required. Individual consent to use their names was obtained from each teacher and participant interviewed. Although I was provided with student names and other personal data, it was agreed with Wen that they would remain anonymous in the thesis. Consent forms were also obtained from all interviewees not directly involved in the observations.

4.4 Studio observations

American ethnographers Oswald Werner and G. Mark Schoepfle (1987, 257) describe observations as the "mainstay of ethnographic enterprise." This was true of this study, although the data produced was always compared with and used in conjunction with that from other sources wherever possible. They afforded the opportunity to gather 'live' data in 'live' situations (David and Sutton, 2004, 104). While important to gather data on a range of teaching situations, it was equally essential that the observations did not interfere too overtly with the people or activities being observed (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2000, 674).

The setting

The observations were all carried out at one of the larger School branches, located on the top floor of a mixed-use commercial building in QuanQian Road, Central Taipei. The other ten floors are a mix of retail, restaurant and educational (*buxiban*) use.² The branch does not have a standard Cloud Gate Dance School layout. While all buildings have limitations, Wen explained this branch was more restricted than usual. It also has to share services such as lift access and restrooms with a restaurant on the same floor. As an aside, the restaurant is independent but is licensed to use the Cloud Gate name, another example of Cloud Gate's commercial activities.

The branch consists of three studios, a reception area, small staff room, an area with lockers for students and another with changing cubicles, and a waiting area for parents with seats and mostly dance-related reading materials. The link with Cloud Gate Dance Theatre and Cloud Gate 2 was emphasised by a large screen in reception that regularly played excerpts of their productions. In the semester in which the fieldwork took place, the branch held 65 classes per week, Monday to Friday from approximately 5pm to 10pm, Saturdays from 9am to 9pm, and Wednesday and Friday lunchtimes.

Figure 7. Exterior of Cloud Gate Dance School, QuanQian Road, Taipei branch
(photo: David Mead)

Figure 8. Reception area, Cloud Gate Dance School, QuanQian Road, Taipei branch
(photo: Cloud Gate Dance School)

Scheduling

It was not possible to follow every class, so decisions had to be made about which courses and levels to observe. Following the preliminary observations in May 2006

and the subsequent meeting with Chu, it was agreed that I would follow Life Pulse levels 5 and 11, and Pre-professional Basic level 1 and Senior level 1. This would allow for the observation of two age groups, 6 to 7 years and 8 to 10 years, and four teachers.

Although the courses and levels to be observed were agreed in May, the detailed observation timetable was not finalised until the following October, after my arrival in Taipei. The School accepts student registrations right up to the beginning of the semester and many parents leave it until late to confirm their child's place. Classes only run if there are more than eight students and therefore the School does not know precisely which will operate and when until very close to the first day of the semester.

Chu informed me of the suggested observation timetable on Monday 2nd October, the first day of the semester and three days after my arrival (see Table 1 overleaf). This was formally agreed at a meeting with her on the following Thursday. As agreed, the observations were all to take place at the QuanQian Road branch, which not only made matters easier for the School to manage, but also for me to build relationships with the branch administration staff and teachers who would see me more regularly. All the classes to be observed were led by teachers with several years experience at the School. All had also been vocationally trained in dance in Taiwan. Huang Hsu-hui had formerly danced extensively with Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, while Gao Pei-ling continued to perform as a freelance artist. All four teachers not only agreed to participate in the fieldwork, but could also discuss matters with me in English as necessary. Brief biographies of all the teachers are shown in Appendix 10.

Each class was to be observed from the first lesson of the semester until the School broke up for the Lunar New Year vacation on 11th February. Such a lengthy period gave the students and teachers ample time to get used to my presence, and allowed time to build relationships and events to be fully understood. In the event, a visa renewal problem led to my returning to the UK two weeks earlier than anticipated on 26th January, although the School filmed several of the classes I missed and forwarded them to me on DVD.

<u>Course, level</u>	<u>Day and time</u>	<u>Student age**</u> (<u>youngest,</u> <u>oldest</u>)	<u>No in</u> <u>class*</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
Life Pulse level 5	Thu, 1700-1800	6 yrs 1 month 7 yrs 10 months	10	Chu Kuang-chuan
Pre-professional Basic level 1	Thu, 1820-1920	6 yrs 0 months 7 yrs 10 months	14	Zhu Ming-yu
Life Pulse level 11	Fri, 1740-1910	9 yrs 2 months 10 yrs 7 months	8	Gao Pei-ling
Pre-professional Senior level 1	Sat, 0900-1030	8 yrs 2 months 9 yrs 2 months	12	Huang Hsu-hui

* This is the number registered for each class. In practice this varied from lesson to lesson due to absence or other students who had missed their usual class making up by joining this one.

** At the beginning of the semester.

Table 1. Weekly observation schedule

Chu explained the nature and purpose of the research to the other teachers. She stressed it was non-judgemental and that I was there in a learning capacity, collecting information about how they taught and how the curricula linked together in practice. They were asked to teach as normal and as if I were not there. They were told about my background, experience, and the research techniques that would be used, and that I would probably want to interview them at a later stage. At this stage, permission to film classes had not been granted, although discussions were ongoing.

Prior to the first observations, the School supplied copies of the teacher's register for each class to be observed. This gave each student's name, date of birth and date of first enrolment at the school. At the first class of the semester for most courses the teacher gives an introductory talk to parents, outlining the course, any particular requirements for it such as rules regarding dress code and grooming, and allowing them to ask any questions. It was as part of this that my presence was explained and some details about the research given. Not only did no parent express concern or ask for their child to be transferred to another class, but many appeared genuinely interested in the study. Some later asked how the research was going as the semester progressed.

It quickly became apparent that observing four classes per week and transferring the data to computer was not sustainable. In early November, I decided that weekly observations would continue for only the Life Pulse level 5 and Pre-professional Basic level 1 classes. Focusing on these two, one of which allowed for student creativity while the other focused on specific use and placing of the body, meant that all the fieldwork questions could still be addressed, in particular those pertaining to the links between the courses. There was the additional advantage that the students in these classes were of the same age with six attending both. It was further decided and agreed with the School that the other classes would only be visited occasionally and not recorded so fully, the material gathered being used with a more general, contextualising eye. Chu communicated the decision and reasons for it to Gao Pei-ling and Huang Hsu-hui, the teachers of those classes, who then told their students.

It was hoped to observe a range of classes at other levels in the Life Pulse, Pre-professional and Martial Arts programmes. This would have given a broader understanding of the School activities and allowed me to see if teaching and learning strategies observed in the Life Pulse level 5 and Pre-professional Basic level 1 classes were reflected throughout the School. Unfortunately, apart from one Martial Arts level 3 class observed, lack of time made this impossible, although other Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes had been observed on previous visits to Taiwan.

The complete schedule of lessons observed is shown in Appendix 11.

In the studio

The possibility of the researcher having an effect on the data they collect is common to all research strategies but is most likely in observation (David and Sutton, 204, 104). So as to compromise the data as little as possible, I sought to take a 'complete observer' role, where the researcher is not a participant and does not formally take up a role within the group (Hammersley, 1995, 104). As Fielding (2001, 150) says, I aimed to be "in [their] social world but not of it." He considers that this sense of marginality is vital for the success of research, adding that it is out of this experience of being simultaneously an insider and an outsider that creative insight is generated.

Whether the complete observer position is truly achievable is debatable. Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2000, 674) note that there is no such thing as pure, detached observation since it always involves the observer's role in the world being studied, and the effects of the observer's presence can never be erased. In the studio, I was in their world, we were aware of each others' presence, and there was interaction that was often visual and occasionally verbal. Angrosino and Mays de Pérez further consider that interaction in observation is a tentative process that involves the continuous testing by everyone of the conceptions they have of each others' and their own roles (p.683). The researcher and researched do not reside in fixed and defined positions; rather their perceptions, expectations and behaviours, are part of a dynamic process.

I determined that the front left corner of the studio was a place where I could best remain inconspicuous yet still observe events, and obtained each teacher's agreement to sit there. Besides being as unobtrusive as possible by remaining in this place throughout lessons, moving as little as possible and not taking any part in proceedings, I also aimed to 'fit in' in terms of dress, demeanour, behaviour and attitude. Not only was the whole class observed each time, important for understanding activities within context, but I was usually in place before any students arrived so pre-lesson events could also be captured and was also usually the last to leave. During the lessons I did not move round to try and better record dialogue or actions, which would have been extremely disturbing to the participants, leading to my having a significant impact on events (Fielding, 2001, 152).

Everything was done openly. I never engaged in covert observation or use of tools, a strategy essential if trust is to be maintained. In fact, the speed at which actions occurred and the number of students meant that notes had to be made openly and throughout the lessons, although students were forewarned that this would happen so as to ease any anxiety they may have.

Figure 9. Studio 1, Cloud Gate Dance School, QuanQian Road, Taipei branch, in which many of the observations took place.
(photo: Cloud Gate Dance School)

Observations can be rendered as descriptions either through open-ended narrative or by using pre-designed checklists or field guides (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2000, 674). Previous observations of classes and interviews at the School had allowed a set of fieldwork questions to be formulated with an attendant action or series of actions specifying how data was to be obtained so they could be answered (see Appendix 3).

To facilitate note-making in the studio, an observation form and associated field guide was designed prior to my leaving the UK. Each form had a front page giving factual data about the class such as date, time, teacher's name and the number of students. The main pages provided space on which the time each activity or exercise began, a description of it, the type of activity, modes of teacher delivery and guidance, student actions and processes, student outcomes and assessment and feedback were all written. A final page was then used for other comments and reflection. A copy of the form is shown in Appendix 12.

Werner and Schoepfle (1987, 262-4) set out a typology of observation. My plan was to undertake what they called 'focused observation.' That is, where the researcher only notes certain defined things as relevant, while others, implicitly defined as

irrelevant, are ignored. The decision as to which is relevant may be based on prior observations in the setting, interviews, or as in the case of this study, both.

The observation forms were designed to pre-sort data into relevant and appropriate categories. Although the design process took into account my previous observation experience at the School, they were not piloted beforehand. My schedule precluded trialling them at the School and while it may have been possible to test them in the UK, creative dance classes for the age group in question are rare, even within state-maintained schools. In any event, the cultural context and different teaching strategies would have significantly reduced the value of any test.

Not surprisingly, therefore, some issues quickly came to light. Although the column headings were very effective as prompts for things to watch for, the forms assumed that lessons neatly divided into separate activities. This was the case in the Pre-professional lessons, but Life Pulse activities tended to develop gradually, sometimes over 30 minutes or more. The design also made it sometimes difficult to see the developing narrative, for example what teacher action or comment prompted a particular student reaction or outcome, or what teacher feedback related to which student action. There was a danger that the form would start to impose itself on the data rather than vice-versa. This was resolved *in situ* by drawing lines connecting action and reaction or outcome and feedback. I also found myself writing across columns, in margins, and anywhere else that helped me record what I was experiencing. When transferring them to my computer it was easiest to add extra text and some repetition. Some of the boxes were also too small or too large, although this was rectified by a minor redesign.

Very quickly the observations moved towards 'descriptive observation,' which is the observation of everything (Werner and Schoepfle, 1987, 262-4). I found I was effectively writing an open-ended narrative that included almost every happening in the studio, even events that seemed completely irrelevant to the study such as a child leaving the room temporarily, or a member of the administration staff bringing in a message or the students' books. This led to a mass of data, some of which turned out to be irrelevant, but as Werner and Schoepfle note, it is only through exposure to data

that researchers understand what is and what is not relevant. Even that not directly relevant has proved useful in contextualising events and helping with their later recall, important since it was not possible to film most classes.

The completed observation forms were a mix of brief longhand notes; significant key words, quotes and phrases; a personal shorthand using private symbols and abbreviations; diagrams and stick-figure drawings. The speed at which events occurred meant that making full notes in the studio was impossible, although they were subsequently expanded when transferred to computer. Drawing on my previous experience and professional training, and the advice given by writers including Berg (1998, 147-8) and Emerson, Fritz and Shaw (in Lofland *et al.*, 2006, 110), I ensured I noted:

- Details of the context and setting as well as actions and behaviours.
- General impressions and feelings, even if unsure of their significance.
- Apparent attitudes, feelings, moods and relationships of all participants, including myself.
- What I sensed was important in scenes or actions, especially concrete sensory details about action and talk, paying special attention to what may be easily forgotten, and people's keywords and phrases.
- The time activities started, and of any significant intermediate events, especially if activities were long.
- Memories of previous classes and recollections of conversations or interviews the observations bring back.
- Immediate reflections and evaluative assertions, including memories of previous events and experiences that had been jogged, although these were made on a separate sheet of paper to keep them apart from the descriptive jottings.

Checklists or tick sheets were not used. While they can be useful where it is highly likely only a given range of standardised actions or behaviours will be observed, or where the observer is only looking for a narrow range of specific things, they were not appropriate for this study, concerned as it was with the whole process, including action, speech, environment, mood, feeling and intention. I am not trained in, and

therefore did not use, any recognised dance notation system. Although useful for recording individual movement, such a tool would not have been appropriate to this study since it only focuses on movement outcomes rather than the whole process. In any event, it would have been impossible simultaneously to notate all the individuals in the studio, who were often all moving differently.

The studio observations thus involved more than simply taking notes of actions and events, feelings and moods. They simultaneously combined observation, documentary analysis of student-parent books, introspection and reflection.

The third time I filmed the Life Pulse level 5 class I decided not to make notes in the studio but to construct a written record from the film later. Similarly, the final time I observed each of the original four classes, I determined only to note any event or reflection that seemed especially significant. According to Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2001, 356), deliberately suspending concern with written records allows the researcher fully to participate in events in an 'experiential style' and I did indeed feel better able to consider events and actions as they happened when I did not have to concentrate on writing. This certainly happened in the Pre-professional Senior level 1 class, when some interesting insights formed, which I jotted down immediately.

Although I enjoyed watching and recording the lessons, the observations were sometimes both difficult and tiring. In the Life Pulse level 5 lessons, which involved the students in creating movement, the action and dance was very much in the moment, then gone forever. Outcomes were rarely repeated as the students were encouraged to try something else. With ten students in the class, usually all dancing or moving together, it was impossible accurately to document the actions or outcomes of all. It was often only possible to obtain a general impression with some examples unless I focused on specific students to the exclusion of others. The teacher also moved quickly from activity to activity or sub-activity to sub-activity, and often there were many people talking at the same time, all of which made recording difficult.

The transfer of the my studio notes to computer took place as soon as possible so as to capture as high a degree of detail as possible. As I did so, I added further reflections

made away from the studio, although with the date clearly marked. Lofland *et al.* (2006, 110) counsel the writing of full field notes should occur no later than the morning after the observation day. Given that it took approximately three hours to write up one hour of lesson, and that most observations took place on Thursday evenings, with some on Fridays and Saturdays, meeting such a schedule was impossible. I therefore set my own timetable that called for each week's observations to be written up by the following Monday evening, something that was usually achieved.

Transferring the observation notes to computer took place in my apartment, which given the noise and bustle of Taipei proved to be a remarkably quiet and non-distracting environment. Given the length of time the transfer of each lesson took, I found it useful to break them down into manageable pieces of 20 to 30 minutes of class-time. Each lesson produced a significant amount of data and I found that doing any more without a short break led to a form of data overload as I started to tire and make errors in transcription.

The transfer essentially involved extending and developing the studio notes, combined with an element of initial data sorting. During the process I followed a combination of the detailed guidelines given by Spradley (1980, 78), Fielding (2001, 152-4) and Lofland *et al.* (2006, 112-5). The final record therefore:

- Accurately recorded numbers of students, locations, dates and times, the physical character of the setting.
- Gave a general characterisation of the lesson and events.
- Cited examples of student outcomes.
- Detailed the times activities started, ended, and of any significant intermediate events.
- Ensured a clear narrative could be followed.
- Captured action, character and context.
- Gave concrete descriptions rather than using general adjectives.
- Included how things were said and done as well as what was said and done.

- Distinguished between exact quotes and occasions where only the substance of what was said was noted or can be recalled.
- Was honest about apparently subjective feelings and emotions.
- Recorded personal impressions and feelings that occurred both in the setting and subsequently, including emotional responses to being an observer in the studio.
- Noted questions for the teacher or items that needed clarification, translation or explanation.
- Maintained a standard format and wording while not being overly conscientious about grammar, punctuation and narrative flow.
- Used a new document for each lesson, with two electronic copies saved on separate devices. The handwritten studio notes have also been retained.

Both the studio notes and the written up versions on my computer were, and remain, private texts for future reference, analysis and reflection. At no time did I offer to show them to anyone at the school, and at no time did they ask to see them.

Photography and filming

Still and video photography are both useful and flexible tools in ethnographic research. Video is good at capturing non-verbal interaction while both provide a further record of practice and events. The visual image can be used as an aide-memoir in analysis or when writing up; as an information-rich tool when presenting findings (Alexander, 2001, 352); and can save written description.

Permission was sought to make still and video photography records in December 2005 but was refused since the School felt it would be too intrusive. Given the important part film could play in evidencing findings, a further request was made in August 2006. The response this time suggested that at least some filming might be allowed although not saying so explicitly. A third enquiry was made some four weeks into the observations. After referral to Wen it was agreed that three classes in each of the four courses could be filmed, but only to aid the subsequent analysis of the fieldwork data, and that the resulting video would not to be used in any presentations without permission.

I immediately agreed a provisional filming schedule with Chu. This allowed for the Life Pulse level 5 and Pre-professional Basic level 1 classes to be filmed at approximately equal intervals, the dates for the other classes to be decided later. We agreed to be flexible and that dates could be changed if necessary. The semester was already six weeks old and I felt it was important to capture the students as soon as possible. Therefore, the first filming took place the following week.

Between mid-November 2006 and the end of the fieldwork in January 2007, three Life Pulse level 5, two Pre-Professional Basic level 1, two Pre-professional Senior level 1 and one Life Pulse level 11 lessons were filmed. While the original schedule did allow for others, the change to the date of my return to the UK meant this was not possible. However, Chu agreed that she would arrange for two further Life Pulse level 5 lessons and one further Pre-professional Basic level 1 lesson to be filmed, and a DVD made and forwarded to me in the UK.

The filming was done using a digital camera with a hard disk capacity of 30 hours recording. For the most part, the camera was placed on a tripod and set to film with as wide-angle as possible so that it covered most of the studio. Some manual adjustment was still necessary on occasion when action took place in a corner or I wanted to zoom in on something. In most cases the camera was set up and filming before any students arrived. This meant that I was able to capture their behaviour on arrival and before the lesson began. Setting it up in advance also meant less attention was drawn to it. The School occasionally films classes for their own purposes, so this was not a new experience for most of the students and only once did I feel that anyone was playing to the camera. The film has since been transferred to DVD.

Detailed written notes were taken of most of the filmed classes since the camera can only capture what is in shot and there were occasions when the students obscured each other or the teacher. Also, when considering movement or spatial relationships, film is a two-dimensional tool being used to illustrate or record a three-dimensional world. It tends to shorten depth and alter perspective, possibly resulting in incorrect interpretation (Frosch, 1999, 267).

Permission for still photography was not granted, either in the studio or in the public areas of the branch of the School at which the observations took place. In the studio it would have been more intrusive and disruptive than video in any event. A video camera can be mounted on a tripod and left, whereas a still camera has to be used manually, meaning that attention cannot be given to making written notes. Also, video cameras are usually silent once running while even the quietest still camera makes a noise.

Photographs of the public areas of the School branch were important since they would help place the other data in context. While the School also refused permission for this, even when no parents or students were present, Wen offered and provided digital photographs of all the studios, reception and other public areas from their photographic library. Since the QuanQian Road branch does not have a standard design and plan, she also provided photographs of the NanMen branch, which does meet their usual design standards.

Audiotape or MP3 recordings were not used in the studio, primarily because it would have been unlikely that everything said would have been clear on the recording. Tapes would have had to be changed mid-class, resulting in some loss of data, and both would have required transcription, which would have taken longer than writing full notes in the first place.

4.5 Interviews and meetings

In her study of a Scottish dance company, Edith Cope (1976, 11) considers that even the most disciplined or acute observations can only record behaviour. I would suggest they also allow the observer to interpret the feeling and mood of actions, and interpret events. However, it is often possible to place different meanings on events, and to impose only one interpretation on them can seriously distort analysis (Silverman, in Cope, 1976, 161). Therefore it was equally important to discover what Cope terms the participants' "versions of reality," that were their beliefs and reasons for acting as they did (p.11).

This was done through interviews and informal conversations, the aim of which was to reveal underlying strategies, institutionalised and personalised attitudes, beliefs, opinions and perceptions about a range of topics, notably different aspects of their personal and the School's teaching strategies. They also helped verify my understanding of what I had seen in the observations and occasionally revealed tensions and differences between what is said and what is done. Some information was also gathered during ordinary conversation and listening as it occurred naturally during social interaction (Lofland *et al.*, 2006, 17), both at and away from the School.

Formal interviews and meetings took place with the teachers of the classes I observed, Wen Huei-wen, and curriculum consultants, thus allowing the capture of different information, knowledge and perspectives, which may vary between levels. Lin Hwai-min had been interviewed previously in December 2005. Since the focus was on teachers' and leaders' perceptions of creativity, the students and parents were not interviewed although some comments from the latter were obtained by questionnaire, as discussed later. A list of interviewees and dates is shown in Appendix 13.

All the formal interviews were held in the final four weeks of the fieldwork. Holding them at this time allowed me to be better informed about the topics under discussion and to relate comments made to my experiences in the studio. They were all conducted face to face, although e-mail addresses were obtained in case later questions arose or clarification was needed.

I first spoke to Huang Hsu-hui, who taught the Pre-professional Senior level 1 class observed. His views had additional importance since he is also presently reviewing the whole Pre-professional curriculum. Chu asked if she could be present at this meeting, to which I agreed. On reflection, this was a mistake. Although I do not think she influenced his answers, she did interrupt on occasions and sometimes talked at the same time as him, making the later transcription more difficult.

To avoid the potentially awkward situation of Chu asking to be present again, the other interviews were all arranged directly with the interviewee and were held one-to-one. The exception was that with Ho Hsiao-mei, designer of the Life Pulse levels 5 to

8 curriculum. Ho asked that a mutual friend and fellow dance educator be present at the meeting in case her English was not adequate. She was needlessly worried and our friend remained silent during the interview, although she did join in a lengthy and wide-ranging post-interview discussion about dance and dance education. All interviews were held on School premises except that with Ho, which took place at a coffee shop near her home.

I also held two lengthy meetings with Chu at which I updated her on my progress and reflections and raised issues and questions at greater length than was possible before or after my observations of her lessons. Again, these were audio-taped and later transcribed.

In conversation

The main purpose of the interviews and meetings was to give the participants a voice. As such, they were generally semi-structured and took the form of ‘guided conversations’ in which the participants could speak freely in their own terms (Lofland *et al.*, 2006, 105). A basic set of questions was drawn up with reference to the research questions, completed lesson observation forms and other collected data, and my reflections. They were then grouped into clusters or topics so as to give the interview a structure that would make sense to the participant as suggested by Lofland *et al.* (2006, 100). Although the same list of questions was used for each interview, they were rarely asked verbatim and their sequence was altered and further information probed for as appropriate.

Group discussions were considered but not used. While these can be effective in offering insights into the dynamic effects of interaction on expressed opinion, they are problematic since those with more dominant personalities tend to be heard most. It was also possible that the hierarchy within the School would play a role, with for example teachers deferring to senior teachers, who in turn defer to the School’s leaders. Fully structured interviews with a pre-determined set of questions asked in the same order from one interview to the next were also rejected as I felt these would

not allow the teacher's voice to be fully heard or give me the flexibility I felt was necessary.

Although by the time of the interviews I had a good relationship with all the participants, proceedings were always opened with some general conversation aimed at putting them at ease. A relaxed interviewee is likely to be more open, especially when speaking about their attitudes beliefs, and values (Fielding and Thomas, 2001, 126). Chu had provided some background information about the other teachers that helped in this respect. I also explained to each interviewee that they could interrupt or ask for clarification at any time. I added that whatever was said was only for the research, but if they did not want anything to be quoted, they should say so. No one made any such request.

All the interviews and discussions took place in English. All the interviewees were happy for this to be the case, although as previously noted, Ho Hsiao-mei asked for a mutual friend to be present in case of difficulty. Although I occasionally had to rephrase questions, at no point did this become a significant problem. A little Chinese was sometimes used in preliminaries, which proved useful in lightening the atmosphere.

Questions were generally open-ended and phrased so as to gain information spontaneously rather than from a rehearsed position. For the same reason, although participants knew the subjects I wished to discuss, specific questions were never provided in advance. Leading questions such as 'Don't you think that...?' which usually lead to self-fulfilling answers were avoided, as were those that might produce superficial responses. Follow-ups or 'probes' (Fielding and Thomas, 2001, 128) were used as appropriate to elicit further information about a topic. In their interviews, the teachers were also asked to comment on various events from their lessons, for example asking 'What exactly were you trying to do when you...?' or 'Why did you...?' To some extent, all the interviews were guided by the participants, as their responses stimulated previously unthought-of questions or as I asked them to clarify or elaborate on issues they had raised.

As previously noted, participants are often more at ease talking about their actions and values if I am willing to talk about mine. On occasions, therefore, I played a greater role and made the event quite conversational by discussing what I thought of the topic. I offered my own opinions or spoke of my own experience and asked what the respondent thought, although always taking care not to show the interviewer subjectivity and bias. Sometimes I used what Fielding and Thomas (2001, 127) called 'projective questioning', which encourages people to give views indirectly, for example beginning a sentence, 'So what you were trying to do...', but then pausing to allow the interviewee to complete it. Like Lofland *et al.* (2006, 105), I have always found such a strategy effective in obtaining answers to complex, open-ended questions. It is not only part of my natural interviewing technique but creates a genuine interplay between the interviewer and researcher (Atkinson, in Fielding and Thomas, 2001, 128).

Thus, just as I was never completely invisible when undertaking observations, so I was not a neutral entity in interviews. Indeed, I was an active participant in proceedings, the interviews themselves becoming a "negotiated accomplishment" of both myself and the interviewees that are shaped by the time and place in which they occur (Fontana and Frey, 2000, 663). The meanings of questions and responses were "contextually grounded and jointly constructed" (Schwandt, 1997, 79).

The participants were very open during the interviews, sometimes answering in great detail or with great feeling. How something was said was often as important as what was said. Like participant observation, interviewing is as much about watching and listening, as well as asking questions.

Their comments drew attention to many of the issues in the literature. Although the term 'creativity' appears infrequently in the transcripts, the interviewees' comments provided insights into their perceptions of it, the weighting they gave it within the curricula, and how they assessed it. The teachers also spoke about the extent to which they devised their own teaching strategies rather than directly using those detailed in the teacher manuals. Meanwhile, the senior teachers and curriculum consultants spoke of links between the Life Pulse and Pre-professional curricula. The consultants

were also quite honest about issues with the curricula and whether it was achieving its aims.

All the formal interviews and meetings were audio-taped and subsequently transcribed. All the interviewees agreed to this and no-one asked for the machine to be switched off at any point. The presence of the recorder did not appear to make anyone any more nervous than might otherwise have been expected. Taping not only ensured that data was not lost but considerably speeded up the process since I did not continually have to pause to make notes, which would have led to the interview becoming stilted (Fielding and Thomas, 2001, 136). It also allowed me to give the interviewee my full attention, think about follow-up questions, ask for clarification and link to what had gone and what was to come.

At the end of the interviews, some interviewees wanted to discuss dance education generally and were particularly interested to compare Taiwanese and British practices. Sometimes these extended discussions lasted over an hour. Although not tape-recorded I remained alert to the fact that points relevant to the research could still be made.

All the interviews and meetings were transcribed personally. This was time-consuming, but while paying another was an option, doing it myself gave opportunities for analytic insights and allowed me to deal immediately with any unclear material. New questions that occurred were noted to be dealt with later.

Due to time constraints, most of the transcription was done after my return to the UK, although each tape was checked for clarity immediately following the interview. While adding to the time it took, I could not be absolutely sure which points may later prove to be significant and therefore opted for verbatim transcription, thus making all the data easily available for later analysis (Fielding and Thomas, 2001, 135). It was sometimes necessary to correct grammar or clarify language. I also added additional notes about the tone or emotions shown by the interviewee, and personal feelings, insights and reflections. A set style was adopted whereby my own speech was shown in italics and separate paragraphs, with corrections, clarifications, notes, reflections or

thoughts in square brackets. The original tapes have been retained and, as with the observation records, back up copies have been made and are stored in separate locations.

Informal meetings were held with Chu every Thursday at the QuanQian Road branch of the School immediately before classes began. These usually lasted 15 to 20 minutes and were primarily used to raise any general issues which had occurred to me as a result of my own reflections, and to resolve any administrative or other fieldwork matters. Notes were made following these meetings where appropriate, but they were not audio or video recorded. Should anything urgent arise between meetings I was able to contact her by telephone or e-mail.

Informal discussions with other teachers were mostly limited to a few moments after class. It was impossible to talk longer as they had busy schedules with responsibilities to talk to parents and to prepare for their next lesson. I was also occasionally able to talk to them away from the School when we met socially at performances.

An extract showing the conversational and informal nature of interviews is shown in Appendix 14.

4.6 Textual data

Besides the interviews and observations, other textual data was collected for later analysis including newspaper, magazine and journal articles; and teacher manuals, parent-student guides, magazines, brochures, and promotional materials produced by the School. Together with the interview and observation data these allowed triangulation to be used; as much to identify conflicting views and understandings as a means of verifying data.

At the outset I asked for, and was immediately provided with, copies of the parent-student booklets for each of the courses I was observing except for the Pre-professional Senior level 1 course, for which they are not produced. It was important to have these immediately as they set out the aims and objectives of each course. The booklets for the two Life Pulse courses also set out the main teaching and learning

points for each lesson. Since the content of the Pre-professional Basic level 1 course builds during the semester with exercises repeated or developed week on week, this booklet contains information about each exercise rather than each lesson. All the booklets also include the School rules and regulations, and give advice for parents and students about such things as eating before class, dress and grooming.

Specimen pages from the booklets for Life Pulse level 5 and Pre-professional Basic level 1 are shown in Appendices 5 and 6, including contents pages showing each lesson title and English translation.

The School produces teacher manuals for every course that give suggestions as to how individual activities or exercises could be taught and tips on studio management. Access to these was initially refused. Chu told me that the School is very successful and they are worried that if the manual contents are made available outside, some other establishments may attempt to copy their ideas and methods. She explained that even their own teachers have to sign a document that says they will not release the information therein and have to return their copies to the School should they leave its employment. I offered to sign a confidentiality agreement but this was also refused.

Although frustrating, I did note that similar rules operated at educational establishments in the UK. However, after lengthy negotiation, partial access was granted in November 2006. For the two Life Pulse courses I was allowed copies of the pages that referred to the lessons that were filmed. The manual for the Pre-professional classes is similar to the parent-student booklet in that it deals with each exercise rather than each class. We therefore agreed that I would have copies of the pages covering two exercises of my choice. All the pages provided have since been fully translated.

Specimen pages from the manuals for Life Pulse level 5 and Pre-professional Basic level 1 are shown in Appendices 15 and 16, again with English translation.

In addition to the above, a range of publicity materials, merchandise and copies of the quarterly magazine issued free to parents were provided by the School.

4.7 Parent questionnaire

Since the research questions focused on the construction of creativity by the Cloud Gate Dance School, its leaders and teachers, it had not been my intention elicit information from parents. However, when Chu asked in mid-January if I wanted to ask the parents any questions I thought it an opportunity that should not be missed since the replies may reveal some new or unexpected views. While they were reluctant to be interviewed one-to-one, some were willing to answer questions in writing. I therefore designed a questionnaire that was copied and given to the parents of students in the Life Pulse level 5 class by the branch administration staff. Six of the ten issued were returned, collected by the School and passed to me. The replies were a mix of Chinese and English. Those in the former have been translated.

On reflection, I regret not having longer to think about the questionnaire's design. It included brief questions about why the parents chose the school, what they considered was most important in the classes and changes in their child's behaviour they have noticed. There was not time to translate it into Chinese, so I deliberately kept the questions as simple and brief as possible. Some questions gave a range of answers the parents could choose from while others invited longer answers. A copy of the questionnaire is shown in Appendix 17.

4.8 Reflections on the process

Earlier, I noted Fielding's view that a sense of marginality was necessary in fieldwork such as this. As Löytönen (2008, 23) notes, there are advantages and disadvantages in conducting a study such as this in one's own field. As a dance educator and participant in education activities, I possess forms of social capital that structure the idiom (Wulff, 1998, 5). While this helps win the trust and respect of the participants, it can also lead to a taking for granted of meanings and modes of constructions.

Although I could not escape who and what I am, it was essential that I recognised if, and when, I started putting my own cultural perspective on the data. I have already noted that I had previously lived in Taipei for several months, made a number of other shorter visits, have many Taiwanese friends, and regularly participate in dance classes

in the city, which gave valuable insights into teaching practices away from Cloud Gate. While all this has made me aware of Taiwanese personal attitudes, behaviours and values, even now there remain times when I do not understand the local culture as I understand my own. I will always look at Taiwanese systems through English eyes.

While differences cannot be hidden, I was able to turn them to advantage. Taiwanese researchers and students have studied in the United States for many years and increasingly do so in Europe, but it remains very unusual for non-Taiwanese to research Taiwanese topics. Dance companies, educators, researchers and academics appeared intrigued that a foreigner should be studying their country. During the fieldwork, as on previous visits to Taiwan, they regularly invited me to discuss their own or UK dance pedagogy and curricula, as much as I wanted to talk to them. This was not only a great help in gaining access and being welcomed in all settings, but proved a useful means of mediating personal biases and constructions.

Although I attempted to remain professionally detached during the observations I cannot pretend that I did not exist. In formal terms I was not a member of the class or the groups within it. However, as Cope (1976, 83) noted about her own observations of a dance company, "it would be spurious to claim only a fluctuating and impersonal role." Like Cope, I was in relationships with those in the class. In her study of ballet companies, Helena Wulff (1998, 5) recalls how she was reminded of familiar and forgotten sides of her personal self. As a dance educator, at times I found myself identifying with the teacher and the issues he or she faced. Equally, I identified with the students. Dance is inscribed in my body and, although I could not join with them physically, there was a kinaesthetic identification with activities. Both teachers' and students' comments, opinions, values and behaviours entered into my experience. I remember feeling quite emotional at the end of the last observation, knowing that I must leave the group. I must reciprocally have had an effect on them. When I temporarily withdrew from the Pre-professional Senior 1 class, I later discovered that the students had been concerned about my absence and asked the teacher why I had not been coming.

I maintained notes of all such personal and emotional responses, since they can provide important analytic leads and can help identify biases, prejudices and changing attitudes towards people and events (Lofland *et al.*, 2006, 114-5). Rather than keeping a separate hand-written research diary, I opted to keep them, along with other notes, reflections and questions to be followed up later, in a separate file on my computer.

In any setting, observing rather than participating immediately marks one out. It is, however, common for other teachers at the School to observe classes, so the students were quite used to being watched. Even so, as a Westerner, I am aware that I look different and therefore attract attention. Despite this, the students quickly accepted my presence, which, as during previous class observations at the School in 2003 and May 2006, had no apparent effect except for isolated incidents when the students or teachers drew me directly into events. In the Pre-professional Senior level 1 class I was occasionally asked factual questions and on one occasion requested to judge who was best at a particular exercise. At my last observation of each Life Pulse level 5 and Pre-professional Basic level 1 class I also participated in the hug ritual that concludes each lesson. In the other classes the students referred to me on several occasions, most commonly in relation to directions. I confirmed my lack of impact on events with the teachers who were able to refer to their experience of events with other classes.

The collection data in the field is always subject to practical constraints, to what works and what is possible. It is also shaped by the cultural context and the “social relations of the field” (Coffey, 1999, 30). In this case these included the School’s rules and regulations. The participants were, after all, there to provide and participate in Life Pulse and Pre-professional dance classes, not to supply me with research data. The teachers and leaders did, however, appear to value research and were genuinely interested in my thoughts and reflections. We enjoyed excellent personal and professional relationships.

Although the fieldwork was enjoyable and stimulating, there were frustrations, mostly in the early weeks when it sometimes seemed to take a long time to obtain answers or decisions to what I thought were simple questions. My understanding was that Chu

had the authority to make decisions yet it seemed as if almost everything had to be referred upwards. Looking back, it was probably no more than a reflection of everyone, myself included, negotiating his or her position and role in the research process. The problems certainly eased considerably as the fieldwork progressed, and the School did everything it could to help with and minimise any issues. This was especially true of a problem that arose with the non-renewal of my visa, when Chu accompanied me in an attempt to resolve matters with the authorities. They also offered to apply for all the necessary documents to extend my stay to mid-February as originally planned, but this was going to cause them a great deal of work and I persuaded them not to do so.

4.9 Reporting and analysis

To some extent, data collection and analysis cannot be separated. It is impossible not to reflect on what one is seeing or hearing as it happens. Both in observations and interviews I not only found myself critically analysing, examining, interpreting and reflecting on what I was seeing and hearing but also on my own practice as a dance artist, teacher and choreographer. Although data analysis did not happen in earnest in Taipei, the very act of transferring observation data to computer was effectively the first stage in organising it as themes became clear in my mind.

Earlier in this chapter I referred to the increasing dialogue between myself and the teachers and leaders at the School as we shared interpretations and reflections. Particularly important in this respect were my regular short meetings with Chu prior to observing her class, and the occasional longer meetings we had. My initial thoughts and reflections were also shared with fellow dance, music and visual arts educators in Taiwan, who gave valuable feedback and comments on my initial analysis. Although they brought their own anticipations, meanings and categorisations to the table, they also provided a further valuable and independent perspective.

Although findings were not formally reported during the fieldwork, a number of fieldwork updates were sent to my research supervisors. These were valuable in that they provided an early opportunity to commit my initial thoughts and reflections to

paper. The very act of putting words down seemed to help bring into focus or crystallise thoughts, something also noted by Lofland *et al.* (2006, 228-9).

The following three chapters analyse in detail the data gathered during the fieldwork. Chapter 5 focuses on the foundations for creativity, specifically the importance of positive affect factors and play; and the building of a personal knowledge base. Chapter 6 moves on to consider the creative process in the studio, showing that while children are encouraged to use their imagination, great importance is placed on appropriateness. Issues of novelty and the creative process are also dealt with here. Chapter 7 then turns towards the teachers and leaders and considers the extent to which they can sustain and effectively take a creative approach to teaching within the framework that governs their practice.

Notes

- ¹ Lu Ch'ai was the pseudonym of Wang Kai, also occasionally known as Tzu An-chieh.
- ² *Buxiban* are commercial cram schools that operate in the evening after the normal school day has finished. See Chapter 1, note 3 for further detail.

CHAPTER 5

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS: PLAY AND BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE-BASE

5.1 Introduction

The fieldwork produced a wide range of evidence regarding constructions of creativity at the Cloud Gate Dance School as shaped by and for students, teachers and leaders. The themes that emerged as the fieldwork progressed, and during the subsequent analysis, are now explored drawing on the actions and words of those at the School and its curriculum consultants. Not every aspect of creativity within the organisation or every possible relationship can be covered. Rather, what follows details, and analyses, those aspects of the teachers' and leaders' perceptions of creativity that I considered salient and that were most frequently evidenced in their words and actions, both inside and outside the dance studio.

In this chapter I consider what happens before and at the start of each class, and the extent to which this reflects an attempt to encourage students' intrinsic motivation or those personal traits that may encourage their creativity. Not surprisingly, given the ubiquitous nature of the concept in the creativity literature and its pre-eminence in these classes, in doing so I examine the use of play and playfulness. I then move on to consider the extent to which studio practice at the School indicates a belief that creativity in dance can only emerge once students have acquired a certain level of dance or movement skills. The framework for the analysis is provided by Amabile's (1996) model of creativity, (see Chapter 3), and its three cornerstones of intrinsic motivation, domain-relevant skills and creativity-relevant skills, all of which she believes to be essential if an individual's creativity is to be developed.

In this and the following chapters, many comments and reflections by teachers, especially Chu, are incorporated into the text. These were made both in formal discussion and in numerous informal conversations before and after lessons. As such, they are not referenced individually.

5.2 Play

In Chapter 3, I noted how scholars have generally agreed there is a link between play or playfulness and children's creative development. The majority of the research linking play and creativity has focused on pretend play, in which one thing is playfully treated as if it were something else (Russ, 2003, 291). At the Cloud Gate Dance School, make-believe was sometimes used in Life Pulse level 5, such as in lesson 12, when the students experimented moving like animals and making animal sounds; and in lesson 13, when they performed a short dance-drama where they took the roles of animals in the forest (see section 6.2). Non-pretend student play was very much in evidence both before and during lessons.

At the School, students are allowed to enter the studio before lessons begin. Although unsupervised in the sense that the teacher is often not in the room, he or she is likely to be nearby as are the reception staff. Pre-professional course students are given a stretching exercise to do but Life Pulse students are free to play.

In the lessons observed this almost always involved playing together, usually a version of tag. At the beginning of the game the students decided amongst themselves who would be 'it'. The chosen one then had to chase and tag the others by touching them somewhere on the body. The tagged student then became 'it', with the former 'it' joining those trying to avoid being tagged. Occasionally the students used the whole studio with no safe 'base' where they could not be tagged. More often it was played in a much more restricted space, using just one side of the studio, with the studio wall as a 'base'. The students were regularly observed leaving the base and moving to another position, thus making themselves vulnerable to being caught as they did so. Chu Kuang-chuan, the class teacher, later explained that there was an unspoken rule that only allowed them to remain in the same place against the wall for five seconds; a rule all the children appeared to follow. The game was always played with great energy and enthusiasm, and lots of squealing and shouting as the children dared to get as close as possible to 'it' without being touched.

Children's activities are influenced by the physical as well as the psychological environment. I consider the nature of the pre-lesson play was, in part, a response to the students having a large, safe place in which to engage in a physical game such as 'tag'. As noted in Chapter 1, space for play at home is usually highly restricted. However, their play was equally directed by the lack of objects or decoration in the studio.

According to Haight *et al.* (1999), Taiwanese children typically engage in pretend play at home. This frequently includes the use of objects. Pretend play is commonly cited as facilitating the development of children's divergent thinking skills by their using objects to represent different things and by role-playing different scenarios (Russ, 2003, 293). While not precluding pretend play, I consider the lack of objects in the studio made such play more unlikely. The lack of objects did, however, encourage the focus of the play to be on the body. Learning about one's body is a stated aim of the School. Although not part of formal lessons, the children were, even in their play, being directed towards sanctioned activities. I consider such non-object based play also removes any possibility for conflict over access and ownership of materials, and the objects they might symbolise.

Although the children did not need any encouragement to play, Chu not only encouraged the activity but recognised its value by actively supporting it and using it as part of lessons. Before the lessons she said it was useful for "releasing [the students'] energy and forgetting the pressures of the world outside." Ho Hsiao-mei, the Life Pulse level 5 curriculum consultant, similarly commented that play was "a way into the class," adding that the short period of meditation that always came early in lessons helped them understand the difference between play and the creative or other work that followed. Meanwhile, Wen Huei-wen, the School executive director referred not only to pressures outside the School but also those in the studio. She explained that being creative suggests a sort of pressure because you usually have to do or produce something. Play is the "best learning way because there is no pressure. Then, from play comes creativity."

Ho's and Wen's comments indicate a clear dichotomy is made between play and learning. As observed in Chapter 1, the idea that learning involves only acquiring knowledge and skills from structured, given tasks, is a view widely held among Taiwanese teachers and parents (Chang, 2003, 277). Ho's comment in particular suggests a belief that creativity requires a similar structural base. Ho and Wen's comments further echo the view of Craft (2000, 50) and others that, while play is not the same as creativity, it can facilitate it.

Play and affective processes, self-confidence and self-expression

Russ (1993, 2004) proposes five categories of affect that are important in the creative process and notes the increasing link made between creativity, play and affective processes. While access to affect-laden thoughts is primarily concerned with fantasy in play, openness to affect states, affective pleasure in the challenge, affective pleasure in problem solving, and the cognitive integration of affect, are all relevant to the children's play observed.

Openness to affect states includes tolerance to anxiety, passionate involvement in the task, comfort with intense effort, and mood-induction. These were all in evidence in the various tag games at School. The games were always played with great intensity and most of the children were anxious not to be tagged. They were not only completely involved in the game and gave it their fullest efforts, but their shouting and facial expressions indicated that they took affective pleasure in the excitement and tension of the challenges it presented. The person who was 'it' often appeared to take deep pleasure in problem-solving. Not once did a student give up on the challenge and on several occasions paused if a strategy was not working, his or her face suggesting he or she was deeply in thought about how to proceed, then lighting up when a new approach was devised. Although it seems likely that the students' affective processes were at least subconsciously aiding their critical thinking skills, what Russ (2004) termed the cognitive integration of affect, the extent to which this was happening is less clear and more difficult to determine.

The students' freedom to express themselves and lack of pressure to achieve during the games also encouraged their self-confidence and self-expression. A willingness to express oneself and having the confidence to do so are personality traits associated with creativity (Feist, 1999). As Ho (2007) noted, these are often underdeveloped in the Taiwanese context where experiences at home or in public school mean children are reluctant or nervous to do so. She explained that most children in Taiwan live in small apartments. Furthermore, large public spaces are limited, so most of the time they cannot express themselves physically by running and shouting.

While Taiwanese parents consider expressions of joy important in play and playfulness, less importance is given to physical spontaneity and humour (Li, Bundy and Beer, 1995). Ho (2007) confirmed this, saying that when children visit the park, you can always hear their parents say things like, "Don't get your shoes dirty," or, "Sit still."

Such parental behaviour was evidenced in lesson 11, when the parents came into the studio to participate in the lesson with their children. One parent in particular spent most of the lesson telling her son to calm down and not be so physically enthusiastic. Her actions reflect Newman *et al.*'s (2007) findings that Taiwanese parents are not only controlling, but tend to direct children to activities they deem appropriate and away from others they are deem not. Why the other parents showed no such inclination is not clear, although it may reflect that Taiwanese middle-class and higher-educated parents tend to be more influenced by Western culture, values and methods (Chen and Luster, 2002, 415). The cost of classes at the School means that most parents are middle and high earners.

It was the affective aspects of play that Chu focused on most in discussion. She explained that fulfilling lesson and course outcomes was important although this was most likely to be achieved, and the students were more likely to be expressive, if they were happy and sensing the lesson to be fun; in other words, if they are feeling playful. She said, "If they have this feeling, they are more likely to be creative and take a full part in the class." Play was a way of achieving this. She added that the use of the children's tag game or variations on it was a deliberate strategy to encourage just such

feelings. This was sometimes done, for example, by reintroducing an element from previous classes, such as freezing in a high or low position when tagged. Sometimes children perceive activities as work and are less enthusiastic, she said, but if they see them as play, and a play they recognise as being in part their own, that they know and enjoy, they are much happier.

Building each student's confidence to express his or her individual movement ideas was also an important element in other lesson activities. While some activities began using imitation, each quickly developed to encourage the students to explore concepts for themselves and to be creative. Chu always gave regular and fulsome praise and encouragement as activities progressed. Only rarely did she feel the need to criticise or suggest that any student outcome was inappropriate, which in her terms meant the defined activity objective not being met, even if some other learning may have been achieved.

Although the direction Chu was looking or the nature of her comments (for example, 'Wow, look at that, so high...') suggested they were directed at certain outcomes or students, she also never gave remarks by name. I consider that doing so may have raised the self-esteem of class members, especially those less confident in their actions. As Chou and Ho (2007, 365) observe, such an approach is common in other educational contexts in Taiwan, and is typical of collectivist societies.

Taken as a whole, the evidence supports British researchers Howard-Jones, Taylor and Sutton's (2002) conclusions that the experience of free play has a significant positive influence on the creativity of young children in subsequent activities. They describe free play as that initiated by children and engaged in with no outsider direction (p.2). It is, however, unclear what the essential elements were that supported creativity at the School. It may have been the transfer of a playful mindset, an exploratory mindset, or the intrinsic motivation from pursuing an activity of their own choice; that the children were more relaxed; or simply that they were more awake.

The students' pre-lesson play also had the important social function of enhancing a sense of the class as a social group. As Craft (2000, 117) observes, children are much

more likely to express themselves and promote new ideas in an environment that they consider to be non-threatening. While some of the students knew each other from earlier Life Pulse classes, others were new to each other, and two were new to the School. Initially, the pre-lesson play was slow to form, with some students apparently shy and reluctant to participate. Eventually, this reticence passed as I observed friendships being formed across the whole class, with no-one left out.

Chu made little reference to this, although she did comment about the positive mood the game created amongst the students. She felt that it made them want to work together and as a group. Research into mood-induction and creativity has mostly been with adults, but does suggest that positive affect facilitates motivation and performance. The evidence from the School indicates it has a similar effect on children's creativity. In a study of American university students, Erez and Isen (2002) found participants in a positive mood performed better, were more persistent, tried harder and reported higher levels of motivation than did those in a neutral mood. Furthermore, it also facilitated creative cognitive processes including flexible and effective problem solving, decision making and thinking, and evaluations of events. While their findings correlate with other researchers cited, they caution that the effects of positive affect appear to be far from simplistic. For example, it seems significantly more likely to influence performance and outcome when there is prolonged effort in excess of ten minutes, than when there is less. In another text, Isen (2002, 61) also noted that positive affect has much greater effect in situations that are perceived to be safe and enjoyable, as at the School, than in those that are seen to be negative or threatening. This suggests the nature of the activities themselves are as important as the affect induced or created beforehand.

A further benefit of the pre-lesson play in particular was that it informed the teacher of the mood of individual students prior to the lesson proper beginning. I have always considered that correctly judging the mood of dancers is an essential facet of effective teaching. Chu always made a point of being in the studio a few minutes before the start of the lesson so she could observe the children playing. She used this time to talk to some of them but primarily she watched them at play. She explained that this

allowed her to assess their mood both individually and as a group. For example, if a student was not participating as usual, it may suggest there was an issue about which she needed to be aware. She could then talk quietly with the child or with a parent if they were still present. She said she sometimes changed her teaching strategies if the children seemed quieter than usual, for example she might use play more than planned. Her comments and approach echo Hanna (1999, 135) and Erikson (in Russ, 2004, 8), who both suggest that play can be used as a diagnostic tool to tell us about the child.

Play and cognitive processes

Besides its positive effect on the students' affective processes, Ho and Chu also considered that the pre-lesson play had important carry-over benefits regarding their cognitive processes. The importance Chu attached to play was demonstrated by the way she used it in her teaching strategies. Sometimes, as in lesson 3, she took the tag game directly, but other times changed it. In lesson 6, for example, she gave the student who was 'it' a ball of rolled up tape, and said that rather than touch them with a hand, they should do so with the tape. The first child who was 'it' quickly realised the task was now more difficult since she could no longer extend her reach by using an open hand. Indeed, at first she dropped the tape several times as she attempted to tag the others. After a moment of standing, apparently in thought, her solution was to take aim and throw the tape at her target; an outcome that was extremely effective until Chu narrowed the activity guidelines and asked her to keep it in her hand.

In lesson 8, another variation required the students to freeze in a 'down' position when they were tagged, which the students all took to mean kneeling or in some way lying on the floor. Two versions were played, one where they could not be released by being touched by student who was untagged, and one where they could. In both cases the object was for the person who was 'it' to catch everyone as quickly as possible. Then, in lesson 12, in what was essentially a version of the game British Bulldog, the students were required to run across the studio and reach the safety of the other side without being caught.

Finally, in lesson 13, Chu used two variations on the students' game. First she asked them to freeze in any position when tagged, although they could now be released by being touched by one of the other students. Then she greatly reduced the space. As in all the Cloud Gate Dance School studios, there was a circle marked with tape on the floor in the centre of the room, approximately 3 metres in diameter. The child who was 'it' had to remain outside the circle while those inside could not step out.

This presented both the individual and the group with a new problem. The highly restricted space and the fact that the child who was 'it' could very quickly run round and change the direction of approach meant those inside the circle found it much more difficult to avoid being tagged. In response, they started to work very much as a group, moving as one, which was also necessary to avoid falling over each other. They even called instructions to each other as to which direction to move. As soon as this happened, the student who was 'it' found it much more difficult to tag people and responded by short periods of inaction interspersed with sudden running and thrusting movements towards her targets.

Although the students generally appeared to be working individually in the games, this was not the only evidence of communal decision-making. A second incidence occurred in lesson 8, when Chu asked two students to be 'it' but where tagged students could now be released from their frozen positions by being touched by one of the others. My notes make reference to the fact that although the pair did not discuss tactics, they clearly seemed to be working together, gesturing towards each other and trying to make potential targets run towards the other. Later, as more students were tagged, they took one side of the studio each in an attempt to stop those who remained untagged from freeing those who had been caught. The pair was so successful that they managed to tag all of the students in only two minutes.

While it is recognised that divergent thinking is not synonymous with creative thinking, it is an important part of the creative process (Guilford, 1968; Runco, 2003, 322; Russ, 2004, 9). Other cognitive processes forming part of the process include sensitivity to problems, persistence, trying alternative problem solving approaches and

an ability to evaluate tested solutions (Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976). All of these could be seen in the students as they played either singly or guided by Chu.

All the variants of the tag game required the students to decide what strategies to use, either individually or communally. Although there was some evidence of students testing and evaluating different approaches when they were playing on their own, it was most evident when Chu introduced variations of the game into lessons. For some, this involved when and how to run or to move from their place against the wall without being spotted. As games progressed, many incorporated an element of risk-taking as they attempted to get as close as possible to the person who was 'it' without being caught, often dodging, ducking and weaving at the last minute. One or two students even appeared to prefer being 'it' and often seemed to be planning how to get caught, albeit without it being too obvious that was indeed the plan.

It appears from the observations that non-dramatic play, as indulged in by the students and used by Chu, does indeed positively impact on cognitive processes that are widely recognised as important in creativity. While many studies have highlighted links between play and creativity, the focus has been on dramatic play. Russ (2004, 12) highlights a number of such studies by Dansky and Silverman, Fisher and others where play was found to facilitate divergent thinking but these all concluded that the important factor was the use of objects or of engagement in make-believe. My observations rather concur with the findings of Pellegrini (1992), who found that rough and tumble play equally encourages the development of, and flexibility in, problem-solving strategies.

Practice and reinforcement of concepts and skills

When adapted by Chu, the play became a useful tool with which she could guide the students' practice of earlier concepts learned and motor skills developed. For example, when she asked them to freeze when tagged, it reinforced the difference between movement and stillness. Then, when she added a specific level or shape to this, it reminded them of the difference between 'open' and 'closed' and especially between 'up' and 'down.'

Howard, Bellin and Rees (2002) cite a number studies (including Wiltz and Klein, 2001; and Howard, 2002) that conclude children of the age in Life Pulse level 5 can, and do, distinguish play from other activities, while Karrby (1989) suggests that the more play-oriented a learning environment is, the greater is children's perception of learning. At the School, what appeared important was that the students continued to perceive the activities as play and thus approach them in a playful manner. According to Howard, Bellin and Rees (2002, 1), play captures children's attention, makes them more enthusiastic about participation, and frees them from any fear of failure in the safe learning environment it provides. They add that children make subconscious decisions about whether to adopt a playful approach to an activity by looking for cues in how it is presented (p.12).

Chu's choice of activities and the nature of her interaction with the students harnessed their playfulness. Activities were presented as if they were a game. Furthermore, while the children were being guided tacitly in their choice of play, they did have some choice and control within it. For example, when tag was used in lessons, Chu always asked for volunteers to be 'it'. Although her aim was to develop skills and understandings, this was never overtly stated. Howard, Bellin and Rees identify an emphasis on skill development as a major factor in reducing feelings of playfulness (p.11). Games never had an end product; process was all important. Finally, once a game had started, Chu's intervention was usually restricted to encouraging comments such as "wow", "look at that", and if someone almost got tagged, "aaarrggghhh." As explained in Chapter 3, playfulness, and its associated intrinsic qualities such as motivation, freedom from fear, willingness and engagement, is an oft-cited trait of creative individuals.

Although one cannot be entirely sure, from the language and actions of the children it appeared they were not engaged in pretend play during the tag games. They did not seem to be creating a meaningful fiction in it, supposing that their surroundings or their playmates were something they were not. It was rough and tumble play. However, the physical play can be seen as encouraging the development of certain creativity-relevant attributes such as letting go and a sense of openness to exploring

new ideas; and dance-relevant motor skills, co-ordination, and understandings of how the body can be used in space.

From my observations and discussions, the teachers and curriculum designers at the Cloud Gate Dance School understood how children perceive play. This empowered the teacher since she could then manipulate their perceptions of play, work and learning to exploit the positive benefits of playfulness by constructing teaching strategies to take advantage of it. Chu's actions and choice of games did promote the developmental potential of activities. Given the evidence from studies by Russ (2003) and Lindqvist (2001), I consider it likely that even greater child development could have been achieved if pretend play was also used. Lindqvist (2001), for example, sees it as particularly important in providing a base for abstract thinking and creative ability in the arts. However, while such play may have promoted cognitive development, it may also have taken the emphasis away from the body, which is the stated aim of the course.

5.3 Building a knowledge-base

In my reflections on the Life Pulse level 5 lessons, especially those in the first few weeks of the course, I made constant reference to that fact that what I seemed to be observing was "something that becomes before 'create'." Both the Life Pulse and Pre-professional courses are clearly designed with a certain knowledge base in mind and looking back, what I am referring to was the way Chu developed the students' knowledge of movement concepts, rhythm and space so that they could use them creatively.

Alexander, Schallert and Hare (1991, 317) define knowledge as "an individual's personal stock of information, skills, experiences, beliefs and memories" that encompass "all that a person knows or believes to be true, whether or not it is verified as true in some sort of external or objective way." Craft (2005) refers to the relationship between knowledge and creativity as one of the most fundamental issues in creative teaching and learning. Although expecting students to acquire a knowledge base on which they can draw in their creative processes and later technical

training, my observations indicate that the School does not ask them to acquire a deep knowledge of dance. Rather, in Life Pulse level 5, the focus is very much more on building the children's understanding of levels, movement dynamics, personal and general space and how different body parts could be used within it. A comprehension of rhythm and time was also important, many of the tasks being accompanied by and done in time with a simple beat on a drum. A similar approach was adopted in Pre-professional Basic level 1, discussed below.

It has been questioned whether high expertise always facilitates novel production in any event. Cropley (2001, 45) notes that a very high level of expertise, knowledge or skill in a domain or subject can lead to an overemphasis on existing, traditional solution strategies, which in turn can lead to the production of orthodox, tried and trusted, accepted approaches. Gibbons (2007, 202) alludes to this in her model of creativity in dance, when she explains how training in any dance genre is a major factor in helping shape how a dancer or choreographer conceives of the act of moving, often to the exclusion of other possibilities.

The approach used was one of learning by doing, which meant that the knowledge was both functional and contextualised. This is precisely that advocated by American educational psychologist Robert Glaser, who stated that the most effective mode of acquisition of a knowledge base is through dynamic cognitive interaction with the subject matter, that is, receiving information, sorting, grouping, reconceptualising, criticising and solving problems or tasks (in Feldhusen, 1995, 259).

The importance of domain-specific knowledge in the creative process, and the problems that may be encountered in being creative where an individual has insufficient or inadequate knowledge of the subject, or where opportunities for them to deepen that knowledge were inadequately designed, has been highlighted by a number of authors (for example, Amabile, 1996; Nickerson, 1999; Simonton, 1999; Feldhusen, 2006; Mayer, 2006). Such knowledge has been categorised in a number of ways. Amabile (1996, 85) sees it as including knowledge about the domain, technical skills and any special relevant talent such as vivid mental imagery; and depends on cognitive ability, innate perceptual and motor skills, and formal and informal

education. She refers to it as the “set of cognitive pathways” for solving a problem or completing a task, and the complete set of ‘response possibilities’ from which the creative outcome is drawn and information against which it is then judged. The larger the set, the more numerous are the possible alternatives. Although she says that judgement is usually by consensual assessment, her comment that domain-relevant skills includes information against which outcomes are judged suggests there is also an element of personal judgement, either during the process or at its conclusion.

Later, American psychologist John Feldhusen (2006, 138) divided domain-relevant knowledge into procedural knowledge, which is processes and ‘how to’ skills, and declarative knowledge, which is information about a phenomena. Another American writer, Richard Mayer (2006, 145) breaks it down even further and lists five categories: factual, conceptual, procedural, strategic and metacognitive. However defined, it is clear that such knowledge includes more than just factual information. It also includes an understanding of the tools and resources of the domain, in the case of dance, the body, movement and rhythm; technical proficiency and special talents.

Life Pulse level 5

Initial lessons in Life Pulse level 5 focused on individual parts of the body using the concepts of ‘open’ and ‘close.’ In lesson 1, the first activity involved the students opening and closing specific parts of the body. Chu both explained and demonstrated how she could open and close her hands by spreading her fingers wide, then closing them in to make a fist. The students imitated this before following her using toes, opened and closed as the hands; shoulders, hunched and released; and eyes, opened as wide as possible and tightly squeezed closed. Later in the class, other body parts such as legs and arms were used, the students being asked to devise their own means of opening and closing rather than imitating Chu, sometimes working as a pair, imitating each other in turn, and sometimes working individually.

The acquisition of an understanding of the body and how different parts could be moved individually continued in lesson 2. While sitting around the circle, the students took it in turns to open and close part of the body in a way of their choice, everyone

else then imitating. The first students showed movements from the previous week, including shrugging and releasing the shoulders, and spreading the hand and making a fist with the arms held straight out in front. However, as the activity progressed, new ideas began to emerge. Although some students selected a part used previously in the activity, they always moved it in a different way; no-one directly imitated what had gone before. Unprompted, some students began to demonstrate from standing. Examples included circling the wrists with the palms open, circling the waist hula-style, small jumps from two feet, swinging a leg backwards and forwards, stamping alternate feet, making large slow circles with both arms, and making a fast front crawl movement with both arms. Chu praised each set of outcomes, always saying aloud whether it was big or small, fast or slow, or open or closed, thus reinforcing student understanding of these concepts.

Another strategy used in this lesson for making the students think about their own bodies came when they were asked to draw a self-portrait by looking at themselves in the mirror but focusing on things they particularly liked or disliked about their body. This was the only occasion during the observations Chu specifically asked the students to look at themselves in the mirror. In general, her teaching rather emphasised understanding ideas through how movement or positions felt personally. The lack of focus on the outward appearance to oneself correlates with the lack of peer to peer observation in lessons. I have always regarded the latter as an essential learning tool, although I consider this partly reflects my own training and learning experiences. I concede that it can lead to imitation, even in improvisation contexts.

Lessons 3 and 4 focused on extension and contraction in space, allied with experimentation in how movement could be very fast or very slow. Lesson 3 began with the students experimenting with opening and closing different body parts while sitting on the floor. At first they followed the teacher's suggestions, all of which involved only the hands or arms. When she asked for other ideas from the students, they offered a wide range, for example one suggested standing up and 'closing' by bending forwards at the waist while another opened and closed the whole body by standing then crouching. Others chose to open and close relatively small parts of the

body such as spreading then scrunching the toes. This suggested that Chu's strategy in initially working with one part of the body had worked and that the students were able to transfer the concept to other areas.

Although Chu sometimes used demonstration and imitation as teaching strategies in these early lessons, she mostly gave only a full verbal explanation, and then either watched or participated in the activity with the children. She explained that she wanted them to address activities in their own way and not rely on others, including her. Her strategy meant the students could not simply imitate a model seen previously, although when she did an activity with them, it meant they had a reference point should they need one.

I was a little surprised that Chu's approach did not result in hesitancy or uncertainty among the less confident children. This, I believe, reflected the clarity and simplicity of the tasks. The approach resulted in some predictability of outcomes initially, but this was diminished by her prompting them to try new ways. While imitation is an important means of learning for young children, I consider her strategy engaged the children in problem-finding as well as problem-solving. As such, I further consider they were engaged in personal meaning-making (Craft, 2005, 52).

Although there was an opportunity for questions before an activity began, a feature of many lessons in Life Pulse level 5 was that students were repeatedly given the same task with almost no time to think before responding. This was particularly true of the early lessons. For example, students would be asked to make an 'up' position on each fourth beat, usually signalled by the teacher using a mallet on a small hand held drum. Without any break the sequence was 'one, two, three, position, one, two three, position...', up to ten times without a break. The reaction time of the students suggested that they soon became conditioned to producing instant responses. I never witnessed students pausing while they thought what to do.

While the use of such a strategy can be a device to try and circumvent learned habits, it often encourages the reproduction of what is already known. I believe it was almost certainly a factor in the initial predictability of outcomes noted above. Even when

Chu motivated the students to think how else they might do the task, for example what other part of the body they might use, it was noticeable that some of the children tended to keep to similar ideas. This was especially true of balances, which were almost invariably done standing on one leg, with most students making little attempt to use other limbs or parts of the body.

Repetitive practice is a common feature of behaviourist learning (Calder, Faire and McGoughan, 1994). Despite other common features being present at the School, such as the breaking down of knowledge into skills and sub-skills presented individually as the teacher moves towards an overall learning goal, and although there was a behaviourist element to some activities, I do not consider Chu's approach can be so-classed. The students expressions and reactions did not suggest they were being conditioned. It was not repetitive practice in the sense of repeating the same action, it was learning through repetition of the same task, with different outcomes encouraged through positive verbal reinforcement. Furthermore, other features of behaviourist learning such as drill and rote work, traditionally typical of Taiwanese learning environments (see Chapter 1) were not in evidence.

The students never appeared unhappy with the teaching approach. There was equally never an occasion when students expressed a desire to explore a different idea or spend longer on a particular topic, although this may have led to greater learning on occasions. The students' contentedness with lessons reflects the nature of the student-teacher relationship in Taiwanese education generally, in particular the respect for teacher authority and knowledge. In Life Pulse level 5, I recognise, however, that lessons are structured, and variations on activities introduced after a few minutes, so that students do not get bored.

Drill and rote learning did, however, appear in parts of Life Pulse level 11 classes. As explained previously, lessons in this level focus on world dance and learning about foreign cultures. In the reading and discussion part of lessons the teacher, Gao Pei-ling, encouraged students to approach learning with open minds by engaging them in discussion and listening to their ideas and opinions. She regularly brought in

additional teaching and learning materials such as her own magazines and even national foods. Students were invariably enthusiastic about this part of lessons.

Given the focus on personal discovery elsewhere at the School, I was surprised that the learning of various dances that formed most of other lesson activities made no allowance for creativity or personal discovery. Teaching and learning was entirely by imitation and repetition. When I asked Gao about this, she explained that the objectives for each lesson include the learning of specific dances. She felt that time constraints meant that learning by repetition was the only way this could be achieved.

Although the purpose of this study is not to judge practice, in the lessons observed I question how the approach aided student understanding of world cultures. It did not appear to encourage enquiry or critical engagement with the dances, and runs counter to the training traditions of folk dance, which are rarely systematically agreed (Alter, 1999, 472). Furthermore, as Gibbons (2007, 15) observes, teaching folk dance in such an exclusively reproduction manner suggests the dance is fixed and does not change through time. I consider links with other parts of the lesson could have been improved, and student curiosity or engagement heightened, by analysing the dance for its meaning, place in tradition and cultural significance; or to discover and identify characteristics of dances. Student creativity could have been engaged by them being asked to create a dance characteristic of the given country working individually or in small groups. Such an approach would also allow for peer observation and critique.

In Life Pulse level 5, the approach taken was much closer to a constructivist frame. Constructivism has many forms, but all have the central tenet that individuals actively construct knowledge for themselves (Ausubel, Novak and Hanesian, 1978). In both Life Pulse level 5 and Pre-professional (see below) the students were learning through personal discovery, even though the teacher was closely guiding or facilitating their explorations (von Glasersfeld, 1993, 32). Furthermore, connections were constantly being made between new concepts and those that were part of their existing knowledge. The emphasis throughout was on students understanding of concepts and then bringing them together rather than being able to repeat given actions perfectly. It was about what they know, rather than what they can do (Bruner, 1986).

Craft (2005, 31) refers to such teaching methods as “learning by growth.” Returning to the idea of the teacher as facilitator, this includes the notion that the learning space is important for children and that the teacher is, in effect, a gardener planting seeds or tending young plants. Indeed, this is where the term ‘kindergarten’ originates.

Craft further notes such an approach truly requires plenty of opportunity for learners to explore in their own time and space. They need to grow at their own pace and thus the context should avoid frameworks that move them on before they are ready. She suggests time limits should not be placed on activities. Rather, learners should be given control over closure, although ideas may be placed aside and returned to later. This did not happen at the School where the curriculum is heavily structured and the content of each week’s lesson clearly defined, with no space for a course to fall behind.

I agree with Wen (2007a) when she says teachers at the School are not teaching students to be creative. Chu was rather encouraging the children’s creativity through a structured guided process. She was not attempting to teach creativity as if it was an academic subject, but as Wen accurately observed, as something that “has to be fed, nurtured and brought to the surface.” While some Taiwanese educators such as Lee (2004) agree with this view, many do not. In informal discussions, some arts educators expressed the view to me that creativity can indeed be taught, reflecting the commonly held view of education as training, as stated in Chapter 1. Others believe that even this is not possible. According to the *White Paper on Creative Education* (Ministry of Education, 2002, 4), many teachers in Taiwan consider creativity is an inborn trait and that nurturing efforts are futile.

The students’ knowledge continued to be extended as the lessons progressed. Elements of time and effort were introduced in lesson 4, when students were asked to sustain their open or close movements over four counts. Initially they held each movement, thus allowing each outcome to be clearly seen. Subsequently, the activity was done continuously and at different speeds.

This lesson also introduced working as a pair, which proved to be a first step towards working in larger groups. Now creativity was seen as not only individual, but also as

a group activity. Each student had to be aware of what he or she was doing and make it clear so his or her partner could imitate it. One activity involved student A of the pair opening on counts 1 and 2, followed by B imitating on counts 3 and 4. A then closed on counts 5 and 6, with B following on 7 and 8, and so on.

Above, I refer to the repetitive nature of some activities and thus student certainty about what was coming next. This certainty was removed in an activity in lesson 4. The teacher placed cards with 'O' (open) or 'C' (closed) on them on the studio floor face down. The students were asked to hop around the studio when a music CD was playing, then when it stopped, to turn over the nearest card on the floor and make an open or closed shape as appropriate. The activity was subsequently repeated but when the music stopped, the students now had to make the shape with whoever was nearest at the time.

In an indication of the students' growing confidence, for the first time in the course I noted some thought about what shape was going to be made and how. Some pairs discussed what they were going to before doing it, and on one occasion, a pair even turned over two nearby mats, one of which had an 'O' on it and one a 'C', and debated which they were going to follow. Chu made no attempt to stop them, which I perceived at the time, and later confirmed with her, reflected her approval of this expression of self-determination in the activity.

Lessons 5 and 6, titled 'Up and Down (1)' and 'Up and Down (2)' introduced the idea of directionality into the students' actions. One exercise involved extending different body parts upwards into the space, then downwards. With everyone standing around the circle, the activity began using a single body part, with the students following Chu. She then asked them for suggestions as to other parts to use, although directing whether it should be 'up' or 'down'. The activity developed to using pairs of parts of the body such as both shoulders, elbows or arms, before moving on to individual exploration using two and then three different parts. In this final task, one girl who was a little older than the others in the class made a complex 'up' position balancing on one foot and one hand, thrusting the other knee, elbow and her head upwards.

To encourage each student to think about whether they were really reaching up or down, Chu walked round, touching particular parts of his or her body, and asking, “Is this up?” or “Is this down?” This usually had the effect of making the student extend even further. She used a similar strategy in a task where students had to make an ‘up’ or ‘down’ position as soon as they reached a line after running across the studio. At first they tended to use their whole bodies with shapes held high on their toes with arms reaching up or by curling on their knees or rolling into a tight ball. However, when Chu reminded them to think about which parts were “reaching to the sky” or “into the ground,” the students made a much wider exploration of the possibilities and a wider variety of positions was shown. In the ‘down’ positions there were many more angular shapes where an elbow or a knee was clearly pointing down. The older girl referred to above continued to experiment with staying close to the floor while still projecting specific body parts upwards. In one instance she produced a very complex and difficult position as she balanced on one hand and one foot, and reached up with her opposite hip, elbow and knee.

Later, in lesson 6, the concept of sustained movement was introduced, the students slowly transposing from a ‘down’ to an ‘up’ shape or vice-versa. In the upwards direction the teacher told them to think of a tree growing upwards from the ground and reaching to the sky.

Another activity in this lesson introduced working in trios for the first time. Chu drew three sets of symbols on the mirror, with one, two and three characters respectively. When she pointed to one of them, the students had to make a shape individually, in pairs or as a trio, as appropriate. They chose their own partners. Many of the trios were quite complex with bodies intertwined around each other.

During this activity I noticed that the older girl and at least one other student were very clearly looking at their personal and group outcomes in the mirror. This was one of the few occasions this occurred in the whole semester. Although the nature of activities and teaching leads the students away from focusing on the external look of outcomes, these students were taking it into account as they self-assessed their work. Their actions were a demonstration of ‘mini-c’ creativity as described by Beghetto and

Kaufman (see Chapter 3). The students were demonstrating that creativity can be personal and does not have to be assessed by a 'competent other' (Amabile, 1996, 42). Reflecting Hawkins' (1991) idea of feedforward and feedback, one group rearranged their trio when they were unhappy with the first outcome.

As I have already commented, throughout these lessons Chu never criticised any outcome or suggested it was inappropriate, although she did often ask them to 'think how else you might do it'. The activity guidelines were always quite explicit. Chu provided parameters and to a large extent guided student outcomes. Many authors consider such constraint important for creativity (for example Abbs, 1989; Boden, 1994; Smith-Autard, 2002; Plucker and Beghetto, 2004). The students were being guided, but it was still their creativity being evidenced.

Only one student regularly acted or produced outcomes outside activity guidelines. He was also rather more boisterous than might be expected given the nature of some activities. I was unsure at first whether he was being creative or deliberately disruptive, although I accept that the boundary between the two may often be rather blurred. As the course progressed, however, I noticed he was the one student who regularly appeared to give thought to his actions. Although always keen to offer solutions to problems, he would often listen to or watch others before announcing his own idea; an idea that was often significantly different from others. One of the girls, who was almost a year older than the others, also often produced outcomes different from the others, for example more complex shapes and positions. As the semester progressed, however, this appeared to become less pronounced, which suggests she was increasingly adhering to the norms of the social group that was the class.

While this may suggest gender differences in approaches to creative activities or the effect of the group on behaviour, no conclusions can be drawn from so few examples. When another boy joined the class to catch up on a missed lesson elsewhere, his behaviour was different again and more like that of the girls. Amabile (1996, 78) notes that while boys may be more creative on some artistic tasks, the evidence is far from clear. In her own studies, which admittedly were in America, she states gender differences have been rare in results.

I wondered just how far Chu might be prepared to let the students break activity guidelines. This was a question I deliberately did not ask, fearing that it may prompt her into certain actions that she would otherwise have not contemplated. I was to get my answer later in the course in lesson 13 ('Animal Music', see section 6.2).

Pre-professional courses

A similar process in constructing a knowledge-base could be seen in the Pre-professional course. However, rather than beginning with building a knowledge of basic codified technique, for example learning how to do a plié, the focus was on establishing knowledge to facilitate that later learning.

The Basic level 1 course starts by using basic movement and exercises to build students' physical strength, flexibility, co-ordination; and an understanding of body structure, muscles and joints, and how to use them correctly. Huang, teacher of the Pre-professional Senior level 1 lessons explained that the exercises at this level are designed to help the children find their alignment rather than for any technical purpose. He added, "They sit down and train the body, then they stand up and dance."

As in Life Pulse, a basic understanding of movement dynamics and musical rhythm, and an ability to sense the latter when dancing, is seen as important. Indeed, Zhu Ming-yu, the course teacher, always placed great emphasis on the correct timing of exercises, often stopping and restarting them if the children were out of step with the accompaniment. Only very slowly does the course progress towards codified technique exercises.

As with Chu in Life Pulse 5, Zhu's teaching strategy included a clear and detailed explanation of each exercise, especially the first few times they were given. Her strategy was also similar in that relatively little time was given to demonstration. Instead, the students were quickly given the opportunity to attempt exercises for themselves, with detailed instruction only following afterwards. In a mirror of Life Pulse, the students were exploring the movement for themselves, albeit guided by the teacher. In building their knowledge, they were not simply imitating the teacher but were fully engaged in problem-finding as well as problem solving.

A number of standard exercises were used throughout the course. Each was learned by the students and repeated or extended each week as time allowed. All the ten exercises were detailed in the teacher manual. No others were introduced except for occasional variations in the warm-up. Many of the exercises were done sitting or kneeling on the floor. Breathing was important, the students not just being told 'remember to breathe,' but precisely when to breathe in and when to breathe out. Correct use of breath is also a focus of practice and training within Cloud Gate Dance Theatre and, as I have experienced, in other private studios in Taipei where former Cloud Gate dancers teach.

Lessons began with a warm-up that included walking, running and skipping around the studio, then stopping and clapping, all in time to the music. A foot exercise involved flexing and pointing the feet with the legs in parallel while sitting facing the mirror. One for the upper body, again done sitting, included circling the upper body as if using a hula-hoop. A long exercise specifically for breathing and extension included the use of a ball, which the students held as they stretched forwards, rolled their body up, and then reached upwards. This was followed by a hand-eye co-ordination exercise that required the students to pass imaginary stars from one to another while sitting around the circle in the centre of the studio. Two exercises for building strength were done on the knees. One involved extending each leg into the air behind and holding it, followed by cat-like stretches, while the other required them to roll across the studio while curled into a ball, momentarily holding the position each time they came upright on their knees. In another rolling exercise they rolled across the studio with legs and arms fully extended, the body held taut. There were also basic running and jumping exercises. A simple circular dance for the whole group concluded the lesson.

Although pleasant in manner, Zhu attempted to invoke similar feelings of playfulness to Chu only occasionally. Before Pre-professional lessons students do not play, but stretch in splits against the wall, often holding the stretch for five minutes. Although the students chatted to each other or to Zhu during this time, and she occasionally joked with the children during lessons, the mood was more serious than in the

immediately preceding Life Pulse level 5 lesson, which many of the students also attended. On the few occasions when the students became noisy or their attention wandered, Zhu quickly brought their focus back to the task at hand. This was in contrast to Huang's approach in the Senior level 1 class, where although the students still approached tasks in a workmanlike manner, there was space for conversation and laughter.

The evidence supports Howard, Bellin and Rees' assertion, discussed above, that how children approach an activity depends on how it is presented. Both Zhu and Huang's classes consisted of structured learning or training, and followed curricula with set exercises that were always performed by the children in a serious manner. Although he did not present exercises as games, Huang's approach appeared to lead his students to perceive the studio as a safe learning environment. There was never any sense of fear of failure. In contrast, a number of Zhu's students occasionally looked worried and very unsure of what to do. On one occasion one student appeared to be quite upset about her inability to correctly perform an exercise.

It is difficult to draw conclusions about the effect on the children's development of the two approaches. Those in Zhu's class were two years younger than those in Senior level 1, and it was their first introduction to such lessons. Zhu's students certainly learned the exercises, although whether they really understood the concepts behind the learning is, I consider, more doubtful.

The activities in Basic level 1 all have story associations, outlined in the parent-student booklet and used by Zhu in lessons. These involved Puca, a cartoon frog that appears in the School's literature and on merchandise. The stories are intended to encourage the students to use their imagination and engage in pretend as a means of learning. For example, the hand-eye co-ordination exercise was described as follows:

Puca has a bucket of beautiful stars he wants to share with his good friends. Because some of them live so far away they can't reach them themselves. Puca can use his own hands to reach and use hands to send them far away. When he breathes out he can bring his hands and the stars back and then pass them on to his next friend.

(Cloud Gate, 2006c)

Similarly, the strength and stretch exercise on the knees brought references to PiPi, a canine friend of Puca, “who is lazy and likes to stretch very long” (Cloud Gate Dance School, 2006c). Rolling on the knees was likened to egg rolls and rolling like noodles; flexing the feet and extending the toes was likened to an octopus and seaweed; and the breathing and extension exercise with the ball encouraged the students to think of themselves as Puca learning to be elegant like a swan. Although difficult to judge since the children never took on the characters *per se*, even when they were drawn on I gained little sense of the students engaging in any form of pretend.

5.4 Conclusions

Mirroring the views of Best (1982, 287-8), the evidence clearly demonstrates that some understanding of the disciplines, techniques and objective criteria of an activity is seen by teachers and leaders at the School as a crucial precondition for creativity within that activity. For students this primarily involves gaining an understanding of movement concepts and their bodies, while for teachers it includes the School’s curricula and teaching philosophy. This reflects Gardner’s (1989, 154) observation that, in ethnic Chinese societies generally, learning prioritises the acquisition of basic skills and knowledge, and Wu’s (1997, 235) view that an artist’s creativity then develops as his or her technical knowledge and artistry develops.

Gardner found that Chinese children were taught basic skills and knowledge, primarily through demonstration, imitation and repetition or rote learning. As previously noted, this mode of teaching is commonly used in dance learning, especially in technical training. A significant difference in approach at the Cloud Gate Dance School is that equal importance is given to the knowledge, and the way it is built. While teaching approaches varied between the teachers observed, on the whole they were distanced from the pedagogy common in most Taiwanese education that is focused on the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student (see Chapter 1).

While the acquisition of knowledge, skills and technique is guided, it is also built through personal and creative engagement with the subject matter. Knowledge or understanding then allows further discovery and exploration. This is not only true for

both students and teachers, but also for Life Pulse level 5 and the codified dance technique content of the Pre-professional course, where knowledge and understanding is seen as a doorway to greater freedom of expression. As discussed above, the exception was the dance learning in Life Pulse level 11.

At the School, knowledge is not learned from what Kaufman (2003a, 131) calls a “cold cognition, information processing perspective.” While, in the lessons observed, it was sometimes gained through repetition of movement based on a particular concept, in Life Pulse level 5 in particular, learning did not occur through imitation or repetition of the same movement. The students acquired a practical knowledge of the implicit principles of movement and dance, not a symbolic mastery and explicit, consciously recognised rules (Slutskaya, 2006, 154). In Pre-professional lessons, although the external view of a position or movement was important, the emphasis was on understanding how it was achieved and what it felt like in the body. According to British scholar Jennifer Jackson (2005, 29), such dancing “from the inside out” is vitally important in dance teaching and learning. Although she was specifically referring to ballet, her comments can be equally applied to other codified dance forms.

While the lack of observation of, or discussion about, each other’s outcomes restricts the manner of student learning, it places the focus firmly on individually and personally gained knowledge and understanding. The focus on the individual was further emphasised by any discussions with a student about an activity being focused solely on the student’s comments about his or her own work.

Observation of peers’ work is an important component of most models of dance education and most texts about dance teaching. It is most commonly discussed, and used in practice, as a strategy in connection with critiquing finished dances (for example McCutcheon, 2006; Smith-Autard, 2002; Gough, 1999). However, the children in Life Pulse level 5 are not producing finished dances.

While I consider both strategies are valuable tools for self-reflection on one’s own dance, I question the extent to which children of the age in Life Pulse level 5 have the

necessary cognitive skills to transfer what they see into their own, original movement. Furthermore, this is most students' first engagement with the dance concepts being explored. Many are still coming to terms with them. Peer observation would not only negate the personal nature of the knowledge being built, but could lead to misunderstandings of the concepts. Furthermore, even though Life Pulse level 5 does not involve finished dances, any formal observation would involve feelings of performance and assessment, with an associated reduction in positive affect for some students.

As American author Curtis Carter (2000, 182) observes, improvisation in dance can easily fall into habitual and repetitive patterns. In short, dancers keep to what they know and what they like. To ensure the School's students fully explored a concept and generated their personal knowledge base, it was important they generated a constant flow of ideas and constantly surprised themselves and the teacher. As Carter further comments, this is more difficult than following a set of instructions. Key to the process was Chu, who through immediate and positive feedback was able continually to guide the students and encourage them to try new ideas.

The process was teacher-led, with Chu equally curriculum-led. She always facilitated and guided the students towards the pre-defined goal of understanding the concept being explored. Without such guidance, there can be no certainty that the concepts will be understood, but she simultaneously acknowledged that learning is not a one-way transmission of knowledge or information. The nature of the tasks and strategies used meant that each student was still constructing his or her personal knowledge.

Although the construction of the knowledge base is often referred to separately from the creative process, it can also be seen as part of it. Craft's (2000) and Wallas' (1926) models of creativity both include a 'preparation' stage. It can be argued that what was happening in these early Life Pulse lessons was just such 'preparation.' Both described this first stage as being with people who stimulate the process or reaching a point of frustration with the present. It can, however, also be taken as the development of a knowledge base that is well organised and schematically meaningful,

along with the acquisition of appropriate metacognitive skills for working with that knowledge in the most potentially creative manner (Feldhusen, 1995, 261).

The strategies by which the knowledge base was built, largely through creative engagement with the subject matter, equally suggests that the Cloud Gate Dance School not only sees knowledge as important for creativity, but that creativity is in itself an important part of the learning process. Although there were variations among the students, the effectiveness of the approach was demonstrated by the range and appropriateness of their outcomes, which suggests that they very quickly understood each concept introduced. The students' playfulness was encouraged, and strategies of learning through creating developed their fluency and retrieval skills, so they could use information to solve new tasks and problems.

Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 340-342) says that although experts in a discipline usually love what they do, this is not usually the case with young practitioners. He also notes that the less comprehensible the information, the less young people will learn it, concluding that the way knowledge is transmitted should be appropriate to the skills of the learner. At the School, the method of transmission of knowledge is as important as the knowledge itself. The teaching strategies observed and the importance of positive affect and a non-threatening atmosphere were deliberately aimed to make lessons fun, to make discovery part of the learning process, and to bring as much of the flow experience as possible into lessons. This is discussed in detail in the following chapter. Wen (2007a) referred to just this when she said, "We work with what the students already have... This includes the mind and the spirit."

Knowledge was regarded as necessary, but in no way sufficient on its own for creativity. Echoing the views of Amabile (1996), Jeffrey and Craft (1996), and Hennessey (2004) within the creativity literature; and Gough (1999) in dance education; the second cornerstone on which creativity is constructed at the School is the development of positive affect and intrinsic motivation within the children. From positive affect flow the motivational and attitudinal abilities or traits that facilitate creativity. Emotion and mood is often expressed through dance, but here it equally affected the dance. All the participating teachers took a holistic approach whereby a

knowledge-base and positive affect were developed simultaneously. They were seen as very much complementary, and together created a state of the individual in which creative activity could take place.

At the School, teachers were central to the development of positive affect and intrinsic motivation. Pre-lesson play played a pivotal role in creating positive affect, and encouraged a positive group dynamic in which the students were supportive of each other and worked well together. There was no sense of competition between them. Although Chu, in particular, sometimes used their play as a basis for reinforcing learning in lessons, it was not, however, a vehicle for creativity in dance *per se*. In contrast to the views of Russ (1993, 2003) and Lindqvist (2001), the focus was on rough and tumble play rather than dramatic play, although dramatic imagination was a feature of some lessons.

Throughout lessons, the teachers' own enthusiasm and commitment, and relationship building with students, played a significant role in developing and maintaining the children's motivation. This again shows agreement with Gough (1999, 17), who observes that children are more likely to respond to teachers who show passion and enthusiasm for the subject, and who show genuine concern for their students, and their achievements and success.

Taken as a whole, the emphasis on building knowledge, developing skills, and encouraging positive affective states indicates that the School does not believe creativity can arise through chance or luck. Rather, deliberately to misquote Louis Pasteur, "Chance favours the prepared body and mind."¹

Note

- ¹ During his inaugural lecture as Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Science, University of Lille, Douai, on 7th December 1854, Pasteur said, "Chance favours the prepared mind" (in Peterson, 1954, 473).

CHAPTER 6

THE CREATIVE PROCESS: IMAGINATION; FLOW; NOVELTY AND APPROPRIATENESS

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I considered the importance of affect and domain-specific knowledge for creativity at the Cloud Gate Dance School, concluding that the School's leaders and teachers consider both to be essential foundations for the creative activities that follow. I now move on to examine the creative process and constructions of creativity within the School's dance studios by and for students. Given the nature of the curricula, I focus primarily on Life Pulse level 5.

In doing so I explore the use of, and clear distinction made by teacher Chu Kuang-zuan and in the curriculum documentation between activities that focus on kinaesthetic exploration, those that incorporate significant elements of narrative, pretend or make-believe; and how the emphasis throughout is on the creative process and understanding movement concepts rather than with specific, repeatable outcomes. From this emerge issues of novelty and appropriateness, specifically the importance attached to working within task guidelines, how novelty is assessed, and who makes that assessment.

6.2 Imagination

In the lessons described in Chapter 5, not only were the students building a knowledge base that comprised an understanding of basic dance and movement concepts, and ways the body could be used, but did so using activities that engaged each child's imagination. Initially, the focus was on the kinaesthetic, with lesson titles such as 'Open and Close' and 'Up and Down' emphasising the use of the body in space. Although Chu sometimes used imagery in her guidance, for example "reaching up like a big tree", she never invoked narrative, and her encouragement and observations were restricted largely to the physical shape, direction, dynamic or timing of movement.

Each child's construction of shapes and movement became more complex as lessons and activities progressed. Chu always encouraged and reminded them to 'think of new ways.' Through sensation, action and repetition of task, the lack of narrative or use of character in activities encouraged each to develop a kinaesthetic awareness, memory and imagination. Stuart (2007, 144) considers what she calls such "kinaesthetic melodies" not only correspond to gross motor skills but also to potentially subtle and local bodily affect. She adds that these are valuable in terms of effective decision making at a conscious level, and can provide a pre-cognitive or gut feeling about subsequent potential actions. This latter point has implications for improvisation tasks. As Blom and Chaplin (2000, 17) observe, responses become intuitive and freer, and the self is much less an analytic censor, which in turn allows one to engage increasingly in experimentation and further discovery.

As the course progressed, lessons increasingly drew on the children's dramatic imagination, particularly from lesson 12 onwards. In lesson 12 ('March of the Animals'), the students were asked to move like a series of animals and make appropriate noises. The first animal Chu chose was a cat. Initially, all the students attempted simply to imitate a cat's movement, moving slowly forwards on their hands and knees or all fours. Gradually, she encouraged them to adopt elements of narrative, for example to express what they thought a cat's inner feelings and emotions might be with such comments as, "What else do cats do?", "Your food is over there," and "What happens when you see your friend?" As she did so, the dramatic element and the students' range of movement increased, although remaining essentially mimetic. Some showed a cat-like stretch they had learned in the Pre-professional course, one girl washed herself using her arm and hand as a leg and paw, and there was interaction between some students as they rubbed against each other. Most dramatic was the boy in the class, who prowled around the studio making pouncing movements. While his targets may have been invisible to everyone else, the intensity of his actions suggested that to him they were very real.

The same task was repeated using a tiger, cow, bird and dog as stimuli. Again, dramatic elements were introduced as each activity progressed. For the tigers, Chu

suddenly interrupted her constant flow of praise and positive feedback to say, “Stop! What’s that you heard? It’s something to catch. Get ready...one, two, three...” The boy in particular took this up, making roaring noises and attempting to leap on and fight the other students, some of whom responded in similar fashion. As before, the children’s actions were almost wholly mimetic. Furthermore, no attempt was made to encourage any abstraction, although the objectives for the lesson do specifically only refer to ‘imitation’.

At the end of the lesson, Chu asked the students to decide which animal was their favourite, before pairing them off and asking each to demonstrate in turn. She asked them to make sure that everyone could see the difference between the two animals, but many of the students appeared to add their own narrative, for example, one acting as a cat tried to catch her partner, a bird. Two couples also whispered to each other, apparently planning in advance what they were going to do.

Lesson 13 (‘Animal Music’) extended these ideas, although Chu now focused on emotion rather than action, asking the students in their animal characters to be happy, sleepy, angry and sad in turn. As in lesson 12, the objectives do not call for movement to be abstracted, simply that the children learn to endow emotion on the animal characters they are portraying. The primary focus in these and the following three lessons was on events, mood, interaction and characterisation rather than movement. Chu emphasised the students’ dramatic imagination rather than their kinaesthetic imagination, although it is questionable whether children recognise such a distinction. In a discussion of children the same age as this study, Lindqvist (2001, 42), who draws heavily on Vygotsky, says they have a comprehensive approach to learning, consider it in terms of play, and do not separate or specialise between the individual arts.

The children switched between emotions quite easily, the most dramatic being ‘angry’, when some made large aggressive movements accompanied by loud noises. As the activity progressed, some also used their imagination to add a personal narrative to Chu’s instructions. For example, when she asked them to all be angry tigers, not only did the volume of roaring and the range and force of movements increase dramatically,

but at one point, the boy squared up to another 'tiger' and made it appear as if he was attacking her with his paws. She played along as a mock fight developed. Shortly afterwards, when Chu told them they were now very tired and needed to find somewhere to sleep, most of the students curled up on the floor in the centre of the studio. The boy again engaged his imagination and added his own storyline as he crawled to a spot under portable barres stored at the side of the studio. He later explained that this was a cave, and that this was a sensible place to sleep because it was safe.

At the end of this lesson, a longer narrative was introduced, as Chu related a story about wolves hunting in the forest, with half the students taking the role of the wolves, and the others being the sheep. The story told how the wolves crept closer and closer, trying not to be seen. "The sheep do not know they are there and so are very happy... Then suddenly you see the tigers and you are very scared. What should you do? Can you escape?" said Chu. As those playing the sheep attempted to flee by moving quickly to another part of the studio, some of the wolves attempted to grab them around the waist to try and stop them escaping.

Such was the level of student immersion in this activity that it provided the only significant occasion during the observations when they tried to take over the lesson and move the story in their own direction. The first time the story was told, as the wolves approached the sheep one girl suddenly stood up, pointed at them and exclaimed in a loud voice, "I can see them coming! Run!" Chu immediately regained control of the story by saying, "No, you can't!" and moved to stand between the two groups. When the students switched roles and the story was retold, the wolves tried to attack before Chu had reached the appropriate point of the story. Again, she took control by getting between the two groups, although this did not deter the boy from trying again, this time creeping behind her so she could not see him. In the first instance, the children's expressions immediately prior to their intervention in the story suggested they were not conscious of what they were going to do. There was no outward sign of planning, or thinking then acting. Rather, thought, imagination, language and bodily action all occurred simultaneously, and all interacted with one

another. Apart from again showing the depth of the children's dramatic involvement, Chu's response to these instances of student dramatic creativity raises questions of appropriateness, considered below.

The incorporation of narrative continued to increase. Activities in lesson 15 ('Who is Talking?') required the students not only to take on the role of an alien, first using facial gestures and bodily movement they thought an extra-terrestrial might have, but then telling each other stories in an imaginary alien language. When asked to do this, most students stood still initially but soon began moving, often quite abstractly as they drew on movement ideas from earlier lessons such as 'Open and Close' and 'Up and Down.' Their 'languages' consisted mostly of strange sounding, high pitched noises. Although having all ten students participating simultaneously made listening difficult, not only did the children quickly take on their chosen character, but they appeared to give it a history and a *raison d'être*. They increasingly adopted the varying pitch, tone and gestures of everyday conversational speech as they responded to each other's actions.

In the above lessons the focus was almost entirely on the characters and roles the students were taking. The students' actions indicated they were engaged in make-believe. Although they sometimes referred back to previously learned movement concepts, Chu made no reference to the physical except for occasionally directing them within the general space as she pointed to a particular part of the studio or asked them to use the whole room.

Both animals and aliens can be quite easily perceived as being alive and having human feelings and emotions. Lessons 17 and 18 ('Poem Dance 1' and 'Poem Dance 2') however not only associated these characteristics with inanimate objects but also reintroduced a focus on the physical. The lessons were based around *Mountain, sitting quietly*, a poem by You Zeng-hui, reproduced below. Chu guided the students to understand the poem, through reading and discussion, then to use their bodies to express the emotions and the natural landscape in it. She began with static shapes. Some children made their mountain shapes close to the ground, but all were reaching and focusing upwards. Most shapes were also angular, with many students focusing

on their elbows. Taiwan is quite mountainous in parts and the children would have been familiar with such steep, jagged landscapes. Cloud shapes meanwhile tended to be rounded and closed, while flowers and trees were open and extended. All this reminded the students of the concepts learned in the initial lessons of the course.

Mountain, sitting quietly
Cloud is coming, cloud is gone; flower is blooming, flower is falling
The moon is clear, the moon is hidden; sunrise, sunset
Mountain, has seen everything, but says nothing
Children pick the fruit he grows
But he doesn't chase after them
Spring, summer, autumn, winter, day, night
Mountain, always sitting so quietly
Is it thinking why the clouds go quietly, and come back again?
Flowers all gone, flowers bloom again; half-moon, full moon returns
Sun sets, sun rises again
All the fruit picked grows back

Mountain, sitting quietly by You Zeng-hui
(Translated from the Life Pulse 5 Parent-Student booklet)

Chu then introduced emotion, asking the students to imagine they were mountains, flowers and trees going to sleep and waking up again; and whether the mountain might be happy or sad as the flowers and clouds come and go. The first prolonged improvisation of the course occurred at the end of lesson 17. Chu asked the students to imagine they were clouds moving across the sky, initially reminding them to think whether they were happy or sad, and how they were going across the sky. Most children thought happy cloud movements were high and sad cloud movements were close to the ground, many rolling on their knees in a manner similar to one exercise in the Pre-professional Basic 1 course. Chu increased the dramatic mood by dimming the studio lights and telling them it was getting near night, later turning them back up as daylight returned. So immersed were the students in the activity that she let the improvisation run for almost eight minutes, and despite her saying very little after the initial reminders, no student appeared ever to lose concentration or break out of character.

The evidence from the observations confirms the view of many scholars that imagination is a powerful tool for extending and developing creativity, something

recognised by National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (1999, 29). I concur with the Committee, however, that imagination in itself is not creative. It needs to be fashioned in a manner appropriate to the context. What is considered creative in one time and place, even in one Life Pulse lesson, may not be deemed so in another. Chu touched on this when she said, "What is important is how it [creativity] is cultivated and used." For example, in the lessons where the students took on various animal movements and emotions the initial responses were quite literal and mimetic. Chu guided them away from such a play-acting approach.

Two things appeared important when the students were encouraged to use their imagination. First, that although Chu determined the activities and guided the direction they took, it was each student's imagination that was realised in action. She rarely demonstrated and certainly not before any of the animal activities referred to above, and never joined in these activities as she had done in earlier lessons that explored the kinaesthetic. Second, she strove to ensure that what came through in each student's imagination was related to their real lives. I concur with Jeffrey (2004, 15), who suggests that using imagination, experience and knowledge of the domain and context together in this way makes activities relevant is essential for student creative learning.

In these lessons, the children were engaged in "imagination in action," as their actions took on a "dynamic meeting between the internal and the external" (Vygotsky in Lindqvist, 2003, 249). Both the suggested teaching strategies in the School teacher manuals, and Chu in her own practice, chose and directed activities in a way that they offered the children a significant level of authenticity (Craft, 2000, 92). Tasks were both personally authentic in the sense of being meaningful for the students, and domain-authentic since in that they were situated clearly within dance and movement. The children had first-hand, clear and explicit access to the subjects or concepts being explored.

Furthermore, the tasks also had personal relevance and meaning in that they related to the world beyond the Cloud Gate Dance School studio. Craft (2005, 60) calls this 'cultural authenticity.' For example, when introducing the lesson that involved

various animals, Chu asked who had been to the zoo or to a farm, thus relating the activity to real life. Similarly, she asked who had been to the mountains in the first lesson based on You's poem. The activities also integrated the students' conceptual and procedural knowledge, Chu constantly monitoring their need for clarification and content, which she gave through regular feedback and guidance. These formative inputs and active engagement are all pedagogical strategies for encouraging creativity as advocated by Murphy *et al* (2004).

The division between kinaesthetic and narrative in lessons mirrors that drawn by British dance educator Betty Redfern (1973, 1976), who made a clear distinction between creative imagination and empathising or acting, the latter being the use of movement literally, mimetically or as a symbol of emotion. The tacit recognition that human movement is the raw material of dance is something Rudolf Laban was one of the first to theorise (Redfern, 1976, 62). Indeed, the modes of exploration in the early lessons have close similarities with his approach, and again reflect the view that creativity and artistry in dance can only develop after an understanding of the body, and basic skills and knowledge, has been gained (see Chapter 5). Wen (2007a) echoed this when she said, "Before you can reach out to someone else, you need to communicate with your own body," adding that this includes the spiritual as well as the physical being. This was not meant in a religious sense, but further indicated the importance placed on the connection between positive affect and creativity, discussed in Chapter 5.

It was during lessons that involved narrative, whether their own or Chu's, that the students really became animated. From their actions and expressions, these lessons were perceived as fun. I consider this was because the lessons included an element of pretend play, which both Lindqvist (2001) and Lynch Fraser (1991) state that children of this age enjoy in connection with dance. Furthermore, each child could relate to the tasks more easily since they were closer to his or her real-life experiences. The children were certainly more playful, and appeared more willing to explore new ideas and possibilities without prompting by Chu. As discussed in Chapter 3, such

playfulness and openness are important in many conceptualisations of the creative process.

I am not suggesting the children were necessarily any less immersed in the creative and learning process in the early lessons that focused on the kinaesthetic. I do not even suggest they were any less willing to try new ideas. There was, however, occasionally a sense of uncertainty in their actions, although it was difficult to determine whether this was due to not understanding the activity or being unsure about the extent to which experimentation was allowed. As an observer, this sense was compounded by it being difficult sometimes fully to comprehend what was happening, and especially what students were thinking, even when such basic concepts as 'up' and 'down' or 'open' and 'close' were being employed in lessons. Redfern (1976, 64) similarly noted that when devoid of character or narrative, the general flux of movement "may seem impossibly blurred or incomprehensible."

Whether narrative or kinaesthetic, improvisation lends itself to problem finding and problem solving. As Craft (2000, 9) and Sawyer (2006, 73) observe, both are fundamental to creativity. For Craft, problem finding has a close relationship with possibility thinking. Indeed, she goes so far as to say that the word 'problem' can be used in a loose way as 'other possibilities.' Sawyer says that a problem finding creative style is one where individuals "open themselves to the moment" with no predetermined plans, adding that spontaneity can be seen as a form of problem solving creativity.

At the School, activities can be seen as problems. Many tasks were neatly presented for students, with quite narrow guidelines. This does not mean that each was totally defined or that the students were not problem-finding. In problem finding, the problem emerges from the process of the work itself and the teacher always left enough freedom that this could happen. A problem finding dancer or actor searches for their movement problem while dancing or acting; improvising rather than executing predetermined action. This was the case in lesson 15 when the students were asked to have conversations with each other in an alien language. They had to determine the problems, such as what the conversation was about, and how it would

proceed and be resolved, as they went along. Most other activities also started with problem-finding as the students experimented with a movement concept and were encouraged to try new approaches. As tasks progress the focus increasingly turns towards problem solving as students start to focus on a particular approach.

In lessons some students appeared to take a more problem-finding approach than others. In a study of art students, Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976) noted how some spent a long time experimenting. These are the problem-finders. Others, problem-solvers, settled quickly on a particular approach to a task. A similar differentiation was apparent in the Life Pulse class. Chu encouraged all the students to experiment with different approaches. Despite this, many of them tended to fix on one idea and tried repeated variations on it, for example, different ways of reaching up with an arm rather than continuing to try to use other parts of the body. The boy and one girl in the class who was almost a year older than the others regularly experimented with different approaches, sometimes never settling on one.

The strategies at the School raise questions about Lindqvist's (2001) view, stated in Chapter 3, that dance should incorporate elements of drama and role-play before gradually developing and differentiating from it. Here, almost the opposite happens. Although physical and dramatic imagination were used widely in teaching strategies, in the curriculum they are two distinct concepts brought together after each has been explored separately and in that order. The efficacy of the approach could be seen in lessons 17 and 18, which demonstrated that, given the correct teaching and learning strategies, even children as young as seven can imbue significant dramatic feeling and emotion into inanimate objects such as mountains and clouds.

This is not to deny that role-play is important to young children. As noted above, the students at the Cloud Gate Dance School found such lessons fun. They did layer their own narrative on some activities, sometimes very overtly and even when Chu provided a clear storyline, as in the wolves in the forest story acted out in lesson 13.

Lindqvist (2001) considers that children regard learning in terms of play, and that play creates meaning. Drawing on Vygotsky, Lindqvist sees movement or dance as the

dynamic meeting between the child's emotions and thoughts and its external activity, and for this reasons, dance for young children should include narrative. Indeed, she goes so far as to say that it should be called dance-drama.

The evidence from the observations suggests that while narrative is important to children, it does not have to be the primary focus or theme of activities. I accept that it can be a useful tool in aiding understanding of more abstract concepts, but also consider that the provision of a fixed narrative by a teacher can restrict whatever personal fiction children might otherwise imagine, and thus their creativity.

6.3 Going with the 'flow'

I can get totally into the music and not get self-conscious about dancing. I know, that when I first start or if there is some distraction, or I'm conscious of the way I'm dancing, I don't dance as well as when I'm really totally into the music. [I feel the music in my body] when dancing. That's the way it's expressed, the way I feel about it, the way I think about it; which is why it's hard to articulate, because it's something that just comes out in my body, 'cause I don't usually think about the steps I'm going to do consciously.

Quote from a dancer (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 105)

As indicated above, the Life Pulse students were almost always fully engaged in the particular activity or task. Sometimes they appeared to be completely immersed in the process, just like the dancer quoted above. This was true of both individual tasks, when they became completely absorbed in their own movement explorations, and in those small group activities that introduced dramatic elements. My notes make regular comment about how they were so involved in what they were doing that there was not only no conversation but also little evidence of students acknowledging, watching or taking inspiration from each other.

The kind of immersion observed resonates closely with Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow (1975, 1990, 1996). Watching the students, they often appeared to exclude distractions from the process, although the extent to which this happened varied from student to student. Particular features noted included losing any traces of self-consciousness; acting immediately in response to instructions regarding the activity,

without the need for negotiation or any reference to what others were doing; and apparently merging action with awareness.

As has been previously observed, aspects of creativity and the creative process are usually discussed in terms of the individual person. Csikszentmihalyi's (1975, 1996) concept of flow, an optimal psychological state of total involvement in the task at hand, is similarly usually focused on consciousness within the individual performer. Although the students were undoubtedly experiencing such personal flow, there also appeared to be some form of higher level group dynamic in evidence. Sawyer (2003, 10) notes this is a common observation of scholars who have researched group situations, and coined the term 'group flow' to describe it.

Sawyer's text draws heavily on his research of group creativity in drama and jazz improvisation. As such it refers to occasions where a group of performers are working together to create a single product, albeit one that is in a constant state of flux. Jazz musicians jamming would be one such example. In the Life Pulse lessons, this happened on a number of occasions, including when the students demonstrated animal movements together in lesson 12 and during the 'alien conversations' of lesson 15.

There were other occasions, most notably during the extended improvisation at the end of lesson 17, when the students seemed to surrender their individual identity to that of the group. It was as if self were no longer bound within the individual but had been expanded to a new collective self encompassing the whole class. Sawyer suggests group flow helps individuals achieve their own state of internal, although it seems conceivable that the opposite could also be true. The phenomenon appears to resemble 'groupmind,' a term used by Chicago drama improvisers to identify such experiences (Sawyer, 2006, 254). Even though the task was presented as individual, the students perceived themselves, at least subconsciously, as working together as a group. There appeared to be "a state of unselfconscious awareness" in which almost every action seemed to be appropriate to the ever-changing situation and the group worked with "apparent perfect synchronicity" (Seham, 2001, 64).

The previous chapter discussed the importance of play in fostering positive affect. Sawyer (2007, 55) notes that many of the improvisation groups he observed required a warm-up for flow to happen. At the School, the children's pre-lesson play can be seen as having a similar role and effect. The importance of communication during activities for flow was noted above, but Sawyer (2007, 53) also considers that freer, social communication is equally important for group flow. This happened during the play that preceded most lessons and during the discussions with the teacher that usually occurred at the start of lessons, and which often focused on what students had done in the previous week.

These discussions and the short meditation that also happened at the beginning of lessons were also important for establishing group identity. The students sat around a circle marked on the floor, and thus were equal. The meditation, which usually lasted about 45 seconds, had no religious significance but is simply a time for the children to sit quietly, breathe properly and focus their minds (Wen, 2005). Chu used to tell the students that the sitting quietly ended when she said a given number. Some students were sometimes so immersed that they did not hear her, and she had to repeat it more loudly, suggesting again the presence of flow.

Besides the distinction between individual and group flow, Sawyer's research and the observations at the School highlight a further significant difference from most of the creativity literature in that flow, or immersion, is usually seen as an intermediate stage in the creative process, a stage before which potential outcomes are tested and refined. In Craft's (2000, 33) cyclical model of the creative process for example, it equates to the stage of 'letting go', which comes before, and is quite separate from, the conception, finalising and bringing to fruition of an idea. Most dance education literature places the creative emphasis on a final, refined dance product, whether that is performed for peers in the lesson or studio, or at some later point. Yet both in Sawyer's observations and in the Life Pulse lessons, flow, the production of the creative idea and performance was simultaneous, even though the concept involved may subsequently be developed. This indicates that creativity at the School is seen as having both a present and a future dimension, an idea to which I return below.

The experience at the School raises questions for educators about how flow can be used in delivering dance and other educational activities. The conditions necessary for flow are generally agreed, such as everyone having shared understandings of goals and task boundaries, broadly equal levels of knowledge and skills, and tasks in which individual challenges and skills are in balance but slightly above the personal average. Together these allow for 'interactional synchrony,' as performers instantly hear or see what others are doing and respond accordingly (Sawyer, 2003, 41).

Realising all the conditions in any dance or other educational setting where students are not selected through audition or testing is difficult. Yet, observation evidence suggests that flow was achieved to some extent. The nature of activities was important, but I consider that the lack of disturbance and of a stated time limit on activities also played important roles. Sawyer (2007, 47) highlights both as important factors and that flow rapidly fades in the presence of an approaching deadline to complete a task. In the studio, students were free from distraction. There are no windows one can see out of, no unnecessary objects, no pictures or posters, and there is little external noise. Once in the studio, and within each task, a boundary is drawn, however temporary or virtual, between the activity and everything else.

Although unstated by Chu, there clearly are timescales for activities. The objectives for each Life Pulse level 5 lesson have to be achieved in that lesson. The curriculum structure does include any catch-up time, and so activities cannot be carried over to the next week. Despite this, Chu did sometimes allow an individual student to take as long as needed on a task. For example in lesson 8 ('Forwards Together'), when students were asked to measure various studio dimensions using their hands, feet, forearms and whole body length as a means of developing their perception of general space, one student decided to begin again, using a slightly different method, and measured so carefully and deliberately that he took much longer than the others. Chu waited for him to finish before continuing with the lesson and did not pressure him in any way. The evidence from the School and Sawyer's research suggests that more flow experience could be achieved if such time was built in to schedules, as well as

giving teachers and students opportunities to explore selected concepts in greater depth.

Although flow was achieved at the School, Sawyer (2006, 253) notes that improvisation's unpredictability makes it a risky way to achieve it. Furthermore, group flow may also be easier to achieve in social or cultural contexts where intra-group relationships and harmony are recognised as important, than in those where they are not; another issue for many educational settings. Becker (2000) describes how improvisation has etiquette, likening musical interaction to the implicit rules of good social conduct. For example, while everyone should have the freedom to express themselves, they simultaneously depend on one another and have to rein in that freedom for the good of the group.

6.4 Novelty and appropriateness

Boundaries, guidelines, rules

Appropriateness in a dance activity or teaching is determined by curriculum, task or pedagogical boundaries and guidelines. It is these that help a school's leaders, teachers and students recognise, judge and understand their and others' creative outcomes, whether a dance movement or phrase, teaching strategy or lesson plan. At the Cloud Gate Dance School such boundaries are very clearly and closely defined. This appears antithetical to the promotion of creativity and original thought. Despite the importance of such constraints, divergent thinking was at the heart of the creative process, and there was openness to new ideas. As Plucker and Beghetto (2004, 157) explain, that which is new but has no use, merit or significance is simply novel, not creative. Likewise, that which is simply appropriate or useful but not novel is also not creative. The use, merit and significance of an outcome are determined by context and constraint.

The importance of constraint has been discussed by many authors who similarly agree that, without it, the creative act cannot take place (for example Abbs, 1989; Boden, 1994; Smith-Autard, 2002). Blom and Chaplin (2000, 9) point out the value of limitations in improvisation in focusing creative activity. While specific activity

constraints can be introduced by the teacher, it must not be forgotten that they also exist as a combination of the properties, histories and traditions of the dance genre, and the personality and experiences of the creator (Gibbons, 2007, 197-203).

Appropriateness was a major factor at the Cloud Gate Dance School. Throughout the Life Pulse level 5 observations, Chu honed the students' attention on the particular aspects or ideas to be explored. Her guidance was always clear and precise, and followed by the students. Once activities had started, she gave constant encouragement and guidance that allowed exploration of the movement or dramatic possibilities, while keeping everyone within the task boundaries. However, Chu was not the sole arbiter of what was creative and what was not. She set the rules, but also listened to student voices regarding outcomes.

The students only attempted to break the guidelines on two occasions, with Chu's reaction demonstrating just how important she regarded them. The first came when some students attempted to take over the story of wolves and sheep in the forest as described above. The other came in lesson 16 ('Pupa'), when the students took on the role of a silkworm in a chrysalis. Each student lay on the floor inside a body-size bag made of a stretchy material. At first they just moved inside the bag, before Chu explained the worm was tired and needed to sleep. When she told the 'worms' to wake up, she encouraged them to fight their way out of their chrysalis (bag) slowly. At first, everyone did so remaining on the floor. After a short while, one student stood up, making the task much easier. This was a creative decision by her, having thought about the problem, and arrived at a considered solution that made the task easier. Although Chu had not explicitly said they could not stand up, she immediately gently encouraged the child to pull the bag back over her head and return to lying on the floor, thus returning to the initial plan. She also explained to the student why it had to be done this way. Especially in the wolves and sheep activity, the activity objectives would probably still have been met. Chu's reaction to the breaking of the guidelines meant any individual exploration of new ideas, and where they might lead, was not allowed.

Not only did the students keep to the activity guidelines, but, apart from the above examples, Chu never explicitly felt it necessary to say they had to do so. They understood and accepted what was, and was not, appropriate. In part, I consider Chu was correct when she argued that the reason constraints are rarely challenged is because guidelines are always clearly stated and activities are simple. The students' attitudes and behaviour also reflected the importance placed on the social hierarchy and the high esteem in which elders and teachers are held in Taiwan, and respect for social norms discussed in Chapter 1. In all the classes observed, there was equally a tacit understanding of what constituted acceptable studio behaviour.

Wen (2007a) and Ho (2007) echoed Chu's comments when they indicated that clarity of task was essential to ensure students understood what to do, and thus lesson objectives were met. Such clarity of task, allied with an emphasis on keeping to the guidelines, as in Life Pulse, can lead to a rigidity that excludes areas of creative exploration. Rather than creating a range of divergent outcomes, some of which may not be appropriate, creativity is stifled and a smaller range of predominantly effective divergent ones are produced. Furthermore, where teachers are experienced, they will be able to predict those outcomes with a significant degree of certainty. During one discussion Chu declared, "I know what is likely to happen." I have no evidence that this was the *raison d'être* at the School, but making tasks very clear can be a device for maintaining control, which, as noted a number of times previously, is a feature of Taiwanese education.

There is, however, a balance that needs to be struck. Research indicates that clarity of task can also positively impact students' positive affect, especially at younger ages, which as outlined in Chapter 3 is regarded as an important if creative outcomes are to be generated (Fortin and Sidentop, 1995, 9). The uncertainty that comes from a lack of clarity can lead to a weakening of positive climate and student motivation in a lesson.

Ho (2007) alluded to this when she agreed wholeheartedly with Chu's approach. She explained, "Some teachers are not clear. They don't really tell [students] the rules. They don't give the children limitations. They become unsure and can do anything."

To me that is not creativity.” She added that teachers have to be “precise, even demanding,” because if they are not, the students will continue to move in the same way.

The importance of boundaries reflects the view of a number of scholars that East Asian societies, grounded in the ideals of interdependence, cooperation and authoritarianism, traditionally have a different perspective on the inherent meaning of novelty and originality (for example, Li, 1997; Lubart, 1999; Rudowicz, 2003, 2004; Leung, Au and Leung, 2004). Li, in particular, highlights how aims, methods and symbols are subject to modification and radical change in the creative tradition of the West, but how in the East the focus is on adapting and making small changes to the existing paradigm, which in the arts manifests itself in the reinterpretation of something that already exists, and respect for traditions.

While the teacher manual provides such an existing paradigm for teachers, in many tasks the level 5 students discovered their own starting point for activities. Chu explained tasks, but did not provide a model. Her encouragement and prompting then guided, but did not direct, them to try new and different ways. During activities, she never asked, “How can you change it?” preferring such as “What else can you do.” The rapid-fire nature of many activities, especially in the initial weeks, meant students did not have time to consider what they had done previously. I accept, though, that there may have been some unconscious consideration or a ‘feel’ for what was right as suggested by Stuart (2007). Once an activity began, especially those which repeated a task, a paradigm was established, albeit one personal to each student. While some students did tend to make shapes that were simply variations on what had gone before, most did attempt new and different ones.

While the importance of curriculum and activity constraints at the School mirrors that in East Asian societies generally, boundaries are important in any educational context. As McFee (1994, 163) observes, free expression with no guidelines in a dance lesson is tantamount to saying ‘anything goes.’ If a view is taken that all guidelines or rules impinge on student creativity, and should therefore be avoided, the teacher’s role is reduced to providing a safe and supportive environment, suitable stimuli and

preventing interference from outside influence. I concur with Best (1979), who argues that students cannot have expression without understanding. The teacher, through activity guidelines, helps provide a framework and scaffold learning through which understanding is gained. Using Cropley's (2006, 399) division of divergent and convergent thinking in the creative process, students use the former to generate ideas; link, transform and develop movements and concepts; and create surprise; while convergent thinking applies known or imposed concepts and ensures guidelines are preserved.

Chu explained that her insistence on keeping to the activity boundaries was based on a need to ensure that the objectives of each activity were met. In other words, student outcomes were only appropriate if they met the aims of the task being undertaken. Her view parallels that of Sternberg and Lubart (1999, 3), who insist that a creative product must be adapted to task constraints. I agree with Boden (1994), who is more specific, saying that it is those very constraints that make a product or idea creative rather than being merely original. Creativity does not take place in a vacuum. Without constraints there would be no expectations against which outcomes can be measured, and therefore no surprise. Wen (2007a) went even further, saying that, "The best creativity often comes when there are lots of boundaries. The best solutions are when you come up with new ideas and where there are lots of limitations."

Although Chu guided the students' creativity during lessons, and thus, at least partly, guided their outcomes towards a reflection of her view of what was creative, she also encouraged them to show personal expression by asking them to think of new ways an activity could be done. She explained how, when asked to reach up or down with parts of the body, most children's initial poses involve standing on tiptoe, reaching up with the whole body, extending the arms and hands towards the ceiling. To counter this and encourage them to try a different approach, she added how she always asked them to think what other part of the body they could reach up with, and if there was another way of doing so without standing on tiptoe, thus extending students while keeping them within the boundaries.

During lessons, such comments were always couched as suggestions. Chu said this was important, adding, “I never say ‘do this’; I only ever suggest.” While true, it must be recognised that suggestion can easily be taken as instruction. I consider this is especially so in a context such as Taiwan, where all forms of education are teacher-centred, and where the one-way transmission of knowledge is common. I acknowledge, however, that saying nothing would negate the teacher’s role as a guide and facilitator of learning.

While Chu was adamant that the existence of boundaries did not mean she closed her mind to possibilities, there were occasions when she appeared to do just that, for example in the story of the wolves and sheep in lesson 13, and the silkworm chrysalis task in lesson 16, described previously. In both cases what appeared paramount was that the activity boundary remained intact. She later explained that, if she had not intervened, she considered it unlikely the learning objectives would have been met. I defer and consider otherwise. I concede, though, that if this proved not to be the case, time constraints would have made it difficult to repeat the exercise.

New, but on whose terms?

Just as creative ideas or outcomes must be relevant or appropriate to a given situation, so the novelty condition recognises that it is indispensably related to that which is new or different in some way. As Kaufman (2003b, 236) notes, though, while novelty of product or expression is integral to the essence of the creative phenomenon, the criteria for it are often far from clear. Novelty is also a relative concept that can range across a broad spectrum from replication or keeping to the status quo to various ways in which the existing paradigm is rejected.

As previously explained, Chu watched and gave encouragement to the students throughout activities, albeit usually on a group rather than a personal basis. She also continually assessed their outcomes and processes, and made judgements about what they were doing using three reference points. She said, “I am always thinking about what they have done in the past and comparing it to that,” adding that although this was always her first thought, she sometimes made comparisons with others in the

class and what other students of the same age had done previously in other classes. She said, "I never just react."

Chu's three reference points closely mirror the view of the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (1999, 32), which saw and valued originality as existing at the same three-levels. A fourth was added, original in terms of anyone's previous work, although this is not relevant to child educational settings as they are unlikely to produce paradigm-changing outcomes. The manner in which Chu's judgements were particular to the child also parallels the assessment processes of music educators in a study by Odena (2006).

At first sight her conception of student creativity is of the 'little-c' type referred to in Chapter 3 (Gardner, 1993; Craft, 2000). Unlike in 'little-c', Chu's judgement is not based solely on creative outcomes. She explained that she not only considers what each child is doing, but why, especially if those outcomes are not what she would expect. Her judgements were made with reference to the student's interpretations and perspectives, which included personal aspects of the process. She was able to access the children's thoughts and understand their perspectives by talking to them. She considered this also gave her an opportunity to help each student recognise and understand what they had done. Sometimes this took place during activities, but only if it did not disturb the student's flow. More commonly it took place at the end of each task.

This approach moves matters closer to Beghetto and Kaufman's (2007) definition of 'mini-c' creativity, namely that it involves "the novel and personally meaningful interpretation of experiences, actions and events." As in their model, the focus is not only on creative outcomes, but on processes that happen along the way. Beghetto and Kaufman see judgments as the sole prerogative of the creator. They are intrapersonal with interpretations not necessarily original or meaningful to others. At the School, not only are students' experiences, actions and events guided by teachers, but so are their judgements, albeit with some reference to their private processes.

The approach also suggests a respect for each child as an individual. Although Chu used the word 'success' in discussions, she emphasised that she never considers students fail an activity, they simply have different levels of achievement. Wen (2007a) echoed this when she said, "We respect their own way of doing things and co-operating with their bodies. One attitude but many different ways, that is what I say to the teachers." Later she added that, "Life Pulse doesn't put new things on children's bodies. We just accept, and let them work with, what they already have." From my observations, she is correct in part. Although all the activities observed had scope for an individual approach, and students were always encouraged to explore further and to gain a deeper understanding, that exploration was always closely guided by Chu.

When is creativity?

Most creative dance texts for teachers suggest that activities should culminate in some form of informal sharing with peers in the studio (for example, McCutcheon, 2006; Smith-Autard, 2002; Gough, 1999). It is this part of the process that allows for observation and critique, by peers or others. The preceding process is one of experimenting, remembering and continual refining until a final dance work is produced. As a result, both students and teachers can suffer a tension between reviewing the past and planning for the future, and simultaneously trying to attend to the experience of the present (Bannon and Sanderson, 2000, 19).

Life Pulse level 5 is not about making dances or creativity through composition. Although students were sometimes asked to demonstrate during the observations, it was always their present interpretation of the concept being explored. They were never asked to reproduce previous experiments. While many activities involved the repetition of a movement or dramatic concept, the implied intention in Chu's teaching was not that students should remember what had gone before, but that each experiment with a concept or movement theme was approached as if it was the first time, even though each change or improvement acknowledged what went before. In such an approach, each experiment is a creative outcome in its own right, with novelty being ephemeral. The creative process and product are co-occurring (Sawyer, 2003, 165). As Carter (2000, 181) observes, the process becomes more important than the

product, although in Life Pulse it was only in a state of constant flux during the prolonged improvisation in lesson 17. In general, it was a series of individual realisations of the same concept.

This emphasis on the present contrasts with most of the creativity literature where, although increasing attention is being given to process, the focus remains on those specific processes that result in objective, ostensible products that remain after the creative act is complete (Sawyer, 2003, 165). Indeed, as Cropley (2006, 396) and Averill, Chan and Hahn (2001, 172) among others highlight, judgements about novelty and appropriateness are often made in hindsight, and may change over time. While what a student did in improvisation in a lesson can still be judged through recall, it cannot be judged in the way Cropley had in mind by reference to some remaining, tangible product.

Although, as stated in Chapter 3, the focus in the West tends to be on the visible products of creative activities, the findings suggest that teachers should explore student understandings, especially why outcomes that may seem non-creative occurred. Plucker and Beghetto (2004, 159) point out creativity not only varies with domain but with social context, and that what is regarded as creative in one social context will not necessarily be seen as such in another. Drawing on Richards (2001), they posit that recognising that individuals in a given context determine what is or is not creative reframes the division between 'Big-C' and 'little-c' creativity, the former being determined within the scope of a wide social group, perhaps even society at large, while the latter is determined by a narrower social context.

All individuals are members of multiple groups and will bring their own understandings to the dance studio. In any dance class, but especially those with students from different cultural backgrounds, people may have differing conceptions of creativity. The relative emphasis placed on novelty and contrast, personal authenticity, individual or group, may vary between individuals. Educators also need to be aware that, as Averill, Chon and Hahn (2001, 172) point out, just because some may judge novelty and appropriateness using different standards, this does not imply they place a difference on their importance *per se* as criteria for creativity.

The findings suggest a need for an increased understanding among educators of the effects of activity constraints. Constraint in any creative activity is going to restrict outcomes. As Slutskaya (2006, 152) notes, setting boundaries and limiting options can also open up possibilities for creating something new. In any class, some students may find it difficult to work when constraints are very loose, others when they are very tight. While accepting it is difficult and perhaps even impossible to achieve, what teachers have to aim for is a balance that works for the whole class between control and release, containment and freedom, and in codified technique-based classes, between technique and inspiration.

6.5 The overall creative process for students

In Chapter 5, I suggested that the construction of a knowledge base could be seen as the preparation phase of Wallas' (1926) or Craft's (2000) models of the creative cycle. As the observations progressed, I increasingly began to question whether creativity, at least creativity as constructed for students at the Cloud Gate Dance School, took such a simple straight-line or cyclical form, at least with such clearly delineated stages.

In one sense the structure of lessons and teaching strategies was cyclical. Following the setting of each task, the students experimented with the concept or idea, trying out various approaches, sometimes persisting with one, sometimes changing direction in response to Chu's guidance. Then, when they had gained an understanding of the concept, a new element was introduced that extended what had gone before and that introduced an additional issue for them to deal with in a new activity.

For example, lesson 14 ('Follow the Sound of the Piano') focused on rhythm and pitch and included various activities that guided the students to recognise and react to them in different ways. An early exercise required the students to walk around the studio as Chu repeatedly played a single note on the piano, then freeze "like a statue" when she stopped. Next, she sometimes used one key, or two together, the students having to walk and freeze, alone or with a partner. Then, she played one, two or three keys randomly. The tasks, and challenges, explorations and discovery of multiple solutions continued apace as Chu added high and low notes to the range she played,

the students having to walk, then freeze in high or low positions, singly or in groups, as appropriate. Each task presented the students with a new challenge but used the outcomes from the previous one as a starting point. Each problem was explored with a number of solutions devised, but the end of each task simply signalled the introduction of a new element and the beginning of a new cycle. An important difference from most models of creativity was that each activity or problem ended not with a single visible, tangible product that could be further refined, such as a dance phrase, but with an understanding of the best way or ways of solving that problem.

There are parallels to the idea of understanding being an outcome of activities in the Pre-professional course. Although students in Basic level 1 learn a number of set exercises, the focus is very much on gaining an understanding of the body rather than the exercise *per se*. For example, during the 'Swan and Ball' exercise, the emphasis is not on each position within it, but on understanding how to achieve it and why. This was equally true in the Senior level 1 course. Although this focuses on a combination of basic codified ballet and Graham technique, many of the teacher's comments and explanations in the lessons observed were not about what to do but about how to do it and why.

As already demonstrated, lessons were never isolated from one another. Chu often explicitly made a link to what had gone before, as, for example, when she reminded them about 'up' and 'down' before the various activities in lesson 17 ('Poem Dance 1'). Such references were, however, always to the concept, theme or process; not to specific, visible outcomes.

Life Pulse has different temporal dimensions for the student and teacher. While Chu considered how past concepts discovered by students could be used both in the present and the future, the focus for the children was very much on the present, with, as already noted, each experiment in an activity approached as if it was the first time. This contrasts strongly with the emphasis on both the past and future, within the generic creativity literature and much of that which is dance-specific and linked to the idea of honing ideas and narrowing down outcomes towards a final product. There was, for example, no allowance for taking time away from the problem, a phase

within both Wallas' (1926) and Craft's (2000) models. Wallas referred to this as 'incubation', whereas Craft saw it as a time in which potential solutions were narrowed down and individual possibilities focused upon. The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (1999, 91) similarly suggested that "time away from a problem may facilitate its solution." Significantly, Abbs' (1989) model of creativity in the arts does not include such a stage, but instead has a time when the artist works with the medium, which parallels what happens at the School where the understanding of concepts is facilitated by continuous experimentation in movement that is spontaneous rather than considered.

While there was no formal allowance for incubation within Life Pulse lessons, there was some evidence of it taking place, particularly by the one boy in the class. Both Chu and I noted how he quite clearly thought about actions and suggestions before making them. For example, when everyone was sitting around the circle either discussing an activity or offering suggestions for a present task, most of the students immediately raised their hands to speak or even just began to call ideas out. The boy was more considered. He was never the first to speak, preferring to think and to listen to everyone else before speaking up, often with ideas or movements that were significantly different from the others. During activities, he sometimes watched others, thought about and revised ideas as in the activity when the studio was being measured with different parts of the body described previously. Indeed, on this occasion he explicitly told Chu he had watched and thought about what the others were doing before arriving at his own solution. The literature tends to imply that incubation is over a lengthy period, but there is no reason why it cannot just last a few seconds as here.

Incubation is encouraged between lessons. For each lesson, the parent-student booklet contains suggested activities based on the lesson that students should do with others in their family. Following lesson 7, for example, the students are asked to observe how different kinds of animals move; and observe different kinds of natural phenomena such as the wind, waves, clouds or the moon, the way they move and the shapes they make. This encourages them to revisit themes or ideas later. Chu sees such activities

as very important, primarily because it gives parents an understanding of the course and encourages them to do activities with their child. It is a form of incubation and the students did sometimes arrive at the next lesson with new ideas based on what they had done at home. The book also contains two or three student self-assessment questions that they complete at the end of the lesson. For example, for lesson 7 there are two statements: "I can use many different kinds of pathways" and "I can imitate different animals or people in different situations." For each the student has to fill in a circle that represents "Good," "OK," or "I need to work more," which encourages reflection and self-criticism.

The position of evaluation in the creative process at the School also differs from that in many models. Chu was constantly making judgments on what the students were doing as activities proceeded and as outcomes were produced. The students were never asked publicly to comment about experiments that were particularly successful or to remember outcomes for later presentation and assessment. This approach has some similarities with Hanstein's (1993) cyclical model, in which there is a conscious attempt to defer judgement, with the dancer continuing to explore new ideas even if particularly effective ones have already been found or developed.

Students were making private judgements about their own work, which were sometimes articulated during an end of activity discussion. These focused almost exclusively on the student's voice, and on what they felt and what they particularly liked about the activity. Although Chu almost always gave encouraging and supportive comments during activities, she never looked back and gave individual post-activity feedback.

On one occasion, student judgement during an event was very clearly evidenced. In lesson 8 ('Forwards Together'), the children were measuring the width of the studio using their hands. Everyone began by placing the heel of one hand against the fingertips of the other in turn. However, the boy in the class decided to restart, not only using the hands sideways but also being very careful about accuracy. He subsequently explained to Chu that he had started again in direct response to what he

had seen the others doing, saying that he wanted to do it differently and thought his new way was better.

Such opportunities and the ability to critique one's own work is a vital part of the creative process. McCutcheon (2006, 375) considers critical thinking as part of routine self-reflection produces learners who are more intentional in their work and gives them a greater sense of ownership, and thus relevance. She also notes how students evaluating their own dance-making can refine their domain-general critical thinking skills, especially where that evaluation is made verbally. At the School such self-criticism is usually private, except at the end of Life Pulse lessons when each student rates their performance in the lesson in their parent-student booklet. In the UK, Smith-Autard (2002) similarly sees self-assessment, which she terms appreciation, as important, making it clear that it constantly develops as the creative process proceeds and that includes creator-appreciation as well as viewer-appreciation.

Although cyclical models of creativity in the generic literature are helpful in understanding the creative process, they are not a literal description of the process at the School. For example, Craft's (2000) stages of germination, when the idea or solution is conceived; assimilation, when it is finalised; and completion, where it is brought to fruition, are effectively simultaneous. Similarly, in Abbs' (1993) model, three of the five stages occur at the same time: working with the medium, realisation, and presentation and performance.¹

The same issues apply to models within dance education texts. While the processes within the separate stages identified by the Arts Council of Great Britain (1993), Hanstein (1993), Smith-Autard (2002), McCutcheon (2006) were all present, their place within the overall cycle was blurred. Although these models focus on contexts where there is a completed dance work as a final product, the evidence from the School indicates that different conceptions of the process are possible.

In summary, while the component aspects of a number of cyclical models of creativity can be seen at the School, the process has an inherent flexibility and operates beyond a given structure. The temporal dimension is central. Most theoretical models of

creativity, whether spiral or straight-line, set out the process as a number of delineated stages that occur in sequence. In Life Pulse level 5, these often occurred simultaneously or were difficult to separate. Odena (2006) reached a similar finding during his study of creativity in music composition. Common to Odena's study and this was the improvisational nature of activities, although his music students did have an end product, which was not the case at the School. The evidence suggests, though, that while the essential idea of a spiral may be appropriate to dance teaching, the position and application of each part of the process can vary significantly between contexts. I consider it may be useful for researchers to investigate further the temporal element in relation to other domains, although different domains may have a specific time emphasis for domain-specific reasons.

6.6 Conclusions

The improvisational strategies found within the Life Pulse course involve a continual interplay of movement exploration, use of kinaesthetic and narrative tasks, imagination and sensitivity to the environment. In both Life Pulse and the Pre-professional course the focus is on the sensing of the body by each individual and the gaining of a sense of self-physicality. The relationships developed are primarily between each student and his or her body, and student and process, rather than with specific outcomes. Even within the Pre-professional course, students are guided towards what Bannon and Sanderson (2000, 18) call 'moving thinkers,' rather than solely focusing on tangible, visible outcomes and principles in a particular dance tradition. The observed positive and varied outcomes, enjoyment and value attached to the School's lessons by students and parents, the latter's responses given in questionnaire replies, suggests dance educators might consider how such a sense of individualism can be promoted within their teaching and whether such an approach might lead to a lessening of negative feelings of self-worth some students feel.

The studio strategies at the School challenge the traditional roles in the dance creation process. For example, evaluation and critical assessment is usually undertaken by an audience, whether in professional theatre settings, or in education where the observers are the teacher and the dancer's peers. Those assessments are public. Here, while the

teacher was making an assessment, it remained essentially private. What was of prime importance was not what the teacher thought, but each student's own voice. The students were effectively taking on all four roles of creator; dancer; audience, in the sense of feeling what they were doing rather than seeing; and, to some extent, critic.

The view that each of the multiple outcomes in an activity is a creative product appears to place divergent thinking at the heart of the process. Simultaneous acknowledgement of task constraints and appropriateness is important as it transforms what Cropley (2006, 398) calls 'pseudocreativity' or mere novelty into 'true creativity.' It is this that makes it possible to explore, criticise, assess and identify the effectiveness of the divergent outcomes, whether that assessment is by the self or by another. There is always a compromise to be made between the creation of new ideas and appropriateness. Where that balance lies will vary according to context.

At the School, student creativity is seen as individually formed. Yet the group is important both in creating the appropriate positive affective conditions described in Chapter 5 and for group flow. This suggests educators who use groups in the creative process should consider not only group creativity, but how the energy and unconscious dynamic that groups can generate can be harnessed to encourage the creativity of the individual.

Although the boy and the older girl in the Life Pulse class regularly experimented more widely in their movement explorations, and the boy in particular appeared to give more consideration to his actions and comments, nothing can be deduced about the role of age or gender in the creative process: the numbers of children in this study are far too small. Baer (2005) affirms that that both have a part to play in creativity, and that the effect of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation may be significantly different for boys than for girls.

While taking care not to overstate the importance of the Taiwanese cultural context on the findings, the evidence from the observations resonates with the conclusions made by a number of scholars, such as Averill, Chon and Hahn (2001), that tradition and the

limitations it imposes on appropriateness are particularly important in Eastern constructions of creativity. This is not to deny there was still a place for novelty at the School. There was openness to new ideas. American psychologist Louise Sundararajan (2004, 213) observes that in the West, this is often combined with a rejection of convention, but here, both had roles to play. Similarly, the emphasis on the individual balanced by recognition of the importance of the group, indicates that both are equally important rather than that group interests are stressed over individual concerns as suggested by Chen (1995) and Rudowicz (2003, 2004).

Finally, as Press and Warburton (2007, 1273) note, creativity in dance at the School is seen both as a means to an end, and as an end in itself. It is a skill that can be used to create something new for personal or shared purposes. It is also a process in which bodies and minds actively pursue new knowledge about a sense of self, others, the physical environment and the embodied nature of symbolic systems. It encompasses all aspects of dance-making, from initial movement making to performance and assessment.

Although this chapter has focused on the students, many similar issues, especially novelty and appropriateness, also apply to teachers, as they relate to teaching strategies adopted in the studio. This is discussed in the following chapter.

Notes

- ¹ Abbs' (1989) conceptualisation of the creative cycle in the arts consists of five phases the artist and the artwork pass through together: the impulse to create (stimulus), working within the medium, realisation of final form, presentation and performance, and response and evaluation.

CHAPTER 7

CURRICULA, CREATIVE TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6, I considered the construction of creativity for students, showing how it is promoted and valued by the School's teachers and leaders; seen as individually formed, with children encouraged to engage in divergent thinking; and produces multiple outcomes, albeit within clearly defined parameters. I now move on to investigate the apparently paradoxical position taken regarding creativity for teachers, and considers the extent to which they sustain and effectively practice a creative approach to teaching within the framework that governs their practice.

In doing so, I first consider the School's curricula and pedagogical policies. Reflecting the views of the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (1999, 41) that creative teaching is focused on the teacher's practice, and Jeffrey and Craft (2001; 2004), who suggest it can be interpreted as effective teaching, I then look at practice in the studio and how teachers endeavour to make learning more interesting and effective. This is considered in two parts: practices that are planned, and those that can be seen as a form of improvisation. Finally, School-wide policies designed to develop and enhance teacher creativity are reviewed.

7.2 Curricula

As previously stated, Life Pulse and Pre-professional teachers must follow set curricula, including the content and objectives for each course and level, and in Life Pulse, each lesson. This is regarded as important by the School's leaders if the overall course framework and cross-curricula links are to be preserved. Those links were evidenced during the observations. At one point, for example, both the Life Pulse level 5 and Pre-professional Basic level students, some of whom were in both classes, were working with concepts of 'open' and 'close'.

Standardisation of educational provision is neither new nor unique. As previously noted, despite the curriculum reforms of 2001, and schools starting to take up

opportunities for increased freedom about how and what is taught, curriculum standards and guidance throughout Taiwanese general education remain subject to goals and policies laid down centrally by the Ministry of Education. In dance in Taiwan, while some dance schools follow highly standardised technique training syllabi drawn up by examination-based organisations, I am unaware of any creative dance context where curricula are as highly centralised and detailed as at the Cloud Gate Dance School.

Taiwanese author Chang Bi-yu (2004) notes how, through regulating and selecting art forms, cultural policy can be used to create a favoured ideology, reinforce selected values, maintain control, increase cultural capital value, and thus ensure the success of a cultural and political hegemony. The structuring and regulation of the School's curricula, and the manner in which they should be taught, similarly reinforces teaching and learning values and beliefs. The system is also a means of maintaining control, and admitted as such by the School's leaders.

Maintaining control is not wrong *per se*. The School is a commercial organisation in a competitive market. Establishing and maintaining quality of product is important. It must be recognised, however, that the structured curricula do constrain teaching and learning. Warburton (2009) is correct when he stresses, "Dance learning is not a neat, orderly process." Students do have different needs, and acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at different speeds. The scheduling and nature of the Cloud Gate Dance School curricula, Life Pulse in particular, leaves teachers few opportunities to explore a concept in greater depth, to recap, or to spend more time on a concept or theme if the students in a particular class require it. Students, meanwhile, have no opportunity to learn anything other than what is detailed in the parent-student guide or teacher handbook. I applaud the openness of the School in producing the parent-student guides, and consider them a valuable tool in connecting parents to the School, but the publication of individual Life Pulse lesson content in such detail further restricts what is taught. I consider it likely that questions would be raised by parents and the School's management if teachers vary from stated lesson content.

Researchers including Davis (2000), Woods (2004) and Odena (2006) argue that such standardisation and centralisation of curricula diminishes the autonomy of teachers, restricts teaching strategies and can easily purge creative thinking in the classroom. All, however, note that creativity rarely expires altogether. Amabile (1998, 81) defers, saying that the key to creativity is giving people autonomy of means but not necessarily of ends. She says, "People will be creative if you give them freedom to decide how to climb a particular mountain. You needn't let them choose which mountain to climb." Teachers at the School do have different approaches, evidenced when the regular teacher in the observed Life Pulse level 11 and Pre-professional Basic level 1 class was covered by another.

The conscious paralleling of the two curricula, and the fact that students cannot join Pre-professional classes without also taking Life Pulse, indicates a belief that the teaching and learning of creative dance and movement, and codified technique, are complimentary. As Gibbons (2007, 14) correctly observes, there is commonly a dichotomy in dance pedagogy between creating, discovering or exploring movements or phrases, and following or reproducing movement or phrases given by the teacher. I agree when she adds that these should rather be regarded as opposite ends of a spectrum, with a huge array of styles in between where the two polarities compliment each other.

The linking of curricula, and the evidence from the observations, suggests the School does not see education in specific dance technique as being only about the steps, but that an understanding of movement concepts and the body, and the encouraging of an enquiring mind, are equally important. The insistence that Life Pulse must continue alongside the Pre-professional course also removes any need to decide at what age students should move from creative dance to more technique-based learning.

The connection between Life Pulse and Pre-professional is in contrast to many educational or training institutions around the world, whether they cater for professional or non-professional students. British author Geraldine Morris (2003, 20) notes that, putting aside learning about choreography, which in any event does not happen in most private studios, many institutions interpret training steps as the dance

itself. They assume their role is to teach students to perform those steps ‘correctly,’ or at least to the prevailing values. Life Pulse, particularly through improvisational activities, gives students an understanding of interpretation. This ensures they do not become conditioned or so restricted by the ballet or Graham canon that prevails in the Pre-professional course, especially from Senior level 1, that they find it difficult to move any other way. It teaches them about their bodies in such a way that gives them a greater understanding and ownership of the codified movement.

Looking beyond the School, I further agree with Gibbons (2007, 15) when she observes that if a dichotomy between creative dance and technique is allowed to persist, it is likely to produce dancers who are either creators or excellent technically, but not both. As she adds, production and reproduction teaching methods can be used side by side, and can bridge ages, technique and choreography. However, I consider that care needs to be taken that such connections do not inadvertently serve to restrict creativity in one or both areas. The maintenance of links can become so important that potential developments in one or other courses are constrained.

7.3 Creative teaching

In Chapter 3, I noted that creative teaching is focused on teacher behaviour and practice, and that learners’ creative abilities are most likely to be developed in an atmosphere where the teacher’s creative abilities are similarly engaged (Craft, 2005, 44; National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, 1999, 103). As shown above, the curricula at the Cloud Gate Dance School are highly structured with little opportunity for teacher flexibility about what is taught. I now examine teaching practice at the School and consider the extent to which creative teaching can take place in such an apparently controlled system.

For any analysis of teacher behaviour to be valid, the behaviour observed, and which that analysis is based, must be faithful to their everyday teaching. My experience as a workplace analyst suggests that all workers appropriate procedures creatively. Not only was it most unusual for people to work as if I was not present, at least initially, but there was a tendency for them to follow stated procedures very accurately indeed.

Only with time, as they became accustomed to the researcher's gaze, did they perform their tasks as when the researcher was not present. I had similar concerns about the fieldwork in this study, especially in Life Pulse level 5, where I considered the likelihood of 'teaching by the book' was increased due to the presence of a trainee teacher in all lessons. I was assured by Chu and the other teachers that they were teaching as usual. While I would not expect them to say otherwise, I consider the length of the observations was such that any deviance from the norm would have become apparent.

Control of pedagogy

Since creativity involves problem solving and decision-making (see Chapter 3), if teachers are to be creative in their teaching it follows that they must have some freedom of pedagogy. Each teacher is guided by the School's centrally-produced teacher manuals and the suggested teaching strategies therein, that are designed to ensure course and lesson objectives are met. Yet, as I have previously observed, suggestion can easily become instruction, which raises questions about just how much control teachers truly have.

The manuals are produced for each level of every course. Those for Life Pulse, with its discrete objectives for each lesson, contain lesson-specific plans and strategies. The Pre-professional course manuals set out separate strategies for each exercise to be learned during a semester. Each lesson plan and strategy has been considered by senior teachers, the School's leaders and curriculum consultants, and then tested under real-life studio conditions before being incorporated into the book. Changes are made from time to time as new lesson plans or possible ways of teaching a task are agreed. Wen (2007a) described them as being, "for ever a work in progress." Example translated pages from manuals are shown in Appendices 15 and 16.

Given the commercial sensitivity of the manuals and the School's wish to protect its intellectual property rights, I was only able to negotiate access to pages for two Life Pulse level 5 lessons, and two Pre-professional Basic level 1 exercises. From these, and by talking to teachers it was clear that the Life Pulse level 5 manual is more

specific about strategies than is the Pre-professional manual, which focuses more on the movement of the set exercise than how to teach it.

The restricted access made it difficult to determine the extent teachers varied planned activities or exercises from guidance, although it was possible to identify occasions where they devised their own methods and others where they followed the manual very precisely. Zhu employed her own variation on strategy in the Dance of the Stars exercise in Pre-professional Basic level 1, which involves the students passing imaginary stars between each other. She asked the students to sit around the circle marked on the floor in the centre of the studio rather than in two lines facing each other as suggested, which made it easier to keep the exercise flowing.

In her class, Gao added to the teaching guidance while similarly remaining true to the curriculum framework. Life Pulse level 11 focuses on world dance. In each lesson the students not only learn short sections of folk dance from a given country, but also read about that country's culture and history from their parent-student booklet. Gao always preferred to ask questions and engage the children in discussion. She always brought additional resources to the studio, most commonly her own travel magazines or books. Sometimes, she even brought food from the country in question for the students to try such as Belgian chocolate or German sausage. Besides adding real-life relevance to the subject, her approach increased the students' enthusiasm for learning, evidenced by the eager way they always approached this part of lessons.

Although Chu is a very experienced Life Pulse teacher, and claimed she always regarded the manual as a flexible guide, I was unable to identify what I considered to be any significant variation in strategies in the two lessons for which I had pages. On one occasion she followed the suggested strategy very precisely indeed. The objectives for lesson 12 require the students to imitate the movement and emotions of certain animals. Chu showed a student a picture of an animal, then asked him or her to demonstrate so the others could guess what it was. The pictures are part of the teaching materials provided by the School. Following this, all the students used their own bodies to imitate the animal and express particular feelings and emotions as directed by the teacher. Not only did Chu select five animals, exactly the number

suggested in the manual, she selected the same five suggested (cat, tiger, bird, cow and dog), even though she had fifteen to choose from. Later in the lesson, other strategies were taken directly, including having the students play different animals in pairs so they cannot imitate each other, as the others watched to see which is which; and dividing the students into two groups, both playing animals, but making high and low sounds respectively.

Wen and the curriculum consultants interviewed insisted that the manuals should be used as guides rather than as scripts that should always be followed. Ho (2007) stressed that teachers should not be “people who just implement, who don’t think but just follow the guidelines.” Wen (2007a) and Ho (2007) consider the manuals especially important for new or inexperienced teachers, since they lead them away from the pedagogy common in Taiwan, in which the teacher is the sole source of knowledge, and which most will have experienced in both general education and vocational dance training.

Although concurring with Ho and Wen’s view, there are dangers inherent in such publications. As previously noted for students, suggestion can be powerful and easily become instruction. The teaching manuals form part of the teachers’ knowledge base on which subsequent creativity can be built. They were designed and written by well-known curriculum consultants who the other teachers respect. I did not pursue it at the time, but in retrospect I question whether departing dramatically from the manual could be perceived as being disloyal to the designers and the School. As observed in Chapter 1, there is a reluctance to challenge the social hierarchy in Taiwanese society. Furthermore, Hui, Lee and Rousseau’s (2004, 232-3) and Zhu, Chen and Warner’s (2000, 32) observe that the Taiwanese tend to relate to the workplace through personal loyalty to the people in it. In such a setting I consider it likely that any such manuals would normally be followed closely.

There is a more prosaic issue. The importance placed on meeting lesson and course objectives was emphasised by its being mentioned numerous times in conversation and interview. New and experienced teachers may find using them rewarding since it increases the likelihood that they will achieve those objectives. Furthermore, in the

first few years teachers tend to follow lesson plans they were taught to use and get nervous if a child or events divert them from their course (Sawyer, 2003, 184). I consider that even experienced teachers such as those observed may find it difficult to break free from tried and trusted methods, even though they realise their limitations. In such circumstances, the self becomes an inhibitor and plays a major role in sustaining existing practices rather than being an agent of change (Woods, 2004).

Despite these issues, Ho and Wen stressed teachers should find their own methods after a short period. Wen said she would expect to see some such development after six months, although Ho considered it could take as long as two years before teachers were truly creative. Sawyer (2003, 184) suggests an even longer frame, saying it takes many years of practice before teachers feel completely at ease devising and implementing their own strategies.

Given the limited access to manuals and the limited number of teachers involved in the fieldwork, I was unable to ascertain the full extent to which teachers devise their own methods, but Ho indicated it was a problem. She said the vocational training background of most of the School's teachers lead to a "not to think, only to do" attitude. She added that even some of the more experienced teachers seem to think if something is written down it must be important and must be followed, but ignore the point that they are only suggestions, not instructions (Ho, 2007).

Although I agree that the manuals should help guide teachers towards the School's preferred pedagogy, their use at least partly replaces teacher authority with management control. In any organisation, quality is measured against prescribed norms. At the School, meeting course and lesson objectives within the overall pedagogical framework formed part of that measurement, with the manuals providing an important benchmark and, for some teachers, a guarantee of success.

The need for quality was stressed by both Ho (2007) and Wen (2005, 2007a). Ho explained that, once the School had been established, it quickly became apparent that ensuring consistent quality was always going to be problematic in what was hoped from the outset would develop into a multi-branch organisation. She continued to say

that while it was initially thought a good idea that teachers should design all their own lessons, if they were not told what the most important things to teach were, some might “really go off in a totally different direction,” adding, “Then you cannot control it.”

Thus, just as the teachers at the School are trained to give students precise instructions, the School’s leaders believe they must do likewise for teachers. Ho accepts that some teachers want to change and innovate in the curriculum as well as in their teaching strategies. Echoing Wen, she believes a lack of constraint can lead to less creative outcomes since people then tend to always do what they like to do. She considers that by being specific, precise and clear, you challenge them. Retaining constraint could, however, lead to them simply always doing what someone else thinks they should do.

Despite the influence of the manuals, and that they were working within the broader framework of the School’s policies and practices, I consider the teachers did have some control of their pedagogy. Even given the limited evidence, they did find ways to take advantage of the ‘implementation gap’ between the School’s policies and frameworks and putting them into practice (Ball and Bowe, 1992). Whether they took full advantage of their freedoms is, I consider, questionable.

The Cloud Gate Dance School teachers are not unique in facing the inherent tensions and dilemmas that exist between creativity and control, and the individual and the organisation, in both curricula and pedagogy in many educational contexts (Craft, 2005, 77). As British researcher Kerry Chappell (2007) notes, with specific reference to dance, the dilemma centres around finding a balance between personal voice and freedom, and control. The former is reflected in teaching strategies that encourage risk-taking, accept the possibility of mistakes and missed objectives, and fun. Control is associated with strategies that employ specified structures to apprentice knowledge or understanding, and hard work.

In discussing control of pedagogy, it is important to recognise that it is very unusual for a teacher to be free from constraint. The wider frame in which he or she is working cannot be ignored, and there are a number of factors that might limit his or

her practice of teaching dance. For example, in a school setting, each lesson is likely to be part of the wider curriculum. Even outside of formal curricula, dance teachers are likely to be working towards specific objectives. I agree with McFee (1994, 155), who considers it important that the methods of delivery and those objectives should accord, but equally recognise there is a tension between control, ownership and creativity, and that notions of control and freedom are just as much culturally bound as is creativity.

Inventiveness and improvisation

If teachers have some control of pedagogy, it follows that they have scope for inventiveness in their teaching. Even when following a strictly defined lesson plan there is always some residual requirement for teachers to make judgements and spontaneously respond to the immediate and unique demands of children in a class, and to events that unfold during the course of action (Eisner, 1985, 176). Halliwell (1993, 69-71) describes this as 'inventive flexibility.' For example, if a student calls out unexpectedly, the teacher needs to decide immediately whether to acknowledge them, approve their comment, or otherwise, before returning to the script. Similarly, if a student is slow at understanding a concept or learning an exercise, the teacher needs carefully to consider why, and what if any changes to make to the lesson plan to achieve a breakthrough to learning. As Woods (2004) notes, sometimes this can be akin to detective work.

Sawyer (2003, 183; 2004) argues such teaching can be seen as 'disciplined improvisation', a term he borrows from theatre studies, and which emphasises the balance of freedom and structure in the construction of meaning. This is in contrast to improvisation in dance practice, which is often seen as a means of suppressing the known and the expected, which is necessary to break the causal link between convention and new practice (Carter, 2000, 181). Foucault (1972, 229) suggests the structural characteristics of improvisation reside in the formation of action and not in any existing model. The disciplined improvisation observed at the School rather respected, and did not undermine, the norms and values of its existing teaching model.

The teachers observed did take advantage of unexpected events where they perceived an opportunity for students to explore movement in a different way and thus extend their learning. In Chu's Life Pulse class, one such example came in lesson 15. The students had been improvising what they thought might be the movement an alien would make, then freezing in a position of their choice when Chu stopped the CD of electronic sounds. When she called them back to the circle in the centre of the studio after the final pose, most simply walked back and sat cross-legged as usual. The boy in the class, who had taken a position on the floor, instead decided to return by turning very fast on his bottom and knees, using his hands as support. Chu exclaimed, "Wow! Look at that!" before asking him to show the other students, and then letting them try and imitate him.

Such opportunities also arose in the Pre-Professional lessons. In Basic level 1 lesson 11, the students were doing an exercise where they had to roll across the floor, each time going through a curled position on their knees, in pairs and in time to a rhythm beaten by the teacher using a mallet on a drum. Those students who had finished spontaneously started clapping to the rhythm, but quickly became slightly out of time. Zhu stopped the activity and took time out to explain the rhythm to them, and encouraged them to clap, thus incorporating another learning element into the activity.

Mehan (1979), in a study of American first grade classroom dynamics, found that such reaction not only happens effortlessly, but also subconsciously as teachers improvise variations depending upon the demands at the time. Chu reflected the subconscious nature of the process when she was asked if she could give examples of instances where she had changed what she planned to do. After a long pause she said, "It's very difficult to think of specific examples. Because, you see, I do it all the time. I just don't think about it." I was surprised Chu could not think of any examples. As a teacher I agree with Mehan and Chu that such improvisation occurs intuitively, but afterwards I am usually aware that it happened.

Despite these observations, one aspect of lessons where teachers clearly and frequently improvised was in the language they used and the way they communicated with students, in conversation, description, feedback, and even in jokes. Lee Ching-

chun (2008), the original designer of the Pre-professional course and now curriculum consultant, strongly believes language is one of the most important aspects of lessons, both in terms of what is said, and how. Ho (2007) considers that such opportunities to be inventive are important for many teachers who feel the need to be creative and who would otherwise get bored.

Sawyer (2004, 17) emphasises the role of improvisation in fostering teacher creativity in particular. Simonton (1988) similarly refers to the process as 'intuitive creativity.' In contrast to Jeffrey and Craft's (2001, 7) view that centralised pedagogy and curricula suggests a view of teachers as technicians, Sawyer's view that teaching should be recognised as disciplined improvisation, even within such frameworks, recognises them more as creative professionals. Eisner (1985, 176-7) similarly sees teachers as creative artists who have to cope with a variety of contingencies and unpredictable events that occur in every classroom.

While teacher improvisation undoubtedly happened at the School, a number of factors lead me to question its extent. In *Life Pulse*, I consider that the simple nature of the exercises, clarity and preciseness of instruction, and the respect for the teacher, which meant those instructions were invariably followed, combined to reduce opportunities. In the Pre-professional course, the learning of set exercises, and in Basic level 1 the serious studio atmosphere, further restricted reduced the likelihood of unexpected events of which teachers could take advantage.

Ownership of knowledge and practice

Invention and improvisation suggests ownership of knowledge and practice. Although the teachers were working within a structured curriculum and the concepts and knowledge contained therein, they never appeared to be simply passing on another's information or ideas to the students. From discussions, the teachers appeared to believe they had some ownership of the curricula. Only Gao regularly suggested a sense that this was a job somehow separated from her real self. I was not surprised to learn that she resigned from the School shortly after the fieldwork was completed.

That Chu and Huang indicated they had some ownership of their teaching was not wholly surprising. Chu is a senior teacher and has input to lesson plan design. She did appear to have a personal attachment to the curriculum and pedagogy. Huang, meanwhile, drew heavily on his own technical ability and personal experiences away from the School to transfer knowledge and apply it to the social circumstances of his classrooms in ways that fostered students' learning. Whether, like Gao, other teachers would have demonstrated less ownership is unclear.

The sense of ownership was further enhanced by the way in which the teachers identified with the goals of the School and intended to those goals to the best of their ability. They did have an affective commitment. Hui, Lee and Rousseau (2004, 232) observe that this is common in Taiwanese organisations, which are often perceived as large families, with individuals therein sharing similar values to families, and that develop and nurture members.

Ownership of knowledge also has a student dimension. In Chapter 5, for example, it was shown how each child's knowledge base is personally constructed, albeit that construction is teacher guided. The children's ownership was further enhanced by the way Chu and Huang, in particular, regularly used to play down any idea they might have that teachers were omniscient. They would sometimes share in the children's puzzlement, feign surprise or pretend to be as mystified as them, thus encouraging them to come up with solutions. Huang regularly even used to make deliberate mistakes either in quickly recapping an exercise which the students already knew or in demonstrating, thus tacitly inviting correction from students, which they were always quick to give.

Student ownership of knowledge was also encouraged by the strategy of only briefly demonstrating or explaining an exercise before asking students to attempt it. Indeed, in Life Pulse level 5, Chu often only explained, but even in the Pre-professional lessons, demonstration was kept to a minimum before the students attempted an exercise. Only after this first attempt did the teacher engage in detailed discussion and explanation. Huang in particular encouraged them to participate and ask questions at this point, for example asking why something looked incorrect or ugly. The students

were then almost always given the opportunity to undertake the exercise again and refine their approach in the light of their previous experience and new knowledge gained. Apart from providing increased opportunities for discussion, the approach provided further evidence that that problem finding was seen as important as problem solving, allows greater personal understanding of the exercise, and leaves space within its technical execution of the exercises for some personal interpretation.

Relevance

I agree with Warburton (2009), who says that if a dancer is not engaged with content, then they do not learn that content, or in the case of the School, understandings that develop from it. Invention and improvisation allows teachers to make material personal to each child and each class. According to Woods and Jeffery (1996), Lucas (2001) and Woods (2004), this is an essential facet of creative teaching.

The School's philosophy is to make lessons relevant to the needs of students' dance and movement education, to their wider immediate needs and interests, and to knowledge and skills that will be of lifelong benefit. Although the studio activities on the whole focused on dance and movement, the wider objectives of the curriculum go beyond immediate dance outcomes. Dance and movement is regarded as vehicle through which each child's personal, social and emotional development can be achieved. This incorporates working together and knowing oneself and others; in addition to learning dance and movement related concepts.

Wen (2007a) reflected this when she said Life Pulse was not only about the physical body but also the mind and the spirit, saying that this includes, "confidence, communication, creativity, imagination, all those kinds of things." She added, "If the kids can feel comfortable with their own bodies they can do everything they want to do in their lives." This suggests that while relevance is viewed in the studio in terms of immediate needs and interests, it also has a lifelong aspect.

To make lessons relevant to the children's immediate needs and interests, the teachers observed often drew on their actions at the time, their prior knowledge, or used subjects they were curious about or interested in. This is built into the curricula,

especially in Life Pulse level 5, but the teachers also grasped opportunities to be creative and make lessons relevant through personal strategies.

The Pre-professional course and Life Pulse level 11 teachers sometimes managed to move away from repetitive practice and make lessons more relevant. Besides teaching at the School, Gao was a freelance dancer. She drew on this experience to create a series of floor-based stretches for her class of 10 and 11 year-olds that varied from week to week. She explained this sort of warm-up was more interesting for her and the children than that in other classes, and gave an extra dimension to lessons that were mostly otherwise about learning sections of world dance by imitation and practice. It also gave her an opportunity to talk with them and assess their mood. From their questions and the discussion during this part of lessons, I consider the children did indeed find the approach relevant.

In the Pre-professional Senior level 1 class, Huang always tried to make exercises relevant by explaining why an exercise was done and where it might lead. Quite often he demonstrated what he meant, for example that a *tendu* can lead to a *degagé* or even a *battement longue*. On one occasion he showed the importance of a *demi-plié* as a preparation for a jump by demonstrating a short *grand allegro* sequence for them. Just as when Gao's discussed her warm-up, Huang explained he was trying to make the lesson more interesting, for him as well as the students. He said, "When I get into the studio, I really want to dance. I feel why should I do these boring things? I think the students feel the same." Both teachers' comments reflect the importance of teachers having the opportunity to be inventive, something recognised by Ho (2007). Huang's actions and willingness to comment so openly also reflected his confidence in his teaching and his position in the hierarchy. At the time of the fieldwork he was leading a review of the Pre-professional course.

Relevance to students is also built into the curricula by using appropriate stimuli and seeking to exploit children's love of narrative, dramatic play, and feelings of care and concern for animals and people. Woods (2001, 2004) observes this encourages feelings of empathy, which widens perspectives, provides comparative material and helps the critical formulation of thought (Woods, 2001, 2004). As already described,

Life Pulse level 5 contains many activities in which children are asked to imitate animals and think about how they might move and express their emotions, and most Pre-professional Basic level 1 activities have an associated story or image.

The suggested teaching strategies also encourage teachers to make activities relevant by associating them the children's experiences away from the School. This was a common feature of Chu's lessons. For example, at the beginning of lesson 12 in which the children took on the roles of animals, she chatted with them about who had been to the zoo and what animals they had seen. Later in the same lesson she asked if anyone had a cat or dog at home and how they moved when they were in a particular mood.

While I consider making connections to the world outside the studio is an important facet of good teaching practice for all ages, incorporating it so directly into a curriculum so closely followed takes some responsibility and freedom away from teachers. Students in different classes are likely to have different interests. The School's policies raise questions about how a teacher might respond if children in a particular class did not connect with a topic. I did not evidence this, and consider it unlikely to happen, but what, for example, if no students had been to the zoo? As Deakin Crick (2002, 48) observes correctly, a major issue with contexts that feature highly structured curricula and pedagogy is that teachers may not only have little room for discretion, but they may not even be sure how much discretion they have.

Despite the presence of highly structured curricula and pedagogy, I consider the teachers were able to be creative both in planning lessons and in responding to the immediate demands of the studio. However, as for students, that creativity took place within clearly defined, and observed, guidelines. The creativity demonstrated generally took the form of modifications to existing practices, rather than being paradigm-changing. However, as Sternberg (1999), Craft (2000), and Puccio and Gonzalez (2004) all make clear, creativity takes many forms along a continuum. While the heavily structured curricula, prescribed pedagogy and socio-cultural factors at the School significantly influence the form creativity takes, the evidence shows that they are not a barrier to teacher creativity *per se*.

What appears important is the extent to which gaps are left in curricula and practices for teachers to exploit, and the extent to which they feel able to do so. While more loosely structured curricula at the School may lead to creativity being manifested in different ways the cultural context may preclude this. As Newman *et al.* (2007, 433) observes, conformity to group values and practices is emphasised in Taiwan. A further issue is the nature of teacher assessment. Davis (2000) considers it is not inflexible and prescriptive frameworks that restrict creativity but how success is measured within them. Although Wen, Ho and Chu all stressed that teachers should develop their own strategies, the extent to which the School's teacher assessment mechanisms recognised the value in truly independent thought and unorthodox expression is unclear.

Despite the importance placed on achieving course and lesson objectives, the teachers demonstrated that they also cared strongly about the personal, social and emotional development of the children as well as their dance education. There was warmth between them, even in lessons where the atmosphere was more serious. Although this is not one of Woods' stated characteristics of creative teaching, it is implicit in his writing. Woods and Jeffrey (1996, 57) earlier called it, "Teaching people to be people." Core to the approach was the development of relationships.

Student-teacher relationships were developed in a number of ways, before, after and during lessons, and almost all of which were designed to encourage student-teacher communication. In Chapter 5, it was explained how Chu always arrived in the studio early to watch the children play, and how she found this invaluable in learning about how they felt and their mood on that day. Zhu and Huang similarly always arrived before the start of lessons. Although their students were required to stretch against the wall in side-splits during this time, both teachers always took the opportunity to engage with the children, often talking about events disconnected from the School, and thus making emotional connections with them. Like Chu, by discovering children's emotions and engaging with them in this way, the other teachers ensured they could attend to them in lessons. This in turn can help take away some of the fear from learning, and encourage risk-taking, in creative work. Relationships with parents

were built before and after lessons when the teachers made themselves available in the reception area, even though the change over time between lessons was usually only ten minutes.

The emotional connection was further enhanced by an end of lesson ritual unique to the School. Before leaving the studio the students all lined up and received a hug from the teacher. On the surface, it is no more than an expression of each student's and the teacher's mutual care and love. Coming from a British context where such close contact with students is frowned upon, I found the hug both pleasing and concerning. It can create a bond and gives teachers an opportunity to say a few private words of support and encouragement to each child, especially important if they had not seemed particularly happy in the lesson. Yet, while some students appeared to show genuine affection, others seemed much less enthusiastic. Most disturbing to me was the formalised, ritual nature of the event. The students lined up quietly, and approached the teacher one at a time. There was none of the end of lesson chatting, shouting or laughing that I would have expected.

Whether teachers should touch students in any way, let alone affectionately, is the subject of some debate in Anglo-American contexts (Marshall, 2009). In my observations at the School and elsewhere though, physical contact in dance lessons is not unusual in Taiwan. Indeed, local dance educators have expressed amazement when I have said that it is disapproved of in Britain. Besides verbal and visual correction by demonstration, both Huang and Zhu regularly corrected students in the Pre-professional classes this way, for example by placing a limb in the correct position.

7.4 Leadership initiatives

Teacher ownership and control at the Cloud Gate Dance School does not only exist at the individual teacher level. It also has a collective dimension, which is actively encouraged through a number of policy initiatives, implemented by the School's leaders and actively supported by teachers.

Tapping into a pool of diversity

Sharing of ideas and outcomes whether through observation, listening or discussion is a common feature of many dance education environments. While this is discussed in many models of dance education with respect to students, I believe teachers can similarly benefit from such processes. All teachers who wish to improve their own creativity can tap into a pool of diversity, whether at their school, through membership of a professional organisation, or by attending professional development activities. Different educators will have different ways of presenting concepts, ideas and information to students, and by viewing lessons from others' perspectives and considering what practices others employ that could be appropriated, teachers can gain new insights and develop different ways to teach.

All the teachers who participated in this study said they regularly discuss and share ideas. Much of this happens informally in the teachers' room that all branches have. Cohen (1994, 4) says that in such discussions and conversations, a mutual exchange process takes place in which hypotheses and strategies are shared (Cohen, 1994, 4). During the fieldwork, Wen and the School's curriculum consultants seemed equally keen to discuss ideas and probe for knowledge. On many occasions I was asked my opinion of curricula, teaching practices, or engaged in discussion about dance education in Taiwan and other contexts. The School also actively promotes cross-fertilisation of ideas through its programme of regular workshops and allows teachers to watch each other's lessons whenever they wish. Sawyer (2003, 183) sees such peer collaboration processes as a form of group creativity.

Given my experience in the UK, I was surprised at the extent to which teachers at the School take up opportunities to observe each others' lessons. While generalist teachers have often watched workshops I have led in primary schools, it is very unusual for other dance teachers to ask to observe, or for me to observe them. Yet, during the observations at least one other teacher was present; sometimes just watching, sometimes actively note-taking, in approximately 20% of the Life Pulse lessons and 10% of the Pre-professional lessons. I agree with Wen's (2007a) assessment of the value this brings, describing it as an opportunity for them to hold a

mirror up to their own teaching and by doing so reveal issues in their own practice that may otherwise remain hidden. Her views in part echo Runco (2003, 323), who also sees such observation and sharing as useful for building self confidence and addressing inner turmoil caused by the demands of teaching reality. However, I equally share Hill and Amabile (1993, 409) concern that, although such observation may provide a valuable learning situation, it can have a detrimental effect on the creativity of the teacher being observed.

Sharing ideas may not always lead to increased creativity and diversity. Runco (2003, 323) highlights the danger of it leading towards conformity and away from personal interpretation, both when applied to students and teachers. While I consider that watching colleagues and peers is an important part of teachers' continuing education and learning, care must be taken that it does not become 'watch and copy.' Rather it should be watch and listen, understand how and why, and develop for one's own context. Sharing can also be problematic if teaching is excessively harmonised and learners have similar abilities. Although no teacher can exactly replicate the teaching style and efforts of another, teachers in such circumstances are likely to share similar perspectives, knowledge and experiences, leading to the perpetuation of existing practice rather than the development of new ones. I consider this is a danger at the School, although I recognise that each class is different because each is open to all, regardless of ability, skill or background.

Guided engagement

As noted in Chapter 2 and above, most dance education in Taiwan is performance-oriented and most teachers have vocational training backgrounds. New teacher recruits at the School will be familiar with authoritarian pedagogical methods but will have had little experience of creative dance activities, or classrooms where students' voices are valued highly. The School, therefore, allows them opportunities to become socialised into the demands of the 'improvisational performance' of the studio (Sawyer, 2003, 184).

Through experience they acquire 'perceptual sensitivity' that allows them to diagnose and explain reasons for behaviour, feelings and outcomes, and to behave effectively in active situations; behaviour which involves creativity (Talbot, 1993, 204). They learn how to determine not only what is happening, but an understanding of why and how to do something about it. It is by engaging with the concepts in the real life studio situation that they come to understand them. Having learned how to recognise problems and issues and having built their knowledge base, they can then start to deal with problems in a more complex and creative manner.

Sometimes the trainee teacher just sits and watches, but as Ho (2007) correctly acknowledges, it can be difficult for them fully to engage with what is happening, especially if they do not have a dance background. "Sometimes you don't really know what [the children and teacher] are looking at or feeling. You just copy down what the teacher is doing," she said.

As an alternative, trainees are sometimes allowed to participate in lessons as a student. This happened throughout the Life Pulse level 5 lessons observed. Such practice mirrors the 'guided participation' model argued for by Griffiths (2004) and Griffiths and Woolf (2004), and which they consider fosters creative engagement. Their model begins with the apprentice watching and listening to an expert practitioner. At the School this sometimes extended to subsequent participation and learning new skills and techniques alongside students, as in the lessons observed. Just as experienced teachers are encouraged to watch and listen, understand how and why, and develop for their own context, as referred to above, so the apprentice then deconstructs and recreates the knowledge gained, which leads to independent creative work. The model is cyclical since further watching and listening will be at a new level.

The model undoubtedly allows the trainee to experience the give and take of studio interaction, although I question whether it is possible to participate fully or observe the teacher to the extent a non-participant observer could. My observations of the class revealed another significant issue: neither the children nor the trainee seemed sure of their roles and position. The children clearly did not accept her as part of their social group. They rarely spoke to her and regularly ignored her when asked to get

into groups for activities. Further, as Ho (2007) acknowledged, adults cannot really take part as a child since they do not think like a child. Although the trainee was engaged in experiential learning, it was not a real experience.

Creativity competition

To encourage experiments in teaching and demonstrate the value of teachers' ideas, the School's leaders have instituted an annual creative teaching competition. Teachers are encouraged to enter suggested alternative lesson plans. Entries must, though, be within the existing curriculum or lesson objectives, and in the same format as those in the existing teacher manual. Entrants are encouraged to seek advice from more senior or experienced teachers.

The restrictions on entries are likely to direct creativity towards variations on existing practice rather than the unusual and unorthodox. Drawing on my experience administering a suggestion scheme in a previous job, I agree with Amabile (1998) and Ekvall (1996), who consider that entries tend to self-sort even in the absence of guidance. Entrants tend to put forward only ideas they think have a chance of winning, and schemes or competitions rarely lead to the sweeping innovation that has been the focus of much creativity research (Carrier, 2000). Kaufman (2003b) calls this the 'familiar task-familiar solution' scenario, although, since I accept that creativity exists on a continuum, I dispute his assertion that such problem-solving necessarily involves little or no creativity.

The School's competition entries are judged by the appropriate curriculum committee, who decide the winner and other places, and which should be tested and adopted. Winning teachers receive cash prizes, although these have to be used to fund professional development activities. Despite the fact it is a competition, during the interviews there was no sense from the teachers that they felt they were competing against each other. It is not seen as a threat to the harmony of the social group, something important in Eastern society as previously noted.

Since research has shown that creativity is foremost a matter of intrinsic motivation rather than something that can be triggered by the introduction of extrinsic reward, a

number of scholars have questioned the rationality of suggestion schemes or competitions as a means of encouraging employee creativity (for example, Amabile, 1988, 1998; Ekvall, 1996). They are, however, widely used in the East Asia, and are regarded as particularly successful and valuable in Japan (Ekvall, 1996). I consider this may be connected to the affective commitment and personal loyalty to employers common in East Asian societies (Hui, Lee and Rousseau, 2004, 232).

A key concept of any creativity or innovation strategy that relies on employee participation is that employees will share their ideas if given the opportunity to do so. According to Wen (2007a), the School's competition is highly successful with a large number of appropriate entries each time it is held. In discussion, both teachers and leaders considered it not only a potential source of improvement for the School, but also of advantage to the themselves as a collective group, since the take up of one person's idea benefits them all. There is thus an element of both self and group interest. The involvement of the winning teacher in the implementation process also allows for some continuing ownership and control, cited as important factors in teacher creativity by both Jeffrey and Craft (2004, 82) and Woods (2004).

Finally, the fact the competition is only open to experienced teachers is a further indication of the value the School places on the acquisition of knowledge and skills as a precursor to creativity. When pressed, Wen (2007) accepted new teachers may have creative ideas, but expressed concern about their appropriateness in the context of the School, and whether many would be successful in practice.

7.5 Conclusions

All organisations have rules and values. There is always an inherent tension between individual creativity and the organisation (Talbot, 1993, 199). As Beghetto (2007) notes, institutional practices and frameworks can send out the message that creativity is not worth the risk or effort. As with most educational institutions, the Cloud Gate Dance School faces a dilemma when promoting creativity between balancing the creative needs of teachers and students, and the needs of the School.

The interview, observation, and other evidence from the fieldwork suggests that teachers at the School should feel themselves caught between the contradictory positions of wanting to be creative by making lessons more varied and interesting for students, and the constraints of the studio, including learning content and meeting School mandated standards. The centralising of curricula and pedagogy in particular should pose a challenge for them. While Huang and Gao suggested this was sometimes the case, it only appeared to be a major issue for Gao. I consider this is not surprising given the curriculum is deliberately structured to allow opportunities for teacher and student creativity, albeit within guidelines. Only Gao appeared to make what Beghetto (2007) calls a 'Faustian pedagogical bargain' in which teacher creativity is only expressed, and additional opportunities provided for students to express theirs, if time and circumstances permit.

On the whole, the experienced teachers observed did not see creativity and the constraints of the studio as opposites which they had to choose between. Rather they attempted to adopt a balanced approach that recognised that creativity and constraints are in fact complementary. This suggests that if teachers, managers and school leaders can recognise the relationship between creativity and constraint, it is possible to align them within a pedagogy and curriculum framework such that creativity is supported (Beghetto, 2007).

In Chapter 3, it was noted how the two central components of creativity are novelty and appropriateness. Chapters 5 and 6 meanwhile noted the importance of appropriateness to student creativity in lessons. While divergent thinking leading to novelty is encouraged at the School, the evidence indicates that it is equally important this takes place within boundaries defined by the teacher. The same considerations apply by the School's leaders for teachers.

There is an emphasis at the School on creativity taking the form of incremental change or reinterpretation of existing procedures, a construction that scholars have found to be a feature of East Asian societies generally. There is a respect for the School's values and traditions. While I may not have perceived teaching strategies as overly creative in the circumstances, Chu in particular indicated she held a different view. It

is important to recognise that focusing away from paradigm-changing creativity does not mean in itself that creativity is less valued.

The foundation for teacher creativity at the School is a knowledge base. This is a two-part construction that initially is built through direct teaching and learning of the School's curricula framework and practices, and "learning how we learn to learn," which is, "the kernel of the teacher's pedagogy" (Lucas, 2001, 44). Subsequently, it reflects the approach taken for students as knowledge is gained through personal experience in the studio, in this case guided by experienced teachers. As they gain experience, teachers are encouraged and are more able to experiment and discover their own methods and variations on practice.

In many ways the approach reflects a professional model of dance training. Rather than gaining knowledge of theatre dance repertoire and technical dance skills, teachers acquire expert knowledge of what might be called the School's curriculum repertoire and become highly skilled in teaching techniques, some of which are as codified as any dance technique. This mirrors the view expressed in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation report, *Dance Education and Training in Britain* (1980, 49), that far from killing creativity and spontaneity, such a structured approach can in fact increase teachers' power by widening their teaching vocabulary. Personal development, qualities and the freedom to express oneself are equally important, but it is important to recognise that notions of freedom and control vary according to context.

The School's model also reflects Best (1982, 285) who similarly argues creativity is not restricted by technical competence but enhanced by it. Creativity and the acquisition of skills and knowledge are not fundamentally in opposition. The evidence indicates the School goes further and sees them as essential partners. As Paris *et al.* (2006, 345) note, "Creative thinking is a powerful tool in the development of reasoning skills and the acquisition of knowledge, and knowledge and reasoning skills are important tools in extending creative thinking."

The previous chapter showed that student creativity is seen as individual. Something approaching Beghetto and Kaufman's (2007) 'mini-c' view of creativity is taken, with

teachers taking time to discover and understand meaning if it is not clear to them. While teacher creativity is also personal, at the School it clearly also has a collective dimension. It would be easy to place responsibility for this on what is often over-emphasised collectivist nature of Taiwanese society (See Chapter 1). Yet, as Sawyer (2003, 179) notes, group creativity occurs frequently, although many genres are not recognised as such and are rather 'taken for granted' by scholars. Many creative products are generated by groups, including the Cloud Gate Dance School's curricula, lesson plans and teaching strategies. Constructions of creativity are reflected in these documents and frameworks. It is not only the individual teacher who decides what is creative, but the School's leaders, and curriculum designers and consultants too.

There is a collective element inherent in the findings. The nourishment and support of the individual is set in the wider context of other teachers and the School as a whole. In practice, this means teachers are encouraged to observe and discuss experiences with each other, and to evaluate both their own ideas and teaching and those of others. While there is some debate in the literature about the effects on creativity of such colleague support, comments by Chu and others indicate such an approach is valued and that ideas do emerge as a result. Their comments resonate with the views of McNiff (in Craft, 2005, 75), who argues that such dialogue not only nurtures individual creativity but that the very interaction can unleash previously unseen creative potential. Sawyer (2003, 181) considers collaborative emergence is more likely to occur in such contexts because information flows are faster. While schools and educational organisations should consider how they can establish similar rich and deep networks between team members thus fostering group creativity, they must be equally aware of other context-specific factors that may fuel or moderate its effects.

As for students, central to the construction of creativity for teachers is the notion of appropriateness and that for creativity one equally needs constraint. While teachers are encouraged to be creative in lessons, creativity must take place within the boundaries of the existing curriculum and lesson objectives and the ethos of the School. Indeed, Wen (2007) said as much when she said, "We try to treat the teachers the same way as we want them to treat the kids. We go back to basics." She also

stressed the importance of positive affect factors as she added, “We try to induce teachers to have the same motivation that we like to see from the kids.” Despite the presence of often quoted inhibitors to creativity, most notably highly structured curricula and pedagogy, I consider the experienced teachers observed and interviewed were able to find space to be creative.

I would be surprised to hear a manager in any educational institution say that teacher creativity was not valued. I would be equally surprised, though, if they did not wish to guarantee quality and standards, which inevitably means some level of control. As Torrance and Myers (1970, 44) note, all tradition starts with a creative act, and the establishing of the School’s curricula and methods was creative in the context of mid-1990s Cloud Gate and Taiwan. Establishing the School involved a risk-oriented vision that came from the highest level of the organisation. However, such visions often become risk-averse with time as policies and frameworks become set (Hill and Amabile, 1993, 421). I agree with Sawyer (2003, 181), who draws on American organisational theorist Weick to argue that, while improvisation or innovation may not always be appropriate, educators and managers in all subjects should consider how pedagogical diversity can be always be used as an asset rather than regarded as a problem to be solved. They need to find the appropriate balance between freedom and constraint; goal setting that is tight at the school-level but loose at the classroom or studio level as progress is made towards those goals. As Nasir *et al.* (2006, 499) note, this may involve them changing their views and questioning their assumptions as to what is creative, about teachers as learners and about relevant knowledge.

Depending on the assumptions, biases and experiences of the reader, the extent to which teachers appeared to be intrinsically motivated and challenged by their goals and tasks may make the School sound like a pedagogical ideal. Others may find some of the values or practices less appealing. Even though some teachers questioned aspects of individual practice, in my considerable experience of studying workplaces I have never researched in one where the employees appeared so committed in both their words and actions to the aims and ideals of the department or company as did the teachers at the School. This is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8

A CREATIVE ETHOS

8.1 Introduction

The first time I walked into a branch of the Cloud Gate Dance School in 2003, I remember being struck immediately by the energy of its members, and the dynamic, stimulating, appreciative and caring atmosphere. This experience was repeated many times subsequently, at other branches of the School and events; before, during and after the fieldwork. In the previous three chapters, I have analysed the observation, interview and textual data with regard to the five research questions that emerged during the fieldwork, which are set out in Chapter 1.

The analysis demonstrates how creativity was conceived of at the School and the foundations for it. As the fieldwork progressed, however, it became increasingly apparent that these areas of investigation were bound together by a more fundamental set of values that underpins the School's teaching and learning philosophy, and which was reflected in the energy and atmosphere that I experienced.

8.2 Values and beliefs

No individual, institution or community approaches dance from a value neutral perspective. The method of teaching dance and means by which a knowledge base is formed reveals a set of values. As teaching and learning philosophy becomes curricular practice, these values are clarified and given form (Schwartz, 1993, 8).

As I noted in Chapter 2, the Cloud Gate Dance School's stated values and beliefs include that dance is not be an elitist art form, and that anyone can dance. A common theme through Chapters 5, 6 and 7 is the importance placed by its leaders and teachers on dance education as a means of developing the whole self, with a concern and respect for the worth and creativity of each individual. The School may guide students to explore movement, and develop dance skills and knowledge, but the educational model is not so much one of 'dance as art,' but of 'education through

dance,' where education is seen as a set of abilities and approaches that will be of value throughout life, including creative thinking.

During the fieldwork, the School's values and beliefs influenced, and were visible in: curricula; teaching and learning strategies; formal lesson planning and teacher improvisation; the rituals, customs, symbols and imagery of school life; management structures; publicity and literature; student, parent and teacher induction; personal attitudes, dispositions, and relationships; and the sense of community. As British author Deakin Crick (2002, 41) puts it, they were not "free floating concepts that are divorced from human history."

In Chapter 3, I discussed how the distinctive range of values and beliefs that define the philosophy of a school combine to form its ethos (Donnelly, 2000, 134). This is a rather nebulous concept. Indeed, Deakin Crick (2002, 41) describes 'ethos' as "one of the most vague and ill-defined words in education." She observes that how people feel and think about the school they learn and teach in affects behaviour, and the way they grow and develop in the institution. The idea that a positive climate or ethos in a school can encourage excellence in students' academic studies is not new, but, equally, it can powerfully affect the level and direction of individual creativity, for teachers and students (Hill and Amabile, 1993, 419).

In observation and interview I found considerable agreement between the ethos formally set out by School's leaders and embedded in School documentation, that evidenced by outward actions and behaviours, and the more deep-seated beliefs, of school members. Donnelly (2000, 137) considers such consistency between all three aspects of ethos is most unusual. Even though the participant teachers occasionally raised or indicated they had issues with specific practices, they all spoke with a passion that indicated they held the same core values and beliefs as the School's leaders.

My experience as a workplace analyst showed that employees usually say they agree with company or departmental policy, at least in the initial stages of a research project. It is often only through subsequent prolonged observation of actions, as in the

fieldwork undertaken for this study, that reality is revealed. Finding such initial agreement at the School was, therefore, not a surprise. Significant, however, is the extent to which those values and beliefs are articulated and practiced in all aspects of school life and organisation. They are lived as well as taught, and play an important role in the nature of the social, cultural and dance development of staff and students. That they permeate into the dance studio is seen as especially important, where, as American dance educator Robin Lakes (2005, 3) states correctly, the political, ethical and psychological climate affects student behaviour, processes and products.

The School's ethos appeared even to extend to parents. Although my contact with them was limited to brief conversations, several commented about the importance and benefit of creativity and being able to express oneself in a safe and supportive environment, adding that they had seen a noticeable change in the willingness of their children to do so.

As I discussed in Chapter 3, ethos is usually regarded as socially constructed. In new organisations it is also frequently rooted in the expressed beliefs and wishes of the founders, particularly where they command great authority (Donnelly, 2000, 136). The ethos of the Cloud Gate Dance School was initially articulated by Lin Hwai-min, who set out the purpose and direction it should take. The values therein continue to be taken up by the School's curriculum designers, leaders and teachers.

The designers embed those beliefs and values, including of creativity, into the School's curricula. They are apparent in lesson content and topics, which have been carefully selected to stimulate children's imagination; pedagogy; and suggested lesson plans. In doing so, values and beliefs about creativity are not relegated to the private and personal, but are in the public domain. There are courses and teaching strategies where it is less apparent, most notably in parts of Life Pulse level 11, but I consider creativity does form an essential part of the teaching and learning process at the School. On the whole, it is far from being what Williams (2002) refers to as "the occasional invigorating release from the commitments of the curriculum or timetable." As with all constructions of creativity, though, it is specific to time and place.

Deakin Crick (2002, 48) observes that such embedding of a School's values in the formal curriculum is unusual, although they are more commonly seen in organisational practices and quality of relationships. Curricula in most educational institutions are imposed from outside, whether by government, for example in a national curriculum, or by an organisation to which a school is affiliated, such as a dance training society. As a new, independent entity, the School was able to ensure Lin's values and those of the original committees were fully taken account of. Lin is a dominant, and at times forceful, figure. Given the pervasiveness of traditional values and practices elsewhere in Taiwanese education, I doubt whether those values would be in place, or so embedded, without his guidance and influence.

The many examples from lessons discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 demonstrate how the School's belief in individual exploration and creativity is embedded into lesson content as specified in the curricula, and the means by which that content is delivered. In terms of Donnelly's (2000, 151) dimensions of ethos, detailed in Chapter 3, the 'aspirational ethos' of the written curricula is replicated in the 'ethos of outward attachment.'

As Lakes (2005, 4) observes correctly, teaching behaviours and methods teach a set of rules, beliefs and ideologies as powerfully as any curriculum or a lesson plan. How one teaches is as important as what one teaches. Teachers' attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and behaviours do impact significantly on those of their students, and each other.

Throughout the observations I witnessed behaviours that demonstrated the School's methodological viewpoint that attitudes and methods of teaching should not stifle individuality, imagination or self-confidence. They were most easily visible in Life Pulse level 5, where lesson content and topics have been carefully selected to stimulate children's imagination in the variety of ways discussed in previous chapters. But it was equally evident that the approach towards building a knowledge base in the Pre-professional lessons observed also required students' creative engagement with the material. In general, and despite the need to learn set exercises in the Pre-

professional courses, the emphasis in the observed lessons was on learning for understanding rather than learning for content mastery.

Only in that part of Life Pulse level 11 lessons where students learn set sections of world dances was there what Singaporean educational psychologist Tan Ai-girl calls an 'interface gap' between School commitment and engagement in developing creative potential. I accept that the course objectives emphasise understanding foreign cultures, not foreign dances, and there were problems with ensuring all the required content was covered in the time allowed. Even so, I was surprised there was so little attempt to engage student creativity, through the curriculum, planned teaching strategies or teacher improvisation. I consider it could have been included in the curriculum, for example, by focusing on the characteristics of a nation's dance rather than set sequences of movement, and asking the children to create a new dances in that nation's style.

The importance of creativity is emphasised by the number of references to it in course documentation. The parent-student booklet for Life Pulse level 5 speaks of there being "no barriers to [children's] imaginations" and emphasises the importance of students creating their own movement rather than imitating that of others (Cloud Gate Dance School, 2006d, i). The Pre-professional Basic level 1 booklet (Cloud Gate Dance School, 2006c, 4) and explanatory notes on the Internet refer to the exploration of body, mind and space and "creativity hidden within the body." The latter goes on to explain that exploration of space, and creative thought and expression, also have a role in learning in the Pre-professional Senior course, even though the focus is on learning steps (Cloud Gate Dance School, 2006b). That this happened in practice as the children engaged in problem-finding and problem-solving was discussed in Chapter 5 and, with specific reference to the Pre-professional Senior course, is returned to in the following section.

The overt emphasis on creativity, personal exploration and the value of the individual emerged as a key element of interviews with teachers. Along with Wen (2007a), they stressed the importance of developing personal teaching strategies and their own means of achieving lesson objectives rather than using the teacher manual as a script.

A level of flexibility is built into each manual's suggested lesson plans in the form of gaps in which teachers can introduce their own activities. Many of these gaps are detailed in Chapter 7. Through their training and experience, the teachers knew and understood where these gaps were, and the extent to which the School's norms allowed them to be creative in them. They then exploited them, resulting in personal demonstrations of each teacher's own creativity and style.

Furthermore, the teachers did "seize the teachable moment" and "teach in the margins" as they reacted to events in the studio (Woods, 2004). I agree with Donnelly (2000, 151), that it is in such intuitive action that one's 'ethos of inward attachment' is revealed. It is unplanned actions that reveal the extent of one's deep-seated commitments. As discussed in Chapter 7, all four teachers observed were inventive and improvised, although again, the exception was during the dance learning in Life Pulse level 11.

In contrast to general education situations in Taiwan, an extraordinarily supportive, friendly and relaxed atmosphere existed in all lessons. Discovery, experimentation, new ideas and new ways of approaching tasks were encouraged. Students were encouraged to participate in learning, ask questions, and, sometimes, share experiences. It appeared communication was always open. I consider this emotional warmth in the studio contributed greatly to the students' openness and willingness to vary their approach, or try new ways of completing a task. On the whole lessons were perceived by the children as fun, with humour and a sense of playfulness present in most. As previously observed, positive affect is important in encouraging creativity.

While my values and beliefs about dance education align with many of those of the School, I would have sometimes faced a dilemma: whether to focus on delivering the content of each course or lesson as specified in the curriculum and teaching manuals, or whether to concentrate on meeting the School's broader goals of personal, creative exploration and expression; and the personal development and needs of each child.

Although the teachers supported the School's values, informal conversations and interviews revealed they were occasionally confronted by the same quandary. Gao

and Huang both suggested their classes could be boring. Although she never stated it explicitly, Gao's actions and words indicated she meant boring for her and her students. The manner in which some children, especially the less able, frequently lost interest when learning the world dances, and started to chat or play, suggested she was correct. Whether this was due to the lesson content, mode of delivery, or even Gao's own boredom transmitting itself to students, is unclear. Gao further indicated her teaching was significantly constrained by time and content. Her solution to her dilemma was to ensure the dances were learned in what she perceived as the most efficient manner. Huang had a different answer, and freely admitted to experimenting occasionally in lessons. At the time of the study, he was reviewing the curricula and thus had authority to, as he put it, "try new things", but the manner of his improvisation in reaction to events suggested he also had an inner confidence in his ability and freedom to do so.

Although Chu and Zhu never articulated such dilemmas, the evidence shows that even an ethos that espouses creativity and freedom can constrain people to act in particular ways. I applaud the School's values and lesson objectives being made available to parents and built into the curriculum so explicitly, but doing so in such detail adds to the sense of constraint. My experience leads me to agree with Donnelly's (2000, 150) observation that people rarely follow rules or procedures absolutely. While adaptations and behaviours almost invariably fit in with those who hold positions of power, there is usually a negotiation in which people agree what is and is not a priority, and which results in variations on working methods emerging. At the School, this appeared to happen much less than I expected from such experienced teachers.

This observation demonstrates the respect for, and importance attached to, task boundaries and rules. In Chapter 6, I drew on comments by Chu and Wen, and examples from lessons, to demonstrate how this belief was shared by teachers. Although the teachers constantly encouraged the students' intrinsic motivation and creativity by placing the emphasis on learning for enjoyment, activity boundaries always remained in place. Tighe, Picariello and Amabile (2003, 217) consider that such an approach allows children cognitively to distance themselves from constraint.

The evidence suggests that some of the teachers did similarly. Chu, for example never indicated constraint was an issue.

The extent to which beliefs about the importance of constraint were shared is reflected in the fact that students and teachers rarely even attempted to break free from them. Activity guidelines were always very clearly stated by the teacher, and almost always respected by the children. Teachers similarly respected the School's conventions and traditions, and worked within the parameters of its structured and controlled curriculum framework and teaching philosophy. There was no evidence of significant conflict between any of the School's stakeholders. There was substantial common ground. From their comments and behaviour, both teachers and students not only valued being part of the School, but their individual behaviour and beliefs were informed by it.

Ethos may be imposed initially but then develops from social interaction and process. As in any organisation, the Cloud Gate Dance School's ethos is socially constructed and inherently bound up with the history, attitudes and beliefs of all its members (Donnelly, 2000, 136). Values and beliefs become shared and a product of social learning passed down from the School's leaders and experienced teachers to new teachers, between teachers, from teachers to students, even between students. Significant at the School was that teachers supported the ethos, and took up the creative opportunities available. Sternberg (2007, 6) considers this often does not happen, which is why government programmes designed to encourage people to be creative rarely result in sharp increases in creativity. He considers that if people have been socialised to think in conforming ways, and rewarded for doing so, no amount of effort is going to make them change.

The evidence from the School resonates with Adarves-Yorno *et al* (1997, 411), who argue that social identity is an aspect of self that increasingly includes internalised values and norms derived from memberships of groups. Norms exert a regulatory influence on group members. They influence the direction of creative behaviour (for example, valuing abstract movement over realism in dance), the means by which it is

expressed (for example, whether voice or other dancer-generated sound is used), and how creativity is recognised, by both the teacher and student.

Adarves-Yorno *et al.*'s argument explains why the creative movement shown by the older girl in the Life Pulse level 5 class, who was in her first semester at the School, became less differentiated from that of the rest of the class over time, despite her initially showing a much greater range of creative outcomes. As her membership became increasingly meaningful, and her relationship with other members of the class became stronger, social identity became salient over personal identity, at least in the context of the class. While still creative, group norms increasingly became anchors for her thoughts and behaviours, and influenced her perceptions of what was creative, which become assimilated with those norms.

Although each teacher is encouraged to develop personal teaching strategies that meet course or lesson objectives, I consider it likely that a new teacher who demonstrated creative teaching that diverged from the School's norms would similarly become assimilated with his or her teaching colleagues. Besides being influenced by the social group, I consider he or she would come under management pressure not to significantly depart from published, School-wide lesson plans.

At the School, the self, however, encompassed the social as well as the personal. Identity at the individual level and norms at the group level interacted to produce creative outcomes. Even where creative ideas and outcomes appeared personal, they were part of a dynamic process in which individual and underlying social-structural factors interacted, and were socially determined to a significant extent.

Although I have no doubt that the School's ethos and group membership impacts on the individual behaviour of those within it, this phenomenon is not unique to the School, Taiwanese organisations, or even to East Asian organisations. I agree with the suggestion inherent in Adarves-Yorno *et al.* (2007) that it happens in all organisations, in all contexts. However the cultural context cannot be ignored, and the evidence does reflect the commonly stated view in the literature that group interests are particularly to the fore in East Asian societies such as Taiwan (Chen, 1995, 336;

Rudowicz, 2004, 71). It also reflects James and Eisenberg's (2007, 536) view that there is a correlation between collectivist societies and those forms of creativity more concerned with values, social processes or social systems, as at the School. As they add, however, both individualism and collectivism are essential for any society to function. What differentiates societies, organisations or dance schools, is where the balance falls.

8.3 Creativity in the Pre-professional Senior course

One of the original research questions focused on the connection between creative teaching and learning and the learning of dance technique. I was not surprised to see many of the strategies within activities in Life Pulse level 5, given that these were essentially creative dance and movement lessons. I was surprised, though, to discover the extent to which the School's ethos permeated the ballet and Graham-based lessons of the Pre-professional Senior 1 course.

It is here, in the teaching and learning of dance technique, that questions of creativity, and personal discovery and expression, are most pointed. Not only does the course documentation refer to creative thought and expression, but these attributes were evidenced during lessons. The teacher of the level 1 class observed, Huang Shu-hui, encouraged students to engage in individual exploration, creative discovery, self-reflection and critical thought. I consider this was done without diminishing their technical development in the ballet and Graham traditions. In incorporating ideas of individual learning and the construction of knowledge into technique classes, Huang was drawing on the traditions and ideas of developing and creating a unique voice found in postmodern dance (Lobel and Brodie, 2006, 70). I believe such an approach makes dance become alive and relevant, rather than merely training based on a given aesthetic.

Wen says often, "We don't teach technique" (for example, 2005, 2007a). The term 'technique' implies that there is only one correct way to do a movement, especially when used in connection with ballet or modern dance (Gibbons, 2007, 15). As Morris (2003, 19) notes, recognising the possibility of personal discovery and interpretation,

even within limits, is often seen as undermining the objectivity of the dance vocabulary. In a sense Wen is correct in her statement, although “We teach more than technique” could equally be true. From the Senior level 1 observations, lessons are equally about each student discovering insights into dance and how he or she articulates movement.

Students in Pre-professional Senior 1 learn set exercises. As one might expect, lessons included significant demonstration and explanation, but Huang’s approach was far from the traditional method of technique teaching whereby the teacher demonstrates the movement, which is then reproduced by the student (Salosaari, 2002, 22; Morris, 2008, 49). When explaining how a movement should be performed, any demonstration was always accompanied by a focus on what Gibbons (2007, 11) calls notional qualities, such as use of weight, smoothness, and particularly use of breath; and thinking how actions are motivated or initiated. I believe such an approach emphasises dance as movement, rather than dance as steps.

In contrast to the mode of learning of world dances in Life Pulse level 11, Huang never presented exercises as impersonal prescriptions for performing steps in a single, absolute, ‘correct’ manner. American dance educator Donald Blumenfeld-Jones (1987) argues that studying only forms made and perfected by others can submerge or negate the self. Huang encouraged personal discovery, often guiding the students to find and discuss problems. Sometimes this was done using humour, for example, asking, “What happens if I do it like this”, as he demonstrated with his weight badly off-centre. Such questions encourage problem-finding as well as problem solving. As discussed in Chapter 3, both are important features of creative thinking. Huang’s teaching did not “squench the self”, as Blumenfeld-Jones puts it, but rather required “a self which encounters, not a self which disappears, and the experience [became] a dialogue” (p.21).

At other times Huang actively involved the students in demonstrations and discussions. Johnston (2006) asserts that such use of private speech is important in the cognitive development of young dance students. She considers that, if learning is to be maximised, students should be encouraged to use all the “tools of the mind”,

particularly private speech. She adds that inhibiting speech leads to cognitive dysfunction and inhibited dance performance (p.13).

Peer on peer touch was a further learning tool. On several occasions, Huang asked the students to gather round while he discussed and physically guided a student through an exercise. Following a tendu exercise in lesson 6, he even asked students to guide each other. Each student followed her partner's foot with her hand, then put her hand on her partner's hip, so that both could focus their thoughts on what was happening in that joint. The observing student thus became far more than a spectator.

Brodie and Lobel (2008, 24) consider such a strategy helps students perceive movement accurately and allows them to focus on the more important aspects of the image being presented. Adams (1986) similarly suggests that learning by observing a fellow student, then correcting that student's mistakes, is more effective than watching a perfect demonstration by the teacher since the student observes the process of correcting and improving performance. Such uncovering of the process reveals variations between incorrect and correct versions that are valuable for learners.

I agree with Hayes (1964, 70) and Whittier (2006, 132), who consider that such strategies result in learning becoming a creative process as dancers are challenged to explore the possibilities and significance within movement, sense and listen to their bodies, and use higher level thinking to analyse and evaluate their own movement and that of their peers. The students became contributors to the learning process, which Whittier considers makes them more apt to engage critically and creatively in their own development as the technique learning becomes a springboard for their self-discovery as a person as well as an artist (p.124).

One of the questions Lin says he asked himself when considering founding the School was, 'Why are we teaching all children as if they are going to be professional dancers, when almost all are not?' (Lin, 2005). Huang's approach moved away from such a product model, in which dance technique is the content, the teacher is the expert model, and that emphasises high-level technical skills and the ability to emulate given dance forms. His teaching was more akin to a process model, however, in that he

emphasised the subjectivity of the experience. The set exercises were only the source of the content and problem solving (Kassing and Jay, 2003, 183).

Each student's performance of the exercise was still important, since without such a product students' private processes and progress cannot be assessed, but by exploring exercises as fully as possible I consider Huang allowed students to find new or deeper understanding and greater kinaesthetic awareness (Gough, 1999, 43). As Hayes (1964, 179) proposes, the students were challenged to observe and sense movement critically and discriminately, which she considers cannot happen if steps are imitatively taught. The students certainly learned the exercises quickly and soon performed them to a high standard; much more so than has been my experience with similar-aged children in other contexts. When I discussed this with other local dance educators, it was suggested that this was because Taiwanese children are aware of this expectation of them. I propose it had far more to do with the way Huang engaged his students in the process.

I consider Morris (2003, 20) is correct when she states that arguing steps are supreme can significantly impact on students' personal dance development; and later, when she adds that such an approach tends to emphasise the mechanical aspects of dancing over the qualitative, and nullifies personal expression and thought (p.26). Fortin (2002, 11) similarly considers that mechanical imitation and repetition of movement can lead to the cultivation of habits and attitudes that later impede the capacity to sense, perceive and change, important aspects of creativity. Some authors intimate this is desirable, particularly those of an older generation. British dance teacher Joan Lawson (1979, 8), for example, declared that classical dance consists of a "vocabulary of movement that conforms to rules established by long practice." As Morris (p.19) observes, this leaves no room for individual interpretation or understanding, and I consider, reduces dance to little more than a series of gymnastic or physical exercises.

Looking at the curriculum, teaching and learning strategies and publicity materials for the course as a whole, the School makes the same key distinction as Nettle-Fiol (2008, 85) between learning existing vocabularies, and deriving skills and knowledge from the study of dance through a joint focus on the skills of the techniques and other

practices, including questioning and creative exploration. As in *Life Pulse*, Huang was not transmitting knowledge with the students as passive receptors, but facilitating experiences that promoted growth and guided each to become an autonomous problem-solving agent. Huang's creativity did not come from choreographing new exercises. Rather it came through inventiveness, improvisations, and engaging the students with learning in a creative and critical way that stretched their creativity of thought and action.

8.4 Conclusions

Creativity at the Cloud Gate Dance School is complex and multifaceted. It does not focus solely on creative outcomes, whether a new dance exercise, a new creative dance activity, or individual student outcomes from activities. It is rather what Tan (2002) and Tan and Wong (2007) call 'constructive creativity' in that it highlights the importance of cultivating creative behaviours and minds. As Tan notes, the adjective 'constructive' entails notions including beneficial, humanistic, morally upright and determinant (p.146). At the School, constructive creativity involves adopting the assumption that each individual has the potential to be creative, and an empathetic acceptance of the individual as he or she is, which promotes willingness to share and express ideas. It is embedded in a framework in which education is about developing a person fully. It is interactive and experiential, and individual and social.

The study shows how the values and beliefs of the School's founder, curriculum designers and leaders values and beliefs impact on teaching and learning in dance at the School, through curricula design, lesson planning, student activities and tasks, and pedagogy. That ethos, along with the values and beliefs that underpin it, is shared by today's teachers. I found no evidence that the aspirational ethos set out by those in authority and in documents was undermined or distorted by the actions and genuine attitudes of school members. The teaching and learning observed was structured to address multiple elements of learning, including identity and affect. Even so, there were tensions.

The School perpetuates its dance education ideology, including its construction of creativity, through curricula and pedagogy that reinforces selected values. Control is maintained through regulation. When discussed in connection with creativity, control is frequently perceived as undesirable. In this study I question whether this is always necessarily so. The practices of the School are atypical of Taiwan. Without such control and regulation, I consider it highly likely that a combination of Taiwanese educational norms, teacher biography and parental beliefs and expectations would lead to a pedagogy that reflects more closely that which exists elsewhere in Taiwanese dance education. I consider, however, that the control does prevent teachers from practicing independent beliefs and values sometimes, even though they were largely in agreement with those of the School.

When I first encountered the School in 2003, it appeared there was a paradox between an ethos that espouses the value of individual creative thought, and a system that features highly structured and detailed curricula and teaching practices. Theory suggests that such a high level of prescription in content and teaching methods should work against individual creativity. That I should think there was a paradox is significant. As Montuori and Purser (2000) observe, fundamental polarities, dichotomous thinking and other cultural assumptions and biases affect significantly how creativity is perceived. Such polarised thinking is often both personal and collective. Two such dualisms are individualism-collectivism, and creativity-conformity, the former term perceived frequently as desirable and superior, the latter as undesirable and inferior.

Different leaders and teachers expressed different views about how prescriptive the School's highly structured curricula and teaching practices are intended be. Despite the evidence indicating teachers sometimes perceived it as constraining, and sometimes felt under pressure to conform, there was only occasionally a sense that creativity was discouraged. The presence of constraint and control did not mean that creativity was less valued, or that individuals were less creative. It did, though, mean it took different forms and was judged differently from that which might be case elsewhere.

Based on the evidence, I suggest that while highly structured curricula and pedagogy impacts creativity, how it does so depends on the interaction and relationship between them and the cultural, social and educational context into which they are projected. I consider the absence of formal student assessment at the School allows each student to develop his or her creativity, knowledge and understandings in a personal way.

Teachers are freed from directing students towards specific movement outcomes. The focus on achievement of lesson objectives and lack of curriculum flexibility constrains teachers significantly however.

In any event, I contend that there is no such thing as complete freedom to create. Complete autonomy is as embedded in a system as is constraint, and is equally dependent on the environment. Furthermore, even where there is a perceived complete freedom to create, an individual is bound by his or her history. I consider the study shows that, if dance educators and artists can recognise constraint and creativity as complementary, it is possible to align their value for creativity with a pedagogy and curriculum framework that supports it.

While students were able to personalise learning, I recognise that constraint can encourage a particular type of learning and thinking. Along with standardised assessment, or that which relies on personal assumptions, it can lead teachers to think they are rewarding creativity generally, when in fact they are only rewarding one kind of creativity, or creativity that only operates in one direction. There is a danger that teachers or curriculum designers inadvertently encourage children to play it safe by indicating that they only like certain types of outcome. If creativity is to be fostered as personal to each child, teachers need to understand that it does not depend on their agreement with the child's actions or processes. As happened in lessons at the School, teachers must take time to understand why each student created as he or she did. Judgements must involve reference to the individual and the context. Dance classes are pluralistic. Different students will have different conceptions of what is, or is not, creative.

Ideologies, values and beliefs are embedded in dance teaching and learning in any context, whether they have been specifically considered or not. The values and beliefs

of the Cloud Gate Dance School reflect strongly those of Lin Hwai-min. During planning for the School he took a political decision not to passively submit to pre-existing frames, and to move away from usual Taiwanese practices, and even previous Cloud Gate Studio practices. While this might dilute cultural beliefs and norms, they do not expire totally, and continue to function below the surface. The result is a construction of creativity that is neither wholly what is referred to in the literature as Eastern or Western.

The evidence from this study partially supports the view that creativity in East Asia is often perceived differently from in the West, articulated in Chapter 3. However, the idea that the emphasis on novelty and the relative lack of importance placed on appropriateness found in Anglo-American settings is reversed in the region only partly held true. At the School, both were important. A significant difference from constructions of creativity found in many texts was that the notion of creativity evidenced entailed openness to the new, but without simultaneously rejecting convention or established and accepted norms, which Sundararajan (2004) points out occurs elsewhere in the arts in Asia.

The research suggests there is a wider range of dynamics of creativity than are commonly conceptualised. In contrast to much of the literature that suggests group interests are always stressed over individual concerns in Eastern settings, creativity at the School has collective and individual dimensions. The highly structured curricula and teaching practices form a theoretical frame of reference to guide teachers in their methods (Schwartz, 1993, 14). Combined with the focus on the individual, this gives creativity School-level dimensions, laid down in the curricula; student-level dimensions; and teacher dimensions through improvisation and inventiveness, and teaching in the margins, as discussed in Chapter 7.

For the most part, the teachers and leaders demonstrated an affective commitment to the institution. It was not some impersonal other. Yet, this did not mean they were necessarily passive, unwilling to voice opinions, or improvise or innovate in lessons. What I consider significant, though, was the view that individual teacher creativity should benefit the community wherever possible, for example sharing variations on

teaching approaches. The collective dimension was further evidenced by the frequency with which teachers observed each others lessons. I consider such a collaborative approach allows teachers to take a critical perspective on their teaching, and not only consider and reflect what they do, but why they do it.

At the School, collectivist and individualist viewpoints are fundamentally interconnected. As Montuori and Purser (2000) observe, modern ways of knowing frequently suggest that any vestige of dependence should be viewed as negative and a constraint to freedom, but at the School they are complementary. In Chapter 1 I discussed the mutual dependency and respect that exists between Taiwanese children and their parents, and control frequently imposed by the latter, but noted that children are also encouraged to be autonomous. As previously noted, research indicates such a culture similarly exists in the workplace.

Creativity was in evidence at the Cloud Gate Dance School, both by teachers and students, but it was channelled in particular directions by each individual's relationship with the group as well as by the curricula and activity guidelines. There was a dynamic process at play in which individual and social-structural factors interacted, which emphasises the need to see creativity from a social-systems perspective. Despite Sawyer's (2003, 2007) work on group collaboration in the arts, and Adarves-Yorno *et al.*'s (2007) investigation of the way individual and socio-structural factors interact in the creative process, this remains a relatively unexplored area that calls for further study.

Adarves-Yorno *et al.* observe that all communities exert a regulatory influence on the values, beliefs, behaviour of its members, regardless of context. What I consider was culturally-specific was the extent to which individuals at the School appeared regulated by group norms. Even where a teacher felt a tension between his or her values and approved practices that he or she considered were not maximising student engagement, there was a reluctance to innovate significantly. Sternberg (2007, 3) is correct when he observes that people are creative because they have decided to be creative, but they then thrive because the community of which they are part values creativity and provides appropriate opportunities, encouragement and reward. The

evidence from this study suggests that such creativity is, however, often directed or regulated in ways appropriate to community norms.

Lin often refers to the 'Cloud Gate family' (for example in Lin 2005). The acceptance of conventions and norms was quite pronounced, accompanied by a sense of loyalty and commitment found in families. As in many Taiwanese family structures, the School has a hierarchical and power-oriented culture, but it is equally one that features mutuality, reciprocity and trust. The teachers did indicate a personal loyalty and attachment to the School, even when they had personal issues with a given practice.

The Cloud Gate Dance School is a *dance* school. Yet, while dance and movement is to the fore in activities, and creativity and inquisitiveness is embedded as an attitude, the School's ethos is reflected in a somewhat wider view of creativity. Creativity in dance education is commonly encouraged by assigning movement studies that lead to choreography. Students' presentations are then critiqued in the lesson by their peers and the teacher. In the same way that the School's approach to dance education is about more than the learning of dance skills, knowledge, practices, customs and ideals, the evidence indicates its leader's view of creativity in dance involves more than thinking in a certain way or creating a new movement, dance phrase, lesson plan or even a curriculum. Learning in dance is conceived of as not only about building and extending knowledge and abilities in dance but conceived of as something that can be encouraged and developed so that it becomes part of each person's habitus that can be extended into everyday life in all contexts. In the lessons observed, each student's creativity was realised through teaching that scaffolded the children's potential; and that understood, connected and integrated the body, mind and spirit.

The Life Pulse and Pre-professional curricula and lessons encouraged students' critical and flexible thinking and inquisitiveness across domains. Students were exposed to a range of contexts in which they could apply their creativity and inquisitiveness. In Life Pulse level 5, while activities focused on structured improvisation, invention and exploration of movement, some were solely narrative-based, while the task in lesson 8 in which the students measured the width of the studio using different parts of the body can be seen as being mathematical. Despite

the issues with the dance learning aspects of level 11, the students' inquisitiveness about the culture and history of other countries was aroused. Although Creativity was therefore seen as being both domain or dance-specific and domain general, echoing Plucker and Beghetto (2004).

Central to the construction of creativity at the School was the premise that it can be nurtured only when the twin foundations of a personally-formed knowledge base and positive affect exist within each individual, and are supported by the interpersonal and socio-cultural environment. Such a conception strongly reflects contemporary systems approaches to creativity now prevalent in the education and psychology literature (for example, Amabile, 1996; Feldhusen, 2006).

While the importance placed on knowledge at the School resonates with the views of authors including Adshead (1981) and Smith-Autard (2002), it equally shows that knowledge can be built using personal exploration, inventiveness and inquisitiveness as tools. In my experience, there is often a tension between creativity and the teaching and learning of dance concepts, skills or technique; the latter commonly being regarded in absolute terms, functioning as the antithesis of creativity (Morris, 2003). Having established a personal knowledge base, however, it was the social and group relationships within the School, and the prevailing norms, that combined to determine how people chose to be creative and how others reacted to their efforts. The process by which this knowledge building occurred in Life Pulse, in particular the lack of any final refined dance product, also moved the children beyond the idea that the creative process has a clear beginning and end. Creativity may have a temporal dimension, but the process is not linear. The study also shows the important role of play as a pedagogical tool, but that rough and tumble play can be equally as valuable as that which contains narrative, role-play or make-believe.

Although the basis for creativity at the Cloud Gate Dance School was laid down by Lin Hwai-min and the School's original curriculum designers, it has been taken up and continues to be socially constructed by today's members. It is a creativity that is not focused on external products, but is more about process, innovation and control. It is a creativity that incorporates a balance between control and freedom, collectivism

and individualism, tradition and embrace of the new, and constraint and innovation. The fulcrum is located differently to that which would be found in other contexts, even in Taiwan. At the School it is weighted towards control, tradition and constraint, but that does not mean creativity is any less valued than in a context where the weighting is reversed.

This study highlights the complexity and diversity of the concept of creativity and its articulation by different groups of people in different contexts. Indeed it is not just the concept but also the creative process that can be conceptualised in many ways. The empirical data casts doubt on cultural stereotypes of creativity since, while creativity undoubtedly has a cultural dimension, this in itself is not static or bound. Even within a given cultural setting, creativity has micro-contextual specificity. The empirical evidence demonstrates that being creative in dance can not only encompass all aspects of dancing, dance making and dance teaching, but may be conceived of and manifested differently in different lessons and at different levels. Creativity at the Cloud Gate Dance School is constructed with reference to the histories, values and beliefs of those who comprise the School's community of practice, and which have multiple influences. As at any school, that construction reflects constant re-negotiation about what is creative between the school's leaders, curriculum, teachers and students.

Researchers, scholars and dance educators should, therefore, be wary of relying, however unconsciously, on commonly stated positions about the nature of creativity in dance education and models of the creative process. They must avoid making assumptions that their own community's practice, or personal bias or view, is relevant elsewhere or homogenous. As Nasir *et al* (2006, 499) observe correctly, there is a "heterogeneity of practice" in any group or society. Dance educators should not only be aware of commonalities and differences between creativity as conceived of by individuals, groups and in specific contexts, but be aware of the complexity of both. I contend that only then can the many implications of cultural and contextual diversity be understood, and creativity promoted in a manner than is sensitive to the needs of a given setting or individual.

8.5 Looking ahead

As Joubert (2001, 31) observes succinctly, “creativity is not an easy option.” However, the more educators and teachers understand the construct, the factors affecting it and their interaction, the better placed they are to design effective programmes that enhance their students’ creativity, in dance or any other area of life. Looking ahead, there several directions future research, and the development of dance teaching practice might take, both in the UK and in Taiwan. First, I will articulate some thoughts on methodology.

In Chapter 1, I explained how I saw the School’s teachers and leaders as participants rather than subjects, but that as the project progressed and we discussed, debated and explored different conceptual points and pedagogical questions that related to creativity and dance education, they became co-researchers. I found their thoughts valuable and feel strongly that future studies should engage with participants directly. Taking such an inclusive approach can benefit all and bridge the divide that can exist between researchers and practitioners. Such projects are not easy to conduct. There are many possible relationships along a continuum. The researcher may take the lead, as I did in this study, or an action research approach could be adopted with teachers fully and actively collaborating with the researcher. Teachers may even take the lead with the researcher acting as an adviser. Whatever the approach, there are often tensions between the needs of the researcher and classroom practice. Action research, in particular, requires the wholehearted long-term support of school leaders and managers, not least because of pressures on teachers’ time. Such projects are likely to be particularly effective in increasing understanding by practitioners of topic being researched, and in removing barriers such as access to data or restrictions of methods of study.

Connections and relationships between organisational ethos and creativity in dance education have been little considered, and literature is rare. As Chong (2007, 424) notes, when creativity is conceptualised as a function of the person, domain, and environment, it is no longer perceived as ‘freewheeling’ but something that can be promoted through purposeful efforts and educational policies and practices. Along

with this study, this implies that the ethos of a school, through policies and practice, and reflected in its beliefs and values, can be developed over time in such a way that a climate is created in which teachers' and students' creativity is not only encouraged, but in which they feel able to be creative, both in the dance studio and beyond. The multi-dimensional nature of both creativity and ethos makes assessing, analysing and interpreting such relationships difficult, but future research in different dance settings could investigate the critical question of how, and to what extent, the approach to teaching and learning reflects and affects what the school or organisation values about creativity and the learner.

Although intrinsic motivation is now widely recognised as important in creativity, the wider role of the affective domain was identified by the National Dance Education Organization in the United States as a severely under-researched area in dance (Bonbright and Faber, 2004, 83). While dance is an excellent vehicle for enabling exploration and expression of personal feelings, the study suggests that personal affect and affective processes of learning in the individual can equally colour creativity and expression. Although Kaufmann (2003a) highlights a number of studies in psychology that suggest the relationship between mood and creativity is far from clear, affect management may permit students to make appropriate interpretations of actions and adaptive choices, and enhance or preserve feelings of self-worth. Further study in real studio settings could, for example, test the extent to which different teaching strategies and pre-lesson activities facilitate creativity in different settings.

Dance technique training for children in the UK takes place mostly in private studios, where examination forms a major part of assessment. Knowledge tends to be by one-way transmission from teacher to student, and learning by repetition. Evidence from the School suggests that if creativity is constructed as an attitude, it can enhance the teaching and learning of dance technique. Further research is needed to investigate how bridges can be built between creative dance and technique training; and how changing traditional views about process can enhance student learning. To what extent, for example, would it encourage greater dialogue in lessons, encourage students to engage more with the process, and to articulate and gain a deeper

understanding of what is happening in their bodies in technique work? Can students and teachers be encouraged to think beyond external body shape and not to believe that technique is an end in itself? In the UK, such research would need to take place in private studios or vocational schools. In the former in particular, current practices and assumptions appear to meet the needs of the marketplace, but even if true, this should not preclude new approaches, innovation or change. As Lin asked in Taiwan in the mid-1990s, and as Posey (2002, 45) later questioned in the United States, dance educators need to question how well current approaches serve the general public seeking an education in dance. One might also add, 'How well do they serve dance, both as an artform in its own right, and in trying to address the ever widening creativity agenda?'

As raised earlier in this chapter, a final potential area for further research concerns the nature of the dynamic between creativity, the individual and the group. While researchers such as Sawyer (2003, 2007) have studied group creativity in drama and music, there have been few studies in dance. This study concurs with the view of Montuori and Purser (2000) in suggesting that the self is situated in, and indeed constituted by, a larger social self. The questions for dance are how and to what extent does the group dynamic play a significant role in the creative output of individuals working separately but in the same space, and how can this be applied to the benefit of dance students?

While some of the above possibilities are more appropriate to private or vocational dance schools, there is a pressing need in any event to broaden the range of contexts covered in dance education research. In the UK, most studies and texts focus on dance in education, particularly dance taught as part of the national curriculum. The private sector, which has different priorities and objectives, has been largely ignored by researchers even though it is a significant supplier of dance education. There have equally been few studies of dance education by dance companies, and those that have taken place have tended to focus on specific projects, although the National Foundation for Educational Research report *Aims in Motion* (Castle, Ashworth and Lord, 2002), was a notable exception.

In this research I have analysed constructions of creativity at a specific place, the Cloud Gate Dance School, and at a specific time, 2006-7. It tends to be taken as axiomatic that participation in the arts promotes creativity, but it is often equally axiomatic that creativity is a singular notion. In this research I have shown that it can be constructed more broadly and extends beyond the composition of dances, and the creation of movement or teaching strategies. Creativity is not an absolute construct, and I encourage teachers and researchers to question, critically debate, and reflect on, assumptions and practice, in itself part of the analytical thinking involved in creativity. This will lead to greater understanding and make it easier for them to tap their own creativity, in turn enabling them to more effectively encourage and develop creativity in their students.

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ENGLISH - CHINESE NAMES AND TERMS

Asia-Pacific Young Choreographers' Workshop	亞洲青年編舞家研習營
Bamboo Sheath Dancers	竹塹舞人舞蹈劇場
Blue Skies Project	藍天教室
Bu-la Rui-yang	布拉瑞揚
<i>buxiban</i>	補習班
Cai Guo-qiang	蔡國強
Capital Ballet Taipei	台北首督芭蕾舞團
Cathay Life	國泰人壽
Century Contemporary Dance Company	世紀當代舞團
Chang Chung-shiuan	張中煖
Chang Li-chu	張麗珠
Chang Shu-ru	張秀如
Chang Sung-sheng	張誦聖
Chao Yu-ling	趙玉玲
Chen Pin-hsiu	陳品秀
Chen Sheng-mei	陳勝美
Chen Shui-bian	陳水扁
Chen Ya-ping	陳雅萍
Chen Wang-heng	陳望衡
Chiang Hui-lian	江惠蓮
Chiang Kai-shek	蔣介石
Chiang Ying-bi	江映碧
Chinese Cultural University	中國文化大學
Chinese Youth Goodwill Mission	中華民國青年友好訪問團
Chou Su-ling	周素玲
Chu Kuang-chuan	朱光媚
Chung-hwa High School for the Arts	中華藝術學
Cloud Gate (<i>yen men</i>)	雲門
Cloud Gate 2	雲門舞集 2
Cloud Gate Dance School	雲門舞集舞蹈教室
Cloud Gate Dance Theatre	雲門舞集
Council for Cultural Affairs	文化建設委員會
<i>Cursive</i>	行草
<i>Dance for the Earth, A</i>	為地球而舞
Dance with Cloud Gate	與雲門共舞
<i>da wu</i>	大舞

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)	民主進步黨
Fan Ching-wen	范瀨文
Fuxing Senior High School	復興高級中
Gao Pei-ling	高沛齡
Guangfu Elementary School	光復國小
Guo Yu-gui	郭玉貴
Ho Hsiao-mei	何曉玫
Hsieh Ming-fang	謝明芳
Hsiung Wei	熊衛
Hsu Chi (Adam Hsu)	徐紀
Hsu Shu-ting	許淑婷
Huang di	黃帝
Huang Zhong-liang	黃忠良
Huang Hsu-hui	黃旭徽
Huang Yi-ling	黃乙玲
Huang Yin-ying	黃尹瑩
Jiang Ming-zhu	江明珠
Jue Dai Dance Theatre	一爵一代之
Jung Shu-hwa	容淑華
Kaohsiung City Ballet	高雄城市芭蕾舞團
Kuomintang (KMT)	國民黨
Kuo Wei-fan	郭爲藩
Lan Ling Theatre Company	蘭陵劇坊
Lee Ching-chun	李靜君
Lee Teng-hui	李登輝
<i>Legacy</i>	薪傳
Legend Lin Dance Theatre	無垢舞蹈劇場
Liang Raye-rong	梁瑞榮
Liao Yung-wei	廖泳葳
Life Pulse (course)	生活律動
Li Jin	李錦
Li Tsai-e	李彩娥
Lin Chun-mei	林春梅
Lin Hsiu-wei	林秀偉
Lin Hwai-min	林懷民
Lin Ke-hua	林克華
Lin Ming-de	林明德
Lin Siu-fung	林少峰

Lin Ya-tin	林亞婷
Lin Yuan Ltd	霖園
<i>Little Drummer, The</i>	小鼓手
Liu Feng-xue	劉鳳學
Liu Lee-yun	劉麗雲
Liu Shu-ying	劉淑英
<i>liu wu</i>	六舞
Lo Man-fei	羅曼菲
Mao Tse-tung	毛澤東
Martial Arts (course)	少年武術
<i>minzu wudao</i>	民族舞蹈
<i>Moon Water</i>	水月
Mountain, sitting quietly	山 靜靜的坐著
National Chung-Cheng University	國立中正大學
National Creative Dance Competition	台臺舞躍大地舞蹈創作比賽
National Culture and Arts Foundation	國家文化藝術基金會
National Dance Association of Taiwan	中華民國舞蹈學會
National Taiwan University of the Arts	國立臺灣藝術大學
Ni Ming-xiang	倪鳴香
Pre-professional (course)	專業舞蹈
<i>Revenge of the Lonely Ghost</i>	奇冤報
Shen Xue-yong	申學庸
Shi Yu-qi	史玉琪
Sze Mai-mai	施美美
<i>tai-qi dao-yin</i>	太極導引
Tai-Gu Tales Dance Theatre	太古踏舞團
Taipei National University of the Arts	國立台北藝術大學
Taiwan National Dance Association	中華民國舞蹈學會
<i>Tale of the White Serpent</i>	白蛇傳
Tan Ai-girl	陳愛月
Tiao-yu Tai	釣魚台
Tsai Juei-yueh	蔡瑞月
Tsoying Senior High School	左營高中
Tu Wei-ming	杜維明
Wang Kai	王概
Wang Ke-fen	王克芬
Wen Huei-wen	溫慧玟
Wong Chin-chu	翁金珠

Wu Jing-jyi	吳靜吉
Wu Kuo-chu	伍國柱
<i>Wu Sung Kills the Tiger</i>	武松打虎
Wu Wen-chi	吳文誌
<i>yen men</i>	雲門
You Zeng-hui	尤增輝
<i>yue wu</i>	樂舞
Zhong Zheng Senior High School	中正高級中舞展
<i>Zhou li</i>	周禮
Zhu Liyuan	朱立元
Zhu Ming-yu	朱明玉

APPENDIX 1
TAIWAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Age at start of school year	School Grade		UK equiv.	
29			Higher Education	
28				
27				
26				
25				Doctoral degree
24				
23				Masters degree
22				Teachers college
21				Work experience
20				Undergraduate degree
19				3-year college
18				Technical college
17	12	Compulsory education	Secondary	2-year college
16	11			
15	10			Senior high school
14	9			Senior vocational high school
13	8			
12	7			Junior high school
11	6			
10	5			
9	4			
8	3			Elementary school
7	2		Primary	
6	1			
5				
4				Kindergarten

Note: A number of specialist higher education courses have been omitted for clarity.

APPENDIX 2
TAIWAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TIMETABLE (Grade 5)

Class Timetable on Grade 1-9 Curriculum for Lin-sen Elementary School
 林森國小九年一貫課程班級日課表
 班級 (class) : 508 導師 (Teacher) :王彩如 (Wang Tsai Ju)

時間 Time	星期 Weekday	一 Mon.	二 Tue.	三 Wed.	四 Thu.	五 Fri.
8 : 00 8 : 40		兒童朝會 Students' Assembly	Home Room Teachers' Time 導師時間	Home Room Teachers' Time 導師時間	兒童朝會 Students' Assembly	深耕閱讀 Reading Time
8 : 50 9 : 30	1	數學 Mathematics	美勞 Arts and Humanities	自然與生活科技 Science and Technology	數學 Mathematics	彈性 Alternative Learning Periods
9 : 40 10 : 20	2	語文 Language Arts Mandarin	美勞 Arts and Humanities	自然與生活科技 Science and Technology	鄉土語言 Language Arts Dialects	綜合 Integrative Activities
10 : 30 11 : 10	3	健康與體育 Health and Physical Ed.	語文 Language Arts Mandarin	語文 Language Arts Mandarin	社會 Social Studies	音樂 Arts and Humanities
11 : 20 12 : 00	4	健康與體育 Health and Physical Ed.	語文 Language Arts Mandarin	數學 Mathematics	音樂 Arts and Humanities	自然與生活科技 Science and Technology
12 : 00 12 : 35	午 餐 Lunch					
12 : 35 12 : 55	午 間 靜 息 Break					
13 : 00 13 : 40	5	綜合 Integrative Activities	資訊 Information Technology		語文 Language Arts Mandarin	健康與體育 Health and Physical Ed.
13 : 50 14 : 30	6	社會 Social Studies	數學 Mathematics		語文 Language Arts Mandarin	數學 Mathematics
14 : 40 15 : 20	7	英語 Language Arts English	社會 Social Studies		綜合 Integrative Activities	
15 : 30 16 : 10	8	英語 Language Arts English	教師夕會 Teacher/class Meeting	教師課程研發時間 R & D		

學習領域 Learning areas	學習領域 Learning areas	學習領域 Learning areas
Arts and Humanities	Mathematics	Integrative activities
Science and Technology	Social Studies	Information Technology
Language Arts: Mandarin	Language Arts: English	Language Arts: Dialect
	Health and Physical Ed.	

Source: Linsen Elementary School (2009).

APPENDIX 3

FIELDWORK QUESTIONS

Question	What going to do?	How going to do it?
<p>How is creativity conceptualised at CGDS and how important does the School consider it?</p> <p><i>Specific attention to be paid to the Life Pulse and Pre-professional courses although it is important to have an overview of the martial arts and adult courses too.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Determine the managers and teachers' understanding of creativity and the importance they attach to it. ➤ Determine where in the School's operations they see creativity as important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Interview teachers and management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the School see as its raison d'être? • How does creativity fit into this? • What do they understand by 'creativity'? • What place do they see for it within all the courses, in particular the Life Pulse and Pre-professional courses? • How important do they consider it for teachers to have freedom to be creative? • How is this transferred into practice? • How does the School promote teacher creativity? • What are the limiting factors (possibly the need to and means of maintaining quality, the curriculum...)? • How important do they feel it is for students to have the freedom to be individually creative? ➤ Gather curriculum guidance, teacher training materials, School magazine and other publications available to the public, and other literature. ➤ Observe teaching strategies to ascertain what happens in practice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is policy backed up by practice? • To what extent is student creativity encouraged? • To what extent are students encouraged to simply 'follow the teacher' or being taught/learning by rote? • To what extent is the emphasis on the group/individual?

Question	What going to do?	How going to do it?
<p>What is the primary focus of each CGDS course (for example, personal development, personal fitness, dance training, acquisition of skills/knowledge, dance education, 'creative dance', creative dance, movement education, life skills...)?</p> <p><i>Specific attention to be paid to the Life Pulse and Pre-professional courses although it is important to have an overview of the martial arts and adult courses too.</i></p>	<p>➤ Determine the aims and objectives of each course.</p> <p>➤ Ascertain which aims teachers and management see as of prime importance and which less so.</p> <p>➤ Determine whether what CGDS is doing and what they see themselves as doing is different.</p> <p>➤ Determine the extent to which CGDS is teaching dance and to what extent are they developing other skills?</p>	<p>➤ Observe and document class teaching strategies and student outcomes in the Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does each course focus on particular dance forms (e.g. ballet, Western modern dance, East Asian dance forms) and other movement 'styles'? • To what extent are the class activities teaching specific dance/movement concepts (e.g. unison, canon, rhythm and use of space)? • To what extent is student creativity encouraged? • To what extent are the students being taught/learning by rote? • What are the student learning outcomes? • Is the focus on acquisition of skills, knowledge and/or personal development? • How much emphasis is placed on each? • How is the student-teacher relationship defined? <p>➤ Interview teachers, management and curriculum committee, asking similar questions to the above to discover whether policy and practice are the same.</p> <p>➤ Compare curricula documentation and guidance, actual teaching strategies and learning outcomes.</p>

Question	What going to do?	How going to do it?
<p>What role does creativity play in the Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ascertain why students are not allowed to take the Pre-professional course without also taking the Life Pulse course. ➤ Ascertain concepts of creativity present in each course. ➤ Ascertain how these concepts are manifested in both courses. ➤ Determine the links (creativity and other) between the two courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Observe and document teaching strategies in both courses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is student creativity encouraged in the Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes? • How is this student creativity encouraged or discouraged? • How do teachers react to unexpected (especially creative but others too) outcomes in the Pre-professional classes? • To what extent are teachers creative in these classes? • How far do they vary from the teacher guides? ➤ Examine data for differences, similarities and links between the two courses. ➤ Interview teachers, management and curriculum committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role for creativity do the management and curriculum committee especially see in the two courses? • What links do teachers see between the two courses and how do they work in practice? ➤ Gather data from teacher guides and parent/student booklet, then compare the content with what happens in practice. ➤ Gather other literature including papers written by members of management and the curriculum committee, then compare with the studio practice.

Question	What going to do?	How going to do it?
<p>How and to what extent is student creativity encouraged or discouraged in the Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes?</p> <p>How is this manifested?</p>	<p>➤ Determine the extent to which students work is creative, and free, structured or directed.</p> <p>➤ Determine the nature of the structure or direction.</p> <p>➤ Determine whether this is different in the different curricula.</p> <p>➤ Determine how this is manifested.</p> <p>➤ Determine what happens when students move away from any direction given (i.e. towards free).</p>	<p>➤ Observe and document teaching strategies and class activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What teaching strategies are being used (includes communication and assessment as well as the activities or exercises themselves)? • How effective are they at encouraging students to be creative in their actions and outcomes? • What student creative processes can be seen at play? <p>➤ Interview teachers to determine why particular strategies were used and the extent to which they see student and teacher creativity as being important.</p> <p>➤ Review teacher guides and parent/student booklet for references to creative teaching and learning strategies and creativity in general.</p> <p>➤ Review other literature for references to creativity.</p>

Question	What going to do?	How going to do it?
<p>What factors affect the students' creative process and outputs in the Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes, and to what extent?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Determine how the student creativity is encouraged, what factors do so and to what extent. ➤ Determine the effect of different teaching strategies on student creativity. ➤ Determine how student creativity is inhibited, what factors do so and to what extent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Observe and document teaching strategies and class activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What teaching strategies are used? • What movement vocabulary and/or themes are used? • How much emphasis is placed on doing it "like the teacher"? • What communication strategies are used (instruction, direction, guidance, feedback...). • What are the student outcomes (movement, behavioural, learning...)? • To what extent are the students fully engaged in the activity and how? ➤ Analyse results to determine connections between the above. ➤ Obtain details of previous student experience since this is likely to be a factor. ➤ Document environmental and other factors both in the studio and elsewhere in the School. ➤ Analyse teaching style, teacher/student dialogue and feedback, studio/teaching/school environment, effects of movement vocabulary/themes used. ➤ Interview teachers about the strategies used and why? <p><i>There are other factors which will affect the creative outputs in particular which it will be difficult to assess, including effect of family, home and other outside influences personal to the student.</i></p>

Question	What going to do?	How going to do it?
<p>To what extent does student creativity develop or change over a semester in the Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes?</p>	<p>➤ Compare data from classes at different points in the semester and from different levels of the same course (bearing in mind that the students will be different).</p>	<p>➤ Observe and document student creative processes and outputs over a whole semester.</p> <p>➤ Compare student processes and outcomes from the beginning and end of the semester for the same level of the same course, and compare outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they are different, consider how, why and the extent to which this is so. • Are different teaching strategies being used and if so, how much effect is this having? • Are they different because the students are becoming more confident, are learning new skills or knowledge and are using it more creatively, or for other reasons? <p>➤ Compare student processes and outcomes between different levels of the same course asking the same questions (thus determining whether age may be a factor).</p> <p>➤ Compare student processes and outcomes for the same age but on different courses.</p> <p><i>This can be done at a group or individual level, in which case it will be necessary to identify those individuals it is wished to study.</i></p>

Question	What going to do?	How going to do it?
How important does CGDS regard teacher creativity in the Life Pulse and Pre-professional classes?	<p>➤ Investigate the extent to which the School encourages teacher creativity (e.g. allowing them to vary from the teacher guide and in what ways).</p> <p>➤ Determine the forms that encouragement takes.</p> <p>➤ Determine the circumstances in which creativity is allowed.</p>	<p>➤ Observe and document teaching strategies used in classes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare the teaching strategies employed with those in the published teacher guides. To what extent do they vary? • How do teachers react to unexpected student outcomes (e.g. do they change or modify their lesson plan or not)? <p>➤ Examine the process for curricula and lesson plan changes (both formal and informal).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview teachers, management and curriculum committee about the extent to which informal change and variation is allowed. • How does teachers' practical experience get reflected in curriculum or lesson plan changes? • How are the processes promoted and communicated? It is possible that the method of communication or promotion, although apparently encouraging creativity, could in fact be have the opposite effect.

Question	What going to do?	How going to do it?
<p>How and to what extent is teacher creativity encouraged, discouraged or inhibited in the Life Pulse and Pre-Pulse professional classes?</p> <p>How is this manifested?</p>	<p>➤ Determine the factors encouraging, discouraging or inhibiting teacher creativity.</p> <p>➤ Determine the extent to which the curricula allow, increase or inhibit teacher creativity teachers.</p> <p>➤ Determine how this is manifested in practice. To what extent do teachers deviate from their teacher guides and how much creative input to classes do they really have?</p> <p>➤ Determine whether teacher creativity is different in nature and in the way it is manifested in the different curricula.</p> <p>➤ Determine the factors affecting teacher creativity.</p>	<p>➤ Obtain the teacher guides and review the language and content for signs of the encouragement or discouragement of creativity.</p> <p>➤ Observe and document class activities, creative processes, outcomes, teaching methods and strategies, particularly noting if and how teachers vary from the published teacher guides.</p> <p>➤ Obtain details of teacher evaluation processes (both formal and informal, from within the School and by parents).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is the evaluation done? • How is it done? • What effect on teacher creativity does the evaluation have? • Is there a difference between teacher perceptions of evaluation reasons and possible consequences and actual experience? <p>➤ Obtain details of student evaluation processes (both formal and informal). Are parents' expectations a restricting factor?</p> <p>➤ Interview teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they feel their creativity is encouraged, discouraged or inhibited? • If so, how? • Would they like more freedom in their teaching strategies? <p>➤ Interview management about the need to maintain and to be seen to maintain quality of teaching a factor? This could be a significant restriction (implied or otherwise).</p>

APPENDIX 4

BRIEF HISTORY OF CLOUD GATE

All dance works cited were choreographed by Lin Hwai-min unless stated otherwise.

- 1973 Company established in April in a small studio Taipei, located in an apartment above a store. The name 'Cloud Gate' was chosen the following month.
- First performance is in Taichung on 29th September. The first work danced is *Butterfly Dream*, choreographed by Lin in 1970 while studying in the USA.
- October performances at Taipei's Chungshan Hall in October are sold out. Lin Hwai-min insists latecomers do not enter until the interval. At the time in Taiwan, latecomers were usually allowed to enter the auditorium at any time.
- 1974 Beijing opera movement introduced into the dancers' training, taught by Cao Ju-ling.
- New works include *Revenge of the Lonely Ghost*.
- 1975 Cloud Gate Dance Studio established to offer evening dance classes for children and adults.
- September performances in Singapore (including the premiere of *Tale of the White Serpent*) and Hong Kong, the company's first foreign tour.
- 1976 Lin choreographs *The Little Drummer*, a dance-drama for children.
- First tour to Japan.
- Invited to dance in a joint performance in Pingdong with an aboriginal traditional song and dance group.
- 1977 First free open-air performance in Taipei (June).
- Lin Hwai-min appointed resident artist for a dance festival at the University of California Los Angeles.
- 1978 First tour to southern Taiwan. Performances in Kaohsiung, Tainan and Chiayi.
- The USA breaks diplomatic relations with Taiwan the same day as *Legacy* is premiered in Chiayi. It tells the story of Chinese settlers and their journey to Taiwan becomes the company's signature work.
- 1979 First tour to the USA is critically successful.
- New works include *Milky Way*.

- 1980 *China Times* newspaper lists the formation of Cloud Gate as one of the ten most significant cultural events of the 1970s.
- School campus performance programme launched. 15 performances given and aimed at those on low incomes, three of which are free.
- First Cloud Gate Dance Workshop, designed to provide an opportunity for emerging artists to work with experienced dancers and choreographers.
- Cloud Gate Experimental Theatre founded under the direction of Lin Ke-hua as a training and proving ground for theatre technicians.
- Cloud Gate and Lin organise an *Art and Life* exhibition with over 40 free arts events including Beijing opera performances and recitals by well-known artists; and art, photography and sculpture exhibitions.
- New works include *After Paul Taylor*.
- 1981 Performance to raise funds for medical facilities on Lanyu island.
- Second *Art and Life* event in April with over 70 activities in Taipei, Keelung, Yilan and Hsinchu. A third event is held in December with over 90 activities.
- First tour to Europe, performing 73 times in 71 cities in 90 days.
- New works include *Song of the Earth* (ch. Lin Hsiu-wei) and *Spring Water*. Company also dances Doris Humphries' *Water Study*, the first time Cloud Gate performs work by a Western choreographer.
- 1982 First Cloud Gate dance camp.
- New works include *Nirvana*.
- 1983 Lin choreographs *Dream of the Red Chamber* to mark the company's tenth anniversary.
- Lin founds the National Institute of the Arts (now Taipei National University of the Arts). He serves as its chair until 1988.
- 1984 Lin appointed the first dean of the NIA postgraduate dance programme, the first in Taiwan to formally include Graham technique in the curriculum.
- Noted American teacher Ross Parks comes to Taiwan to teach the company and at universities. The association lasts many years.
- Major new works: *Rite of Spring Taipei*.
- 1985 Tour to USA with performances in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington.
- New works include *Dreamscape*.

- 1986 Cloud Gate and the Council for Cultural Affairs jointly host the Taipei International Dance Festival. Groups from five countries come to Taiwan for a week of performances, classes and lectures.
New works include *My Nostalgia*, *My Songs*.
- 1987 New works include *The River* (ch. Chen Wei-cheng).
- 1988 Cloud Gate Experimental Theatre suspended due to funding difficulties.
Cloud Gate ceases performing at the end of the year, also due to a lack of funds. The *China Times* includes the closure in its 'ten major cultural events of the year.' The after-school class programme continues to operate however.
- 1989 Lin choreographs *Requiem*, a long solo work for Lo Man-fei, one the company's leading dancers, and that is to become her signature work.
- 1991 Cloud Gate Culture and Education Foundation formed and Cloud Gate Dance Theatre reopens. By acting as guardian of the organisation's finances, the Foundation has since been a major stabilising force.
Taiwan government begins a policy of funding goodwill arts missions and professional company international tours as a way of compensating for political and diplomatic setbacks
Company performs Paul Taylor's *Aureole*.
Cloud Gate rehearsal studios move to purpose built premises on a mountainside in Bali, just outside Taipei.
- 1992 Outdoor performance in Taichung attracts 30,000 people. This is company's first large-scale outdoor free performance.
Company returns to Europe for the first time after reopening, performing in Basel and touring Germany.
China Times newspaper and AT&T group jointly sponsor a free outdoor performance in Taipei. Audience estimated at 60,000.
- 1993 Premiere of *Nine Songs* at a free open-air performance in the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Park to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the company's founding. Audience estimated at 30,000.
First tour to Mainland China. Performances in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen to standing ovations. Beijing performance recorded for later transmission on nationwide television.
- 1994 New works include *Rite of Spring* (ch. Helen Lai) and *Songs of the Wanderers*.
- 1995 Lin asks Chang Chung-shiuan to begin planning for the Cloud Gate Dance School.

- 1996 Following the success of earlier free outdoor performances, Lin Yuan Ltd agrees to fund a programme of similar events for ten years. They continue to be very popular, with audiences of up to 60,000.
- Lin introduces *tai-qi dao yin*, into the dancers' daily training. This is a variation on traditional *tai-qi* specifically developed by Hsiung Wei for Cloud Gate.
- Lin has critical success as an opera director with *Rashomon* for the Graz Opera in Austria.
- Lin receives a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Department of Culture of New York City.
- 1997 Two tours to Europe, the second of which includes a first visit to the UK, where *Songs of the Wanderers* is performed in London.
- Lin receives an honorary Fellowship from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.
- New works include *Portrait of the Families*.
- 1998 In April, on the 25th anniversary of Lin sets out three objectives and a new vision for Cloud Gate:
- The main company to expand its international recognition by more international touring.
 - To establish a subsidiary company to perform in smaller, local venues where it was financially impractical for the main company to do so.
 - To establish a community-based dance studio to encourage children to learn about dance and movement.
- Li Yuan-zhe, president of the Academia Sinica, calls upon business to support Cloud Gate with practical action. The Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), later to agree a major funding deal, takes the lead.
- First branch of the Cloud Gate Dance School opens in August in Taipei.
- Major new works: *White, Moon Water*.

- 1999 Cloud Gate 2 established in with a group of young dancers. Its aim is to widen audiences by performing and holding events on campuses and in the community. Lo Man-fei appointed artistic director.
- Cloud Gate launches the Asia-Pacific Young Choreographers' Workshop, which aims to encourage promising emerging choreographers to create new work by providing resources, dancers and space. It becomes an annual event.
- 921 earthquake strikes Central Taiwan on September 21st causing major devastation. The following day, Lin and company dancers go to the area to assist in the disaster relief work.
- First performance of Cloud Gate 2 in a school gymnasium on Matzu, an island off Taiwan's west coast in September.
- Blue Skies Project plans finalised. Cloud Gate, primarily through the Cloud Gate Dance School, will offer free Life Pulse lessons in the disaster area for four years in an attempt to help local children rebuild their lives.
- Lin gives workshops in Cambodia and assists local dancers to design teaching materials for children for Khmer classical dance.
- Lin receives an honorary doctorate from National Chung Cheng University and the Ramon Magsaysay Award (known as the Nobel Prize of Asia).
- 2000 Blue Skies Project launched in February.
- TSMC agrees a five-year funding deal worth NT10 million (£172,000) per year for overseas tours and to stabilise the endowment of the Cloud Gate Foundation.
- First tour to South America (Colombia).
- Cloud Gate Dance Theatre participates in the Olympic Art Festival in Sydney, Australia.
- Lin was named as one of the 'Choreographers of the 20th Century' by *Dance Europe* and one of the 'Personalities of the Year' by *Ballet International*. Also wins 'Best Choreographer' at the Lyon Biennial Festival.
- Lin appointed Artistic Director of the Novel Hall New Dance Series, a programme bringing international contemporary dance companies and artists to perform in Taipei
- 2001 Cloud Gate 2 performs overseas for the first time, at the Beijing Modern Dance Festival.
- Financial services company Cathay Life agrees long-term financial support for Cloud Gate 2's campus programme.
- New works include *Bamboo Dream*, *Cursive*.

- 2002 Cloud Gate Dance Theatre tours Europe, including performances of *Moon Water* in London, and to the USA, performing *Songs of the Wanderers* at Jacobs Pillow. Later, tours to mainland China for the first time, performing *Bamboo Dream* in Shanghai.
- A major education project sees over 80 dance students from the USA, Australia, Taiwan and Hong Kong learn different sections of *Legacy*. The groups are brought together for a complete performance as part of the World Dance Alliance conference in Germany.
- Lin directs the opera *Tosca* in Taiwan.
- Cloud Gate 2 offers a three-week *Dance with Cloud Gate* course at the National Chung Cheng University in Chaiyi. The course attracts students from throughout the Asia-Pacific region. It proves so successful that it becomes a biannual event.
- Lin receives the National Award for Arts from the Taiwan National Culture and Arts Foundation.
- New works include *Smoke*.
- 2003 Cloud Gate 2 performs in Norway and the USA. Cloud Gate Dance Theatre tours to Australia, Brazil, South Korea and the USA.
- Taipei City Council renames the lane in which the company has its offices 'Cloud Gate Lane' in recognition of the company's contribution to the life of the city and the international recognition it has brought. This is the first time a place in Taiwan has been named after a living artist or group.
- Bu-la Rui-yang appointed resident choreographer of Cloud Gate 2.
- Lin receives an honorary doctorate from National Chiao Tung University, Hsinchu.
- Cloud Gate 2 premieres *The Adventures of BoBo*, the first in a series of productions featuring BoBo, an extra-terrestrial, aimed at whole families.
- Other new works include *Cursive II*.
- 2004 Lin receives the Executive Yuan Culture Award, the highest honour of its kind in Taiwan. He donates the prize money to the Wanderers' Fund, which supports local young artists to travel in Asia.
- Smoke* is danced by the Zurich Ballet, the first time a Lin choreography made for Cloud Gate has been performed by a classical ballet company.
- Performances of *Bamboo Dream* in London to critical acclaim.
- Cloud Gate 2's *Dance with Cloud Gate* course at the National Chung Cheng University in Chaiyi attracts 170 participants and visiting choreographers.
- New works include *The Road to the Mountain: Chen Ying-zhen's Landscapes*; and *Oculus* (ch. Wu Kuo-chu) for Cloud Gate 2.

- 2005 Lin awarded the Culture and Arts award of American Joyce Foundation. Introdans, a Netherlands contemporary dance company, performs *White*, made by Lin for Cloud Gate in 1998.
- First tour to Russia. Performances of *Moon Water* in Moscow.
- Lin choreographs a solo for Sylvie Guillem as part of Akram Khan's *Sacred Monsters*, premiered in London.
- New works include *Cursive III*, later renamed *Wild Cursive*.
- 2006 Lo Man-fei, artistic director of Cloud Gate 2 dies after a long illness. Lin assumes direction of the company.
- International Society of Performing Arts awards Lin their Distinguished Artist Award.
- Cloud Gate Dance Digital Archive project established at the *National Chiao Tung University*, which aims to create a digital archive of Cloud Gate's work beginning with 21 choreographies by Lin Hwai-min, Lo Man-fei, and Wu Kuo-chu. The archive is to include photographs, flyers, posters, programs, articles, reviews, and news reports as well as film of performances.
- New works include *Wind Shadow*, a collaboration with Chinese visual artist Cai Guo-qiang; and *The Amazing Adventures of Bo Bo: Who Stole the Nutcracker* (ch. Bu-la Rui-yang) for Cloud Gate 2.
- 2007 Lin invites British choreographer Akram Khan to choreograph for the company. *Lost Shadows* premiered in Taipei in March.
- Cloud Gate Dance School opens its 20th branch.

Source: Various including Cloud Gate (2005a)

APPENDIX 5
CLOUD GATE DANCE SCHOOL LIFE PULSE
AND PRE-PROFESSIONAL COURSES

Age	School grade	Life Pulse course		Pre-professional course		
		Level/	Notes	Stage	Level	Focus
At least 11	6th grade and above	16	Introduction of Beijing opera movement and martial arts	Intensive	4	Freely using the body
		15			3	
		14			2	
		13			1	
At least 10	5th grade and above	12	Introduction of folk dance from around the world	Senior	4	Alignment
		11			3	
		10			2	
		9			1	
At least 6	1st grade and above	8	Focus on incorporating drama, painting, poetry and music with movement	Basic	4	Natural physical skills (e.g. running, jumping), acquiring stamina and the correct technical execution of movements
		7			3	
		6			2	
		5			1	
		4				
At least 4		3	Focus on breathing and basic movement and music skills			
		2				
		1				
		0				
At least 3	Pre-school	0				

Notes:

Children over 4 years old entering the programme are placed at a level appropriate to their physical ability although age consistency is maintained where possible.

Students must have completed Life Pulse levels 1–4 before beginning the pre-professional track.

Sources: Lin and Van Zile (2005), Wen (2003, 2005, 2007a), Cloud Gate Dance School literature and website (www.cgds.com.tw)

APPENDIX 6

BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CLASSES OBSERVED

Life Pulse level 5

In this class the students were encouraged to explore their personal and the general space, to make movements with different dynamics, to create different types of shapes at different levels, to respond to music, and to express feelings. Some lessons sought to develop their ability to see pictures in their minds and to respond accordingly. Some activities were done singly, others involved working in pairs or larger groups.

Page 2 of the teacher-student booklet details the “main focus of the teaching” as follows:

Life Pulse 5 focuses on fostering children’s different types of intelligence. It uses physical development as the main tool. The children will explore movement, open their minds and develop their abilities to communicate. They will become very comfortable working by themselves or with others. Meanwhile, the curriculum activities will encourage them to become closer to the natural environment. They will also become able to say what is their favourite outcome and why. This level of the course therefore not only involves vigorous use of the body but also develops the complete person.

In this section of the course, the content includes:

1. Use of the body, large and small movements to create rich shapes.
2. Use of the body to experience music.
3. Use of movement to express feelings.
4. Development of the ability to see pictures in the mind and make judgements.
5. Exploration of space inside and outside the body.
6. Development of good communication and skills and working with others.

Life Pulse level 11

Life Pulse level 11 focuses on European folk dance, with countries studied for one or two weeks. The lessons have two elements. First, the students learn a section from a traditional dance or dances from the country being studied. Second, they learn a little about the geography, history and culture of that country. The class is as much about cultural education as it is about dance.

The following countries are studied:

France (1 week)	Poland & Lithuania (3 weeks)
Denmark (2 weeks)	Switzerland (2 weeks)
UK (dance from Scotland) (1 week)	Greece (1 week)
Romania (1 week)	Italy (2 weeks)
Serbia (3 weeks)	Germany (1 week)

Pre-Professional Basic level 1

This course is an introduction to dance training. However, rather than focusing on traditional dance training exercises, the teaching aims to help the students explore their own bodies, their understanding of body structure, muscles and joints, and how to use them correctly. The classes also aim to give them an understanding of basics rhythm and to establish their ability to sense it when dancing.

Page 4 of the teacher-student booklet details the “main focus of the teaching” as follows:

In this first level, the teachers try to initiate body exploration and gently progress to basic dance training, emphasising the students’ understanding of body structure, muscles and joints, and how to use them correctly. They also aim to give them a basic understanding of basic movement rhythm and to establish their ability to sense it when dancing. They will encourage the children to concentrate, have the correct attitude and never give up, so they will eventually achieve what they want and the final aims of the course to the best of their ability.

In this section of the course, the content includes:

1. Warm-up: Using different movements and the idea of a big tree and little stars.
2. Foot practice. To flex the toes and use legs and arms like an octopus and seaweed.
3. Upper body practice. Circling, breathing and body hula.
4. Breathing and extension. Like a swan and using a ball.
5. Hand exercise. Dancing with stars.
6. Muscle practice for strength. Kneel and lift your back.
7. Physical training. Basic jumping like half or quarter turns, big jumps, egg roll, roll like noodles, and running and jumping combinations.
8. Creative dance. Little bird dance.
9. Roll. Circle dance.
10. Finish your dance. Use the western way or the Chinese way to finish class.

Pre-professional Senior level 1

The Pre-professional Senior level 1 course is where the students first meet traditional dance training, including basic pliés, tendus, stretches, jumps and travelling exercises. The class is a mix of ballet and modern dance (seemingly Graham-based) training.

There is no parent-student booklet for this course. The website (Cloud Gate Dance School, 2006b) pages give some details about the Pre-professional course as a whole. They note how it combines Western and Chinese aesthetics, the latter promoting preciseness, good form, and the breath. At the same time the course encourages the children to extend themselves physically, building muscular strength, stamina and flexibility. Specific reference is made to the exploration of body, mind and space, and “creativity hidden within the body.” The website talks of movement that must appear natural, and flow smoothly as if coming from inside the body through the use of breath and inner strength. It is not only about outward positions of the body and its limbs.

APPENDIX 7

LIFE PULSE LEVEL 5 PARENT-STUDENT BOOKLET

Course outline (page 3)

[illegible]

Lesson 7: Different kinds of movement (page 11)

7

各種各樣的走法

時間	精力	圖畫	角色扮演
----	----	----	------

看似簡單的走路，卻有許多不同的方法與樣貌。這堂課讓孩子在教室中自由走動，感受並反應與他人在行進間的互動關係；老師給予特定的情境引導，讓孩子學習控制身體的大小肌肉，以豐富的肢體動作表現人類及動物行動的方式；以及讓孩子運用想像力，透過身體模擬大自然中的各種現象。從觀察與模擬中，創造出豐富的身體語言。

想一想

	很	很	加
	棒	好	油

- 我能否以各種不同的方式走路？
- 我能否模擬在不同的情境中走路？

親子活動

- 與家人一起觀察動物不同的走路方式。
- 與家人一起觀察大自然現象，如風吹、浪湧、雲起、月圓、月缺等。

English translation:

Key ideas: Time, energy, improvisation, role-playing.

Walking looks very simple but it can be done in different ways and along different pathways. In this class the children will move freely in the classroom and to sense, interact and work with others. The teacher will give them guidance so they learn how to control their bodies and use different kinds of movements to express human or animal movement patterns. The children will use their imagination and through observation and imitation create different kinds of body languages.

Think about it

1. I can use many different kinds of pathways. Good, OK, need to work more.
2. I can imitate different animals or people in different situations. Good, OK, need to work more.

Activity with the family

1. See how different kinds of animals move.
2. Observe different kinds of natural phenomena such as the wind, waves, clouds or the moon, the way they move and the shapes they make.

APPENDIX 8
PRE-PROFESSIONAL BASIC LEVEL 1 PARENT-STUDENT BOOKLET

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Swan and ball (Pages 14, 15) (Body stretch practice)

天鵝與球 (身體伸展練習)

天鵝在湖面上優雅的玩水，牠抬起修長的脖子，張開翅膀展現美麗的羽毛，好像就要飛起來。

布卡蛙也愛玩水，雙手拿著小皮球，學著天鵝的樣子，吸氣時把球送得又高又遠，吐氣時把球送到腳邊，布卡蛙想像自己也有雙翅膀，牠把腿拉得更長了，身體彎成一個圓弧，讓球輕輕的滾動起來！

14

English translation

The swan always looks so elegant on the lake. It lifts its long neck and opens its wings to show its beautiful feathers.

Puca takes a little ball in both hands to learn how a swan moves. When he breathes in he can take the ball higher and further, and when he breathes out, the ball comes back to his legs. Puca imagines he has a pair of wings when he opens his legs, when his whole body is curved like an arch, and when he gently rolls the ball.

你知不知道？

我們身體的肌肉和關節，也可以像鬆緊帶一樣，很有彈性哦！伸展動作可以幫助我們的身體變得柔軟，輕鬆做出各種輕柔姿，而且也比不容易受傷！

想一想！

- 當我坐在地板上時，背部可以又高又直。
- 我可以一面呼吸一面伸展身體，不會氣喘吁吁。

請記得！

15

Do you know?

Your body muscles and joints can stretch like elastic. Doing extension movements can make the body become very flexible and help us not to get injured.

Think about it:

- When I sit on the floor, my back can be very high and stretched. Good, OK, need to work more.
- I can breathe and stretch my body without breathing very, very hard and fast. Good, OK, need to work more.

APPENDIX 9
NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT CLOUD GATE DANCE SCHOOL
2000-2006

<u>Year</u>	<u>No of locations</u>	<u>No of students</u>
2000	5	1,539
2001	10	3,726
2002	12	6,188
2003	14	8,337
2004	17	9,300
2005	19	10,200
2006	20	Approx. 11,000

Sources: 2000-2003, Chang (2004, 29); 2004, Van Zile (2005, 194), Wen (2007)

APPENDIX 10

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Wen Huei-wen

Wen was a founding director of the Cloud Gate Dance School, and is now its Chief Executive Officer. Her roles include overseeing all operations including finance, administration and curriculum development. She previously studied arts administration and was Director of the Cloud Gate Dance Foundation.

Chu Kuang-chuan

Chu began studying dance at age 6. She is a graduate of Taipei National University of the Arts Dance Department, where she majored in dance teaching. She taught at the School from 1998 to June 2002. During this time she led colleagues in the Blue Skies Project. She subsequently obtained leave to study for her Masters Degree at the University of Surrey in the UK. She returned to teaching full-time at the School in November 2005. She teaches levels 1 and 2 of a new Life Pulse for very young children, and Life Pulse levels 1 to 13.

Chu is also involved with research and development for Life Pulse levels 1-8, a new project started in 2008 in Hong Kong, and provides training courses for new teachers,

Zhu Ming-yu

Zhu has studied dance since age 5. She studied abroad for a short period while at high school. She is a graduate of the Chinese Culture University Dance Department in Taipei. Zhu has been a full-time teacher at the School since 2004, teaching Life Pulse levels 1 to 10 and Pre-professional levels 1 to 4.

Huang Hsu-hui

Huang did not consider dance as a career until he was 17, when he read a novel by Lin Hwai-min and attended a Cloud Gate performance. He studied in Kaohsiung, then at Taipei National University of the Arts Dance Department. After graduating he danced with Cloud Gate Dance Theatre for 13 years, touring worldwide. He says he retired from the stage as he was getting bored with the routine and travel. He has taught part-time at the School since 2004. He teaches Life Pulse levels 11 to 16, Life Pulse for adults, Pre-professional Senior levels 1 to 4, Pre-professional Intensive levels 1 to 4, and specialist modern dance for selected students.

Huang is involved in research and development for Life Pulse levels 11 to 16, and provides training courses for new teachers. At the time of the study, he was also reviewing the Pre-professional Senior course. He is also the company modern dance teacher for Cloud Gate 2.

Gao Pei-ling

Gao graduated from the Taipei National University of the Arts Dance Department in 1997. She then danced freelance for a number of Taiwanese dance companies and taught in a range settings. She joined the Cloud Gate Dance School as a full-time teacher in 2002, turning part-time in 2004. Gao resigned from the School in July 2007 at the end of the semester following the fieldwork. While at the School she taught Life Pulse levels 1 to 13, Life Pulse for adults, Pre-professional Basic levels 1 to 4, and Pre-professional Senior levels 1 to 4.

At the time of the fieldwork, Gao was also a freelance dancer in Taipei, performing for a number of companies including the contact improvisation-based Ku and Dancers.

After leaving the School Gao obtained a scholarship and studied in London with Gill Clarke at Independent Dance. As at Spring 2009 she is studying for her Masters in Fine Arts Degree in Choreography and Performance at Mills College, Oakland, California. Her dissertation topic is contact improvisation.

APPENDIX 11 **SCHEDULE OF OBSERVATIONS**

<u><i>Date</i></u>	<u><i>Time</i></u>	<u><i>Class (lesson number)</i></u>	
5 October 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (1)	
5 October 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (1)	
12 October 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (2)	
12 October 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (2)	
13 October 2006	1740-1910	Life Pulse level 11 (1)	
19 October 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (3)	
19 October 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (3)	
20 October 2006	1740-1910	Life Pulse level 11 (2)	
21st October 2006	0900-1030	Pre-professional Senior level 1 (1)	
26 October 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (4)	
26 October 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (4)	
27 October 2006	1740-1910	Life Pulse level 11 (3)	
28 October 2006	0900-1030	Pre-professional Senior level 1 (2)	
2 November 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (5)	
2 November 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (5)	
3 November 2006	1740-1910	Life Pulse level 11 (4)	
4 November 2006	0900-1030	Pre-professional Senior level 1 (3)	
9 November 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (6)	
9 November 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (6)	
16 November 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (7)	Filmed
16 November 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (7)	Filmed
23 November 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (8)	
23 November 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (8)	
25 November 2006	0900-1030	Pre-professional Senior level 1 (6)	Filmed
30 November 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (9)	
30 November 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (9)	
7 December 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (10)	
7 December 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (10)	

<u><i>Date</i></u>	<u><i>Time</i></u>	<u><i>Class (lesson number)</i></u>	
14 December 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (11)	
14 December 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (11)	
21 December 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (12)	Filmed
21 December 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (12)	Filmed
28 December 2006	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (13)	
28 December 2006	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (13)	
30 December 2006	0900-1030	Pre-professional Senior level 1 (11)	Filmed
30 December 2006	1220-1350	Martial arts level 3 (10)	
4 January 2007	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (14)	
4 January 2007	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (14)	
5 January 2007	1740-1910	Life Pulse level 11 (13)	Filmed
11 January 2007	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (15)	
11 January 2007	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (15)	
18 January 2007	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (16)	
18 January 2007	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (16)	
25 January 2007	1700-1800	Life Pulse level 5 (17)	
25 January 2007	1820-1920	Pre-professional Basic level 1 (17)	

Some classes have different lesson numbers in the same week because they began later than others and some missed a week due to Taiwan public holidays in October.

APPENDIX 12

CLASS OBSERVATION FORM

(Reduced to approximately 90% full size)

CLASS OBSERVATION RECORD

Venue: <div style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;"> Cloud Gate Dance School QuanQian Road Taipei </div>		Course: <hr/> Level: <hr/> Class no: <hr/> Date: <hr/> Time: <hr/>	
Studio: 			
Studio notes: 			
Teacher: 	Notes: 		
Teacher dress: 			
No of students: 	Girls: 	Boys: 	Notes:
Age of students: 			
Student dress: 			
Aims of lesson (from student, parent booklet and/or teacher guide): <div style="height: 150px; border: 1px solid black;"></div>			

CLASS ACTIONS / EVENTS

Time	Description of activity/exercise/task (including teacher imposed limitations)	Task implies movement discovery, generation, exploration; acquisition of skills, knowledge	Modes(s) of delivery and teacher guidance (verbal, own physicality, touch, sound, objects, imagery, interaction with students)	Student actions, processes (follow teacher; discover, generate or explore movement)	Student outcomes (description, originality, appropriateness)	Assessment, feedback (verbal, own physicality, touch, sound, objects, imagery, interaction with students)
	Type:		Setting task:			
	Group size:		During task:			
	Type:		Setting task:			
	Group size:		During task:			

CLASS REVIEW

Were class aims achieved?

Comparison with teacher guide:

Behaviour/discipline:

Other notes:

Overall impressions / thoughts:

APPENDIX 13 **INTERVIEW AND MEETING SCHEDULE**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Interviewee</u>
31 October 2006	1430-1600	Chu Kuang-chuan Senior teacher Teacher of the Life Pulse level 5 class observed; My liaison point with the School
29 December 2006	1430-1545	Huang Hsu-hui Senior teacher Teacher of the Pre-professional advanced level 1 class observed Leader of Pre-professional curriculum review Chu Kuang-chuan
29 December 2006	1545-1630	Chu Kuang-chuan
4 January 2007	1430-1545	Chang Chung-shiuan Chair of the Life Pulse levels 1-4 curriculum committee Member of original team that established the School Former chair of Dance College, Taipei National University of the Arts
5 January 2007	1700-1730	Gao Pei-ling Teacher of Life Pulse level 11 class observed Freelance dancer
17 January 2007	1730-1900	Wen Huei-wen Executive Director of the Cloud Gate Dance School Member of original team that established the School
18 January 2007	1800-1820	Zhu Ming-yu Teacher of the Pre-professional Basic level 1 class observed
19 January 2007	1430-1645	Ho Hsiao-mei Chair of the Life Pulse levels 5-9 curriculum committee Faculty, Taipei National University of the Arts
25 January 2007	1620-1650	Chu Kuang-chuan

The above times include any post interview discussion that occurred.
Informal meetings were also held with Chu Kuang-chuan every Thursday from
approximately 1630-1650.

APPENDIX 14

INTERVIEW EXTRACT

The following is an extract from an interview with Gao Pei-ling, that took place on Friday 12th January 2007, at 5.00pm in Studio 1 of Cloud Gate Dance School, QuanQian Road branch, Taipei. The interview was conducted in a relaxed atmosphere sitting on the floor of the studio.

It is not strictly verbatim in that minor corrections have been made to grammar. My words are in italics, Gao's in regular font.

You once said to me that if I was interested in creativity, your [folk dance] class was the wrong class. Can you explain what you meant?

[Looking surprised] What! Did I say that? When?

Yes. It was after that performance by Shui Ying Wu Ji [Water Reflection Dance Ensemble] at Jiangzicui.

Really? I remember the performance. Mmmm. [Pause] Anyway, do you mean teacher's creativity or children's creativity?

I'm interested in both. I know you might have been joking, but was it just a little bit serious comment? Let's start with teaching. How much freedom do you feel you have in the way you teach the course?

In folk dance, sure I have freedom. You know, I think the folk dance is not that difficult for them. They just need to practice. So the first time they don't do very well but after they practice more they do well. So, yes, I think... I just let them know how happy and how beautiful the steps are, and how happy you can be when you dance with others and dance those steps, and how you can feel all this in dancing.

Can you teach the course how you want to teach the course or do you have to teach it as someone else says? Are you taught or guided in the teacher training how to teach the steps, or is it up to you?

When I was trained, no, they didn't show us the best way to teach this. But I remember some teachers saw the results were not that perfect. There were lots of comments. Some teachers said "Oh, that is so difficult to teach. It is so boring because you have to teach it exactly and the students seem not to do very well in the class." So after that the top teachers said 'we have to do something.' So they worked out how to do the beginning steps and then the whole dance from there.

But it is a problem even now. I try to make it interesting... But I have to teach the dances, and there is not always enough time.

So the teachers talk and share good ideas.

Yes, of course. All the time. Why not? It is good for us and good for the kids.

Your folk dance class is a very happy class...

[Laughed] Really! It should be. It should be this way. All dance classes should be this way. You have to let the students enjoy it but it's not like...I don't have rules in the class. What I mean is I don't have rules for the students. I have my own rules but I want them to be happy and free in this class because when they are free they can do better. When they are nervous or something, they are afraid of you...that is not necessary in the class.

Sorry, can you explain what you mean by your 'own rules'?

Rules for me.

Maybe I'm being stupid, but can you give me an example?

OK. It's like...[pause]...how I behave. I have to be happy and laugh and smile. I want them to dance well but I have to try and not force it. If I do that, then they will not be happy.

And do you think you succeed?

I hope so. I think maybe there is more laughing and shouting in my classes than some others. But that shows me they are happy. So long as we do the dances, that is OK.

So should the students also be free in the professional classes?

That is more difficult. It depends what kind of freedom you are talking about. Their minds should be free but they must know that inside [the class] we have a structure that the teacher knows. The teacher knows [expects or wants] you to do your own part very well but you have to relax in the class. It's about how to guide the students learning. What is really important is the atmosphere in the class.

In the folk dance class, what do you think is the most important thing for the students?

[Pause] It's a 90-minute class and they have to dance for at least an hour of that and be happy. Having a good time is really important.

If that's the most important, what are the other things?

To learn about the different cultures and to experience the dance from there.

How important is it to learn about the countries?

I think it's the same as in the [other] Life Pulse class. You have to tell them some interesting things about the country and to guide them to learn more, so that they can say I can dance the Swiss dance or whatever but I also know about the country. It makes learning to dance interesting. They know what the dances mean. This is a way to do that. I think and I believe that at their age, they are 10 and 11, they can speak and share their own views too.

They always seem really interested in that part of the class. You can see by the way they get really close to you.

Yes, yes. They like it so I keep doing it. I like it when this happens. In another class, if my students seem not so interested in the talking part I will skip it or make it shorter.

So you don't have to include it?

[More quietly] I should. But if it really causes a problem, and they would rather dance...

The travel magazines you bring in, are they provided by the School?

No, they are mine. And this week I brought Swiss chocolate because we are still talking about Switzerland. When we did Germany I brought in some German sausage for them to try.

...and the most important thing for you as a teacher from the class?

I think it's the same sort of thing. I hope I won't feel pressure that I need to finish the piece in that class.

Does it matter if you don't get a dance finished or they don't learn it as well as you would like?

I don't think so, but I always try. They have different abilities, so sometimes it is better than others.

Can I just talk a minute about the whole course? How important is students' imagination?

It is the most important [thing]. It's easy for children to be creative because they have more imagination and they don't have a limit and they have not trained their body in any one style, so they can do movement as free as they can. So, the imagination is so large for them. You can use different ideas to provide input for them to be creative, such as sound, life experience, or story, or music.

Have you ever thought how students' could use their imagination in the folk dance course?

I'm not sure what you mean?

Well, maybe by getting them to work together and create their own dances from your steps.

It is a good idea. I always want to make it more interesting. For me too. But the problem is time. You see the class. It is already difficult to finish everything. Time is always a problem.

Do you think student creativity can be 'anything goes' or does it have to be... You tell me.

First of all it should be inside [guide-]lines because you have to teach them how to do that and let them really know the form is there. After that they can create their own part.

So, you have to teach them something first to be creative with, or teach them how to be creative...

Sorry, maybe my English is not good. I don't think that it is teach. It is guide them because I don't think that creativity is a technique. You can't teach them to imagine or think like what. You can't teach them to understand. But you just guide them, to inspire them to think.

So how does that affect the way you teach in other Life Pulse classes?

[Pause].

How much do you demonstrate, for example?

I can't say I never do that. But I try never to do that. But a special part is when they don't do the movement as I expect. Then I might show them a little bit and say it maybe could be just like this. But they then have to create their own movement. That is most important.

How to guide them is your [teachers'] creativity. You have to use some materials or your experience. I think that is an important part.

Is it a little bit like the students using their experiences and knowledge? The teachers too use their experience and knowledge.

The teacher's experience is [their] most important [asset]. You have performance experience or some life experience. We can compare [use the knowledge of] young teachers and older teachers who can share ideas and differences.

APPENDIX 15

LIFE PULSE LEVEL 5 TEACHER MANUAL

This is a translation of pages 33 and 34 of the manual, and refers to the Different Ways of Walking lesson shown in Appendix 7. The layout is exactly as in the printed manual.

(page 33)

Curriculum content	Teaching guide
<p><i>A. Warm up</i></p> <p>1. Meditation and stretch.</p> <p><i>B. Activity exploration □□</i></p> <p>◆1. Let the students walk freely throughout the classroom. Don't let them bump into each other.</p> <p>◆2. Let the students use different ways of walking (for example on their heels, toes, with bent knees, bouncing, jumping, turning, heavy or light, fast or slow).</p> <p><i>C. Development activity □□</i></p> <p>◆1. Imitate different kinds of walking (using different feeling). The students follow the teacher's guide to walk in the classroom. For example, feel very good or upset, happy walking, walk like an old man or a pregnant woman.</p> <p>◆2. To imitate animals walking (using different energy)</p>	<p><i>A. Warm up</i></p> <p><i>B. Activity exploration.</i></p> <p>1-1. The whole classroom is your space. You can be relaxed and walk freely. 1-2. Remind the students not to walk in a specific or fixed route, or just circle around. Encourage the students to walk in different directions and to sense the interrelationship with others when they are moving, not to change direction suddenly, and to observe and be aware of other students.</p> <p>2. How else can you walk?</p> <p><i>C. Development activity</i></p> <p>1. When the students are walking they can make sounds but not talk. This will help them get into the role and to experience different ways of walking and different emotions.</p> <p>2. Use four kinds of animals representing different kinds of movement.</p>

<p>To direct the students to practice individually. To guide them to learn the movement of a small bird (very light), elephant (very heavy), kangaroo (bouncing) and eagle (open both arms and the chest, soaring and flying).</p> <p>◆3. To imitate nature (using creativity)</p> <p>For example walking like waves rolling, raining falling, smoke flowing, or clouds or leaves blown by the wind.</p> <p><i>D. Sharing</i></p> <p>1. Guide the students to fill in their handbook including the section called 'emotion sharing'. 'Think about it ' points:</p> <p>① How do you walk in daily life. Why do you walk this way?</p> <p>② Have you observed other people. Why do they walk like they do? Can you recognise their emotions from the way they walk?</p> <p>2. Check the parent-student handbooks one by one and give the after-class hug.</p>	<p>3-1. The teacher is best to describe the environment or context to guide the student to produce the different kinds of motor movement possible in the natural environment. Emotions and colours are also important. If the teacher finds it difficult to guide them they can use music to help.</p> <p>3-2 Use both legs as the main way of walking while other body parts imitate the natural environment.</p> <p><i>D. Sharing</i></p>
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3. Treasure box of ideas

☐ Teaching materials treasure bowl	☐ Small tips for the classroom
☐ 1. The teacher has to control the time spent on each activity in this class.	

APPENDIX 16

PRE-PROFESSIONAL BASIC LEVEL 1 TEACHER MANUAL

This is a translation of pages 19 and 20 of the manual, and refers to the Swan and Ball exercise shown in Appendix 8. The layout is exactly as in the printed manual.

(Page 19)

1. Main point of the teaching

Training flexibility and muscle strength.

2. Teaching materials

15 three-colour balls.

3. Process of teaching

Stretching	
Curriculum content	Guidance
<p><i>Preparation: Sitting cross-legged, the coloured ball between the legs.</i></p> <p>Introduction: Breathe out.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inhale. Ask the student to take the ball from between their legs and slowly roll up through the body, and extend above the top of the head. Exhale and reverse the movement. Four times in total. 2. The fifth time the ball is rolled above the head, stretch forward to the floor, breathing naturally. 3. Inhale and roll the ball back to the body, then follow the body, rolling the ball above the head. Repeat the sequence twice, i.e. three times in total. 4. The fourth time the ball is rolled above the head, stretch the legs forward and repeat numbers 2 and 3 three times. 5. The fourth time the ball is rolled above the head, open the legs. The upper body is stretched forward. The ball is placed on the floor. Relax and breathe naturally. 6. Inhale. Use the hands to push up from the floor. Bring the legs together. Exhale. Both legs fall to the right and circle so that the student now lays on their front with the body in a straight line. Inhale. Put both hands next to the chest and push up into a poison-snake position. Exhale, and return to the floor. Do this four times in total. 7. Keep both hands in the same place and push the tailbone backwards. Round the back, sit on the calves and stretch the back. Relax and keep breathing naturally. 8. Put both feet on the floor and straighten the legs, lifting the tailbone up. Plié and stretch twice. Slowly roll up through the back. Breathe and relax. 	<p>Preparation: Both hands should rest naturally on the knees.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1-1. You can verbally guide the students to imagine they are a swan playing with a ball. Imagine the swan can help the student energy from their pelvis and whole torso to stretch upwards through the neck. 1-2. If the ball is dropped during the exercise, ask the student to remain concentrated and continue the movement. They should not be disturbed by this. 6. When you do the poison-snake position, remind the students to think of their stomach and butt and to lift everything up. 8. Remind the students to relax their shoulders, head and neck. If they don't have enough flexibility they can bend their knees. As the roll up, their tummy should be strong. They should feel it bone by bone and feel the weight of the shoulders, head and neck.

Guidance
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Breathing and strengthening the body is an important part of the exercise.2. You can adjust the speed and timing of this practice. For example you can ask the students to breath three or four times when the stretch forwards before continuing.

APPENDIX 17

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Note that this was produced as a single A4-size page.

Dear parents

I return to England on 1/26. I want to say thank you for allowing me to observe your children in the classes at the Cloud Gate School. I have learned a lot and it has also been great fun. Before I leave I would be grateful if you could answer a few short questions. Thank you.

David
大衛·密德

1. Why did you choose the Cloud Gate Dance School for your son or daughter?
2. What do you think your son or daughter learns from the Life Pulse classes?
 - Dance
 - Ballet
 - Modern dance
 - Creative movement
 - Other movement skills
 - How to be creative
 - How to express themselves with their body
 - Other - what?

Which of these is most important?

3. What do you think your son or daughter learns from the Pre-professional classes?
 - Dance
 - Ballet
 - Modern dance
 - Creative movement
 - Other movement skills
 - How to be creative
 - How to express themselves with their body
 - Other - what?

Which of these is most important?

4. What other benefits do you think your son or daughter gets from attending the Life Pulse classes (and the Pre-professional classes if they take those too)?

- Having fun and a good time
- Making new friends
- Becoming more healthy
- Learning to work with others
- Other personal or social benefits - what?

Which of these is most important?

5. Has attending Life Pulse classes made differences to other areas of their life?

At home? How?

At public school? How?

Elsewhere? Where and how?

6. What is your overall view of the classes at the Cloud Gate Dance School?