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Becoming an Engaged Dance Scholar Through Arts-Based Community Engagement Projects

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Postgraduate dance education students can develop a practice of arts-based, engaged scholarship by applying their disciplinary knowledge in collaboration with community partners to enact projects that benefit local, regional and/or global communities and their own scholarship. The present article analyses seven arts-based research projects required as part of the Studio Seminar course for doctoral dance education students at Teachers College, Columbia University. The specific goals of the research project were (a) to assess the level of community engagement present in seven Studio Seminar projects, (b) to determine whether or not the criteria of “evocation and illumination” were fulfilled in the Studio Seminar projects, and (c) to determine the knowledge gained by the participating students who conducted and reflected upon the Studio Seminar projects. Two cohorts of students participated in the study: Cohort 1 (three participants), who completed the course in 2021, and Cohort 3 (four participants), who completed the course in 2023. The data were collected and analysed based on the arts-based research evaluation criteria of evocation and illumination, and the community engagement criteria of co-creation, co-implementation, co-assessment and co-dissemination. The results of this exploratory study reveal that the community engagement criteria of co-creation, co-implementation and co-assessment were present in all of the projects, but co-dissemination was only possible for the students who completed their projects in the first cohort. In addition, the arts-based research criteria of evocation and illumination were present in all seven projects. Furthermore, the results of a Community Engagement Questionnaire revealed that the projects had a positive impact on the students’ dissertation goals and their plans for future community engagement

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projects. In conclusion, providing postgraduate dance education students with guidance in developing arts-based, community-engaged projects assists in their development as engaged scholars.

Keywords: arts-based research, community engagement, assessment, dance, higher education

Postati angažiran plesni strokovnjak prek umetniško zasnovanih projektov za vključevanje skupnosti

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Podiplomski študentje plesne pedagogike lahko razvijejo prakso angažiranega, na umetnosti temelječega raziskovanja, tako da svoje strokovno znanje uporabijo v sodelovanju s partnerji iz skupnosti pri izvedbi projektov, ki koristijo lokalnim, regionalnim in/ali globalnim skupnostim, ter hkrati prispevajo k njihovem lastnemu raziskovalnemu delu. Ta članek analizira sedem projektov na umetnosti temelječega raziskovanja, ki so obvezen del predmeta Studio Seminar za doktorske študente plesne pedagogike na Teachers College Univerze Columbia. Cilji raziskave so bili: a) oceniti raven vključenosti skupnosti v sedmih projektih Studio Seminar; b) ugotoviti, ali so bila v projektih izpolnjena merila evokacije (sprožanje estetskega ali reflektivnega odziva) in osvetlitve (prikaz ali osvetlitev kompleksne teme skozi umetniško prakso); c) raziskati, kakšno znanje so pridobili študentje, ki so pri projektih sodelovali in jih reflektirali. V raziskavi sta sodelovali dve skupini študentov: skupina 1 (trije udeleženci), ki je predmet zaključila leta 2021, in skupina 3 (štirje udeleženci), ki je predmet zaključila leta 2023. Podatki so bili zbrani in analizirani na podlagi meril za ocenjevanje na umetnosti temelječega raziskovanja – evokacije in osvetlitve – ter meril za vključevanje skupnosti, kot sta soustvarjanje in souporaba. Rezultati kažejo, da so bila merila vključevanja skupnosti prisotna v vseh projektih; soustvarjanje je bilo prisotno pri vseh, medtem ko je bila souporaba značilna predvsem za projekte skupine 1. Poleg tega sta bili evokacija in osvetlitev izraženi v vseh sedmih projektih. Rezultati vprašalnika o vključevanju skupnosti so pokazali, da so projekti pozitivno vplivali na študente glede njihovih študijskih ciljev in prihodnjih načrtov za projekte v sodelovanju s skupnostjo. Sklepno lahko ugotovimo, da usmerjanje podiplomskih študentov plesa k razvoju projektov na umetnosti temelječega raziskovanja v povezavi s skupnostjo prispeva k njihovem oblikovanju kot angažiranih raziskovalcev.

Ključne besede: na umetnosti temelječe raziskovanje, vključevanje skupnosti, ocenjevanje, ples, visokošolsko izobraževanje

Introduction

Community engagement and arts-based research (ABR) have great potential to ensure that university dance students and faculty are connected in a meaningful way to the local, regional and global communities. The present exploratory study is based on reflections and outcomes of projects conducted by students in the Doctor of Education (EdD) programme in Dance Education at Columbia University. This is the only doctoral programme in the United States of America focused on pedagogical and educational research in dance. The students in the programme gain knowledge about the importance of the embodied experience to shape learning. Furthermore, the students, many of whom have worked for many years in various community settings, practise becoming engaged dance scholars by creating and implementing arts-based, community-engaged research projects.

All students in the EdD programme in Dance Education at Teachers College, Columbia University are required to take the Studio Seminar, an important practicum in the doctoral journey. Not only does it require students to engage with a community, but it is also the only course in which all students develop and implement research projects using dance as a methodology. Faculty encourage students to use the course project as an opportunity to develop their research interests and methods. The students who are the co-authors of and contributors to this article all took the Studio Seminar course before determining their dissertation topic and research methods. What the students learn in the process of conducting their class project informs both the methods and the topics they focus on in their original, empirical research dissertation. This introduction will be organised as follows: (a) postgraduate education in community engagement, (b) arts-based research definitions and assessment, (c) community engagement definitions and assessment, and (d) the research goals of this project.

Postgraduate Education in Community Engagement

The seminal work of Ernest Boyer (1996) provided the first blueprint for the importance of community engagement as an integral form of scholarship in higher education. He encouraged faculty in higher education to consider work with communities to be important and scholarly work. Other scholars have also described the importance of community engagement experiences for postgraduate students (Lesley & Smit, 2020; Matthews et al., 2015; O'Meara et al., 2006). Postgraduate students benefit from learning to apply their work within the context of a given community. Moreover, "Research clearly indicates

that learning and teaching which is engaged within communities provides a range of opportunities of building graduate attributes in areas of citizenship, employability, resilience, problem-solving and self-motivation” (O’Connor et al., 2011, p. 114).

Postgraduate students in dance education benefit from training in community engagement, as many of them are preparing for leadership in higher education, where all scholarship, whether traditional, creative or community based, needs to be conducted in a manner that makes the rigorous nature of the project obvious. Promotion, tenure and merit decisions made by universities depend on peer review of documents, which are required to demonstrate high levels of scholarship (Ellison & Eatman, 2008; O’Meara et al., 2015).

Not all institutions, units, or disciplines are opening to engaged scholarship at the same rate, and the challenges faced by many individual engaged scholars to have their work recognized and valued remain very real. The growth and recognition of engaged scholarship must be context-specific led by faculty increasingly attuned to their multiple roles, building intra- and inter- institutional understanding attentive to evolving models in other contexts. (Changfoot et. al., 2020, p. 256)

The completion of a community engagement project as a course requirement contributes to the knowledge and skills of future dance faculty, who may use this knowledge to advocate for the inclusion of engaged scholarship as equal to other forms of scholarship.

Many community-based dance projects combine both arts-based inquiry and community engagement (Dailey & Hauschild-Mork, 2017; Duffy, 2019; Mabingo, 2018; Warburton et al., 2014). Purvis (2018) described several dance-based community engagement projects in a review of papers published in the *Journal of Dance Education* in the period 2001–2016. She discovered that the tenets of engaged scholarship were rarely included, and determined that the field of dance could benefit from more qualitative and quantitative studies that provide evidence of the benefits of dance-based community engagement for all parties.

Arts-Based Research Assessment

Arts-based research (ABR) is a qualitative research methodology that may include one art form or a collaboration of several art forms, including dance, music, drama, visual arts and literary arts (Leavy, 2015). The arts (dance, music, drama, visual arts, literary arts) are a creative expression of the artist. The art form can be abstract – where the artist is unconcerned about the personal

interpretation of the artwork, as in some visual artworks and many avant-garde dance works – but the arts can also be a powerful source of knowledge and emotional connection. This is especially true when they are intentionally used to enhance knowledge and provoke the empathy of the observer. Dance can promote a deep understanding and illumination of a topic. In essence, the heart and soul are touched and transformed (Moffett, 2025; Overby, 2022; Wilson & Moffett, 2017).

The criteria for the assessment of arts-based research have been described by Barone and Eisner (2012) to include incisiveness, concision, coherence, generativity, evocation and illumination. Leavy (2015) includes the evaluative criteria of aesthetics, methodology, usefulness and audience response. For the purposes of the present exploratory research project, we focused on the criteria of evocation and illumination, where the work promotes a deep cognitive and emotional understanding that can lead one to reveal the complexities of social issues (Overby, 2022). An example of evocation and illumination was revealed during a dance performance when audience members were cognitively informed and emotionally engaged in the topics presented and performed. After the performance, which was based on the life and legacy of Mary Ann Shadd Cary (Overby et al., 2025), 110 high school students and 112 adult audience members answered a survey regarding the performance. Using a Likert scale of 1–5 (1 lowest and 5 highest), the survey asked respondents to select the number that best represented their knowledge of the production. The majority of the respondents indicated that they had known very little about Mary Ann Shadd Cary prior to the performance (1.6), but had gained significant knowledge by the end of the performance (4.02). In addition, open-ended questions gave the audience members an opportunity to share specific knowledge and meaning gained during the production. For example, one respondent stated “Dance expresses art that words cannot express by embodying the personal challenges she faced” (Overby et al., 2025, p. 116). Emotional engagement is another indicator of illumination of a topic through art. Dance, music, visual art and other creative arts can evoke emotions based on memory and experiences. For example, *Migrant Mother* (Lang, 1936), a painting of a woman during the Depression, gives us a glimpse into her impoverished life: we feel her sadness as we view this painting. One of the most impactful aspects of ABR is the ability to illuminate topics and evoke emotions. Although there are more published results of ABR in visual arts and literary arts (Leavy, 2015), dance, which is less researched, is a powerful tool for illumination and evocation.

As a reflection of their Studio Seminar project, and for the purposes of the present article, the first author and instructor of the Studio Seminar course

requested that each of the co-authors and three other students from a previous Studio Seminar course participate in a study that assessed the community engagement and arts-based research components of the course.

Community Engagement Assessment

In addition to the ABR criteria, we also assessed the engaged scholarship that encompassed the projects, as the projects included community partners. Community engagement can be seen as a continuum from outreach (one partner making all of the decisions) to full engagement (both partners contribute equally, from creation to dissemination). Engaged scholarship (ES) represents the most collaborative aspect of community engagement.

Engaged scholarship (ES) can be defined as scholarly activities focused on the social, civic, economic, educational, artistic, scientific, environmental, and cultural well-being of people and places beyond the academy. It involves the creation and dissemination of new knowledge to address social issues through collaborative relationships and shared activity between those in the university and those outside the university. (Campus Compact, n.d.)

The engaged scholar's goal is to apply their disciplinary knowledge in collaboration with community partners to benefit local, regional and/or global communities, as well as their own scholarship. With community partners, they create, implement and disseminate mutually beneficial projects that address public issues (Overby, 2016). Several forms of assessment have been designed to determine the effectiveness of dance-based, community-engaged scholarship projects. These are included in the book *Public Scholarship in Dance* (Overby, 2016). The assessment criteria consider ways that the researcher and community partner co-create, co-implement, co-assess and co-disseminate the project. In dance, the projects may include teaching, research or choreography leading to positive gains by the community members, the faculty and the performers, as well as benefits for the field of dance.

Leavy (2017) promotes the idea that community engagement provides a theoretical foundation for holistic frameworks and practices when approaching research and storytelling, serving and authentically engaging with a community. Furthermore, she argues for the significance of developing partnerships with stakeholders outside the academic realm that contribute to the progression of research addressing specified issues within the community. Community engagement promotes collaboration while sharing the dynamics of power and a variety of modalities of knowledge that benefit everyone. This outlook on

research tends to be centred on real-life issues and focused on problem-solving, which presents an opportunity for shared responsibility when finding solutions that create change within the development of communities that will be heavily impacted (Leavy, 2017).

Community engagement requires that everyone works from the ground up, because problem-solving is not a bandage to cover up deeply rooted issues within the community. Getting to the root of ground up work through community engagement is about giving access to tools that can be tangible, educational and transformative, and can create societal change (da Cruz, 2018). This work is about creating a safe space to discuss issues, ask the necessary questions, and facilitate a timeframe to process solutions, while also implementing what has been discovered through practice. This holistic outlook, where people are seen and heard, can also be healing for all communities involved. Community engagement reminds us of the power of partnership within the community.

The specific goals of the present research project were (a) to assess the level of community engagement present in the seven Studio Seminar projects, (b) to determine whether or not the criteria of “evocation and illumination” were fulfilled in the Studio Seminar projects, and (c) to determine the knowledge gained by the participating students who conducted and reflected upon the Studio Seminar projects.

Method

The projects analysed in this paper were created as part of the Studio Seminar, a dance education doctoral course taught at Teachers College, Columbia University. Students in this course were expected to complete an embodied, research-related studio project with a group of participants (youth or adults) during the semester in which they are enrolled in the Studio Seminar. During the semester, the students gained knowledge of ABR, embodiment, community engagement and critical race theory. They were guided in developing their projects by discussing course assigned readings and completing a project proposal form, as well as by communicating their goals for the project with the course instructor. The students completed the project, gave an oral presentation and submitted a formal research paper.

ABR was utilised as a method for exploring and understanding a variety of community experiences. Seven projects from the Studio Seminar course were assessed for the components of ABR stated by Leavy (2017): evocation and illumination. Community engagement of the projects was assessed by determining the levels of co-creation, co-implementation, co-assessment and

co-dissemination of the projects with the community partners.

The students answered the Community Engagement Questionnaire, which revealed the level of co-creation, co-implementation, co-assessment and co-dissemination of their projects. Their submitted final research papers were deductively coded, while content analysis was conducted to contribute further information about community engagement and reveal evidence of evocation and illumination of their arts-based projects. This section of the paper is structured as follows: (a) participants, (b) instruments, (c) the research design of the project, (d) procedures, data collection and analysis methods, (e) summary, and (f) ethics statement.

Participants

The participants were seven current and former postgraduate students from Cohort 1 of the Studio Seminar course taught in 2021 and Cohort 3 of the Studio Seminar course taught in 2023. Four of the students are co-authors of the present paper and members of Cohort 3, while three students are members of Cohort 1. All seven students are pursuing (6) or have recently completed (1) the EdD in Dance Education at Columbia University. The participants range in age from 42 to 63 years, with a mean age of 50.3 years. They have an average teaching experience of 29.6 years, ranging from 19 to 42 years, in a variety of settings including community programmes, public schools and college/university settings.

Instruments

Instrument 1. Community Engagement Assessment Rubric

The Community Engagement Assessment Rubric (Overby, 2016), as displayed in Table 1, provided specific criteria and explanations of low-level community engagement (score of 1), mid-level community engagement (score of 2) and high-level community engagement (score of 3). This assessment was used to determine the level of community engagement present in the seven Studio Seminar projects, in terms of co-creation, co-implementation, co-assessment and co-dissemination, in conjunction with reviewing the answers to the first four questions of the Community Engagement Questionnaire (co-creation, co-implementation, co-assessment and co-dissemination). The first author suggests that future dance scholars who utilise this instrument will promote a clearer understanding of how one can develop projects that are scholarly and engaged.

Descriptions of Community Engagement Assessment Criteria

Co-creation of the project

A co-created project involves communication between the community and the project director to determine mutually beneficial goals. The goals of the project director may differ from those of the community partner. For example, the community partner may be interested in gaining skills in a particular dance form, while the project director may be interested in providing accessibility to a variety of dance forms. The goals for each partner should be clearly stated and acknowledged, and the assets of both partners must be clearly articulated from the beginning of the relationship. The project should emerge in the context of mutual interest, needs and abilities, and the partners are actively involved in all aspects of the collaboration, from identifying participants, to the design, implementation, dissemination and continuation of the project (see Table 1).

Co-implementation of the project

During the implementation of the project, ongoing communication is very important in order to ensure that the goals and objectives of each partner are being achieved. The partners have a clear understanding of the project's objectives, timetable and mode of communication, and have determined an equitable allocation of time and resources. Additionally, the partners may have a formal agreement about leadership and work roles. Issues of trust, information and responsibility should be balanced (see Table 1).

Co-assessment of the project

Assessment allows both partners to determine the status of goal acquisition. A formalised formative and summative assessment process exists and guides decisions about current and future project development. Formative assessment occurs during the project, while summative assessments are utilised to determine the final outcomes of the project (see Table 1).

Co-dissemination of the project

The project is not complete until plans for sharing the results have been determined. The partners formally and informally consider ways to improve the project and initiate changes that will strengthen the levels of reciprocity and mutual reward, and actively acknowledge and support the value of the partnership. Dissemination that shares the achieved goals of the university partner may include academic journal publications and conference presentations, while appropriate dissemination for the community partner may include lesson plans, podcasts or presentations for other community partners (see Table 1).

Table 1*Community Engagement Assessment Rubric – From Outreach to Engagement (CEA Rubric)*

	1 <i>Low-level community engagement</i>	2 <i>Mid-level community engagement</i>	3 <i>High-level community engagement</i>
IDENTIFYING SHARED INTERESTS, POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND POSSIBLE PROJECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is designed primarily by one partner, with little input from the other partner(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project emerges in the context of knowledge of all of the partners' interests, needs and abilities. Partner involvement may be intermittent, unequal, incomplete or unsatisfactory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project emerges in the context of mutual interest, needs and abilities. The partners are actively involved in all aspects of the collaboration, from identifying participants, to the design, implementation, dissemination and continuation of the project.
ESTABLISHING A PLAN THAT FULFILLS COMMUNITY AND UNIVERSITY INTERESTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One partner addresses the project's objectives, timetable and mode of communication, but there is little dialogue with the other partner about leadership and work roles, or about equitable allocation of time or other resources. Trust and shared responsibility are lacking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partners consider the project's objectives, timetable and mode of communication, but may not have a formal agreement about leadership and work roles, or about equitable allocation of time and other resources. Issues of trust, information flows and responsibility are unclear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partners have a clear understanding of the project's objectives, timetable and mode of communication. The partners have determined an equitable allocation of time and resources. The partners may have a formal agreement about leadership and work roles. Issues of trust, information and responsibility are balanced.
FOSTERING RECIPROCITY AND MUTUAL RECOGNITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partners have little discussion about how the project's objectives, implementation process and outcomes fulfil the wishes of either partner. Efforts to ensure reciprocity, mutual recognition and reward are non-existent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partners intermittently discuss whether the project's objectives, implementation process and outcomes are meeting the needs of each partner. Efforts to ensure reciprocity, mutual recognition and reward are not clearly articulated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partners have ongoing in-depth discussions to consider whether the project's objectives, process and outcomes are meeting the needs of each partner. Efforts to ensure reciprocity, mutual recognition and reward are ongoing.
ASSESSMENT GUIDES DECISION MAKING ABOUT PROJECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No assessment process is in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The formative and summative assessment process is informal and inconsistent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A formalised formative and summative assessment process exists and guides decisions about current and future project development.
LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partners have no plan to deepen or expand the project, except on a one-time or short-term level. No dissemination plans exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partners informally discuss the next steps for continued engagement, but one or both partners may not be fully committed to continuing the partnership. The dissemination process is informal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partners formally and informally consider ways to improve the project and initiate changes that will strengthen the levels of reciprocity and mutual reward, and actively acknowledge and support the value of the partnership. The partners formally disseminate project outcomes.

Note. Adapted with permission from Appendix A.12 Community Engagement Rubric – From Outreach to Engagement (Overby, 2016).

Instrument 2: Final Studio Seminar Paper

The final Studio Seminar papers provided information that revealed the levels of community engagement included in the various projects. They also included information about the occurrence of “evocation and illumination” in the Studio Seminar projects. The final Studio Seminar papers were organised to include the following components:

1. Introduction (heading one)

- What was your project about?
 - a. Include one or more of the approaches discussed in class (arts-based research, embodied cognition, community engagement, critical arts-based research, counter-storytelling).
- Why did you choose this approach?
- What was the purpose of your project? Or what question(s) are you answering?

2. Methodology (heading two)

- Who were your participants?
- Where did the project take place?
- What exactly did you do?

3. Findings/Results (include tables and/or graphs) (heading three)

- What are the results of your project?
- What did you create, make or discover?

4. Discussion (heading four)

- Why was this project important?
- How does it relate to past projects/research?
- What are your next steps?
- How will you disseminate your work (publication, presentation, sharing with participants)?

Instrument 3: Community Engagement Questionnaire

Six community engagement questions were distributed online to the seven participants. The answers to the six questions allowed us to determine the level of community engagement (co-creation, co-implementation, co-assessment and co-dissemination) structured into their Studio Seminar projects

(questions 1–4) and the impact of conducting these projects on their knowledge development and future plans (questions 5–6).

Community Engagement Questionnaire

1. Were you able to co-create your project with your community partner? Please explain.
2. Were you able to co-implement your project with your community partner? Please explain.
3. Were you able to co-assess your project with your community partner? Please explain
4. Were you able to co-disseminate your project with your community partner? Please explain.
5. What did you learn by conducting this project?
6. How will you conduct community engagement projects in the future?

Research Design

A deductive research design was applied to the present study, allowing the collection of data that were confirmatory in nature. Deductive coding was used to search for the specific community engagement criteria and the ABR content of evocation and illumination. “Deductive coding is recommended when your conceptual framework, categories, themes or concepts are most likely to appear in the data you collect” (Saldana, 2021, p. 40).

The specific goals of the research project were (a) to assess the level of community engagement present in seven Studio Seminar projects, (b) to determine whether or not the criteria of “evocation and illumination” were fulfilled in the Studio Seminar projects, and (c) to determine the knowledge gained by the participating students, who conducted and reflected upon the Studio Seminar projects. The participants, students from the Studio Seminar class, were a convenience sample. This was a non-randomised study, which impacts the generalisability of the data. The participants included seven current and former postgraduate students from the Cohort 1 course taught in 2021 and the Cohort 3 course taught in 2023.

Procedures and Data Collection Methods

The participants completed their Studio Seminar projects during a 15-week semester. They were each required to work with existing community partners in an arts-based (embodied expression) community engagement project. The students created, implemented and assessed the projects, and formally

presented the results as a final presentation and as a final research paper. Seven students who had completed the Studio Seminar course participated in this exploratory research project to determine the level of community engagement of their completed projects and the existence of the ABR criteria of illumination and evocation as they reflected on their practices. The seven projects described in the present paper were quite diverse, including the topics of a) informal dance learning, b) injury and rehabilitation of a dancer, c) dance and healing, d) artists with disabilities, e) youth participatory action research, f) dance and older adults, and g) goal making of future dance educators. In determining the level of community engagement, the criteria of the CEA Rubric (see Table 1) in terms of co-creation, co-implementation, co-assessment and co-dissemination were first applied to the open-ended answers of the Community Engagement Questionnaire (1–4), after which the final research paper submitted for the Studio Seminar class was read and then coded using deductive coding. Each project received a number that represented the level of community engagement: 1 = low-level community engagement, 2 = mid-level community engagement and 3 = high-level community engagement (see Appendix A for the answers to questions 1–4 of the Community Engagement Questionnaire). The ABR criteria of evocation and illumination were determined through deductive coding of the final Studio Seminar research paper. Finally, by assessing the answers to questions 5 and 6 of the Community Engagement Questionnaire, the impact of conducting these projects on the student's knowledge development and plans for the future was determined.

Summary of Data Collection Methods

- Quantitative assessments were conducted by assigning numerical values to the categories included in the CEA Rubric (co-creation, co-implementation, co-assessment and co-dissemination). The numbers were based on a deductive analysis of the answers to the questions in the Community Engagement Questionnaire (questions 1–4) and in the final Studio Seminar papers. 1 = low-level, 2 = mid-level and 3 = high-level.
- The assessment of the criteria of evocation and illumination for arts-based research was undertaken via a deductive coding and content analysis of the final Studio Seminar research papers.
- The impact of conducting these projects on the postgraduate student's knowledge development and plans for the future was determined by assessing the answers to questions 5–6 of the Community Engagement Questionnaire.

Results

The results will be presented by first sharing the level of co-creation, co-implementation, co-assessment and co-dissemination of the Studio Seminar projects, as revealed in the answers to questions 1–4 of the Community Engagement Questionnaire, and the information gleaned from the final Studio Seminar papers (Goal 1). Evidence of the ABR criteria of illumination and evocation will then be shared, as determined by the deductive coding and content analysis of the data retrieved from the final Studio Seminar papers (Goal 2). Finally, the answers to questions 5 and 6 of the Community Engagement Questionnaire provide insight into the knowledge gained and future applications of the student's experiences (Goal 3).

Goal 1 - to assess the level of community engagement present in the seven Studio Seminar projects

Community Engagement Co-creation

The degree of co-creation varied across the projects. For example, in Project 1, the researcher and her one participant were able to co-create the project focusing on injury rehabilitation, indicating a high level of engagement, whereas the researchers in Projects 4, 6 and 7 worked with large groups and conceived of their projects before bringing them to the participant communities. However, each of the research projects emerged in the context of knowledge of all of the partners' interests, needs and abilities (mid-level community engagement).

Project 3:

"Through the pre-assessment interviews, I was able to hear their stories and the ideas that they have about healing, and the frustrations they have had in trusting people enough to allow an authentic community to emerge."

Project 5:

"I focused on issues pertinent to the group's needs and concerns, taken from our conversations."

Project 7:

"[Students] worked with the principal investigator to identify the issue to be researched, collect, analyze data, and report results."

Community Engagement Co-Implementation

Creative processes were instrumental in all of the researchers' methods of co-implementation. The research participants influenced (sometimes changed) and carried out the project with their own creative acts, such as dance-making or performing. Since dance as an embodied form of expression was a requirement for each of the projects, each research project fully embraced dance as a methodology.

Project 2:

"The dancers were able to create the movement themselves at whatever location indoors or outdoors that they chose and video tape themselves, giving them full creative control over their movement videos."

Project 4:

"Students brought ideas to class."

"Student responses informed the direction of the class."

Community Engagement Co-Assessment

Co-assessment occurred in the majority of the projects. The participants were involved in helping set the direction of future meetings and activities.

Project 1:

"The researcher and co-researcher had regular 'check-ins' on the project. They would move one day and then a few days later have a discussion about it. They culminated the project with a viewing of the draft of the video package and a wrap up discussion that was then incorporated into the final short film project."

Project 2:

All participants reviewed both the narrative that was created based on their interviews as well as the edited movement videos. Their feedback and requests for changes were incorporated into the final dance video.

Project 4:

"For instance, we had dance parties. In these imitations of the home learning environment, the students shared their dances with one another. Then, we engaged in reflective discussion. We considered how learning dances at home compares and contrasts with our usual in-school dance educational experience."

Community Engagement Co-Dissemination

The dissemination process was largely limited due to permission constraints: the semester-long timeframe of the course limited the number of permissions that could reasonably be obtained. As a result, the projects involving large groups were not shared formally outside of the class contexts. However, the research participants may have shared the results informally through conversations in their community. In addition, the projects informed the students' thinking and will impact their subsequent work.

The students who completed their EdD degree were able to build on their Studio Seminar projects (5 and 6) in subsequent projects. The students in Cohort 3, who had finished the projects more recently than the Cohort 1 students, had not had time to build on their work and were therefore more limited in the dissemination of the projects.

Project 2:

"This part was not successful for me in the slightest. All participants and myself (and our fellow Studio Seminar classmates, I should note) wanted to share the final dance video at a number of conferences and with online communities, but we are not permitted to do so. So, there is no dissemination unfortunately."

Project 5:

"Yes. The _____ Alliance helped to spread the word about the workshop. They arranged a meeting space and ensured all participants were present."

Project 6:

"Based on the successful undertaking of my pilot and dissertation project, further discussions on community projects at _____ are underway and planned for the fall or winter of 2024/2025."

Table 2*Community Engagement Assessment*

	Project Number and Name						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Dance and Injury Rehabilitation	Artists with Disabilities	Dance and Healing	Dance Learning at Home	Dancing at the Feet of Our Elders	Dialogue, Community Involvement	Youth Participatory Action Research
Cohort	3	3	3	3	1	1	1
Co-creation	3	1	2	2	2	2	3
Co-implementation	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Co-assessment	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
Co-dissemination	1	1	1	1	3	3	3

Note. The Community Engagement Rubric Analysis was based on evidence supplied in the Community Engagement Questionnaire and the final Studio Seminar research papers.

1 – low-level community engagement, 2 – mid-level community engagement, 3 – high-level community engagement

Cohort 3 = 2023 Studio Seminar students

Cohort 1 = 2021 Studio Seminar students

Goal 2 - to determine whether or not the criteria of “evocation and illumination” were fulfilled in the Studio Seminar projects

Since the students were required to include an embodied component in their projects, dance was an integral part of all aspects of the projects. The projects were evocative and illuminating, as demonstrated by the following quotes from their final Studio Seminar papers.

Project 2:

“An example of a reaction from the parent of one of the participants in the dance video we created (pseudonym used). ‘Emma and I concur 100%. She kept looking at me as we were watching to see if tears were flowing from my eyes, as they were from hers. (Yes, they were.) Tears are welling up again now as I’m sitting here just thinking about this. Everyone’s words here need to be seen and heard.’”

Project 7:

“As dance artists, social-emotional learners, group members and researchers, the participants experienced a deeply layered reflection-in-action

process of social-emotional learning through dancemaking.”

Project 3:

“Quite often throughout the sessions, the dancers would stop to ask questions because they wanted to reflect on the awareness that they were having about their bodies, dance/movement, and how this aligns with their mental health and healing.”

Project 1:

“She expressed that movement encouraged a deep understanding of her injury and rehabilitation journey and an appreciation of her body, what it is able to do, and how it is able to do it. The co-researcher also stated that the embodied experiences may help her to communicate about future pain or injuries with a different understanding of her mind, and the needs of both.”

Project 5:

“Participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to move and address their overall well-being.”

Goal 3 - to determine the knowledge gained by the participating students who conducted and reflected upon the Studio Seminar projects

The Community Engagement Questionnaire – question 5 (What did you learn by conducting this project?) and question 6 (How will you conduct community engagement projects in the future?) –allowed the students to elaborate on what they had learned and how they would use the experiences in the class in the future. The experiences of the students in the Studio Seminar class provide an insight into their growth and development as arts-based, community-engaged dance scholars, as well as determining the direction of their dissertations.

Project 3:

“My next steps toward the completion of my doctoral work and considering how to build from here is to continue the conversations with the women in the communities I desire to work with to gain a deeper understanding and continue to learn as we heal. I believe this will help shape my research and the work I want to do by fostering supportive and safe relationships through communities while developing methodological practices that disrupt and challenge negative core values and belief systems.”

Project 1:

"I recently had the opportunity to put my project into practice. During a presentation of my pilot study data surrounding dance-related injury rehabilitation experiences at a recent conference, I opened with a modified version of this experience. By allowing our bodies to move through minor discomforts in order to find comfort, we were able to ease into the studio space and into the conference session. This opened the dialogue about my research and the participants' own experiences, allowing for sharing and conversations that will hopefully reshape the future of dance-related injury rehabilitation practices. As I consider my next steps with community-engaged research and learning, I hope to collaborate with my university's Injury Evaluation and Care Clinic to implement more somatic and dance-focused practices into injury rehabilitation."

Project 4:

"Doctoral studies require a lot of reading, thinking and theorizing. The Studio Seminar project gave me an opportunity to ground my thinking in practice. Sharing my ideas with students challenged me to clarify my questions. Through the research project, I was able to ask my students what they thought about my research topic. The students showed me their experiences of dance learning and offered opinions about what is appropriate both in and out of school settings. The project illuminated the chasm that exists between dance learning in school and dance learning outside of school. I have not yet decided what methods I will use in my dissertation research, but I am sure that I want to hear from and dance with students."

Project 3:

"Collaborating with artists who have disabilities was not only valuable in terms of community engagement, but, more importantly, necessary and crucial to enabling their lived experiences to come through authentically and through their own expression. This was made possible by using an arts-based approach that was collaborative and engaged in doing research with rather than doing research about. This is especially important when doing research involving people or populations who have been marginalized and are not equitably represented in research. When sharing the culminating dance project and findings with fellow doctoral students it evoked visceral reactions about the experiences that were shared by artists with disabilities in dance, and it made me realize the importance of taking on a role of facilitator as part of being a researcher to let people's experiences and

perspectives come through, rather than being a filter through which one reports about others' experiences and perspectives. This became instructive for me in developing a collaborative and participatory methodology for my dissertation research."

Since the projects were conducted as part of a class project and not for publication, the specific details of the participants and the individual studies is not included in the present article. However, Table 3 below provides insight into the benefits gained by the participants.

Table 3

Benefits for the Studio Seminar course project participants

Project	Target Group	Issues Explored	Size of Group	Benefits for the Target Group
1. Dance and Injury Rehabilitation	Collegiate dancers who had experienced injuries.	The injury recovery experience of a collegiate dance major.	One female collegiate dance major as co-researcher.	The benefits of this project included the opportunity for the dancer to articulate her injury rehabilitation experience in her own words and from her own personal perspective, as well as the chance to move/dance through rehabilitative exercises and protocols. This dual approach supported the development of greater confidence in movement patterns that may have previously been affected or compromised by the sustained injury.
2. Artists with Disabilities	Performing artists (dancers primarily, but some are also actors and singers) with various disabilities (deafness, vision impairment, Down syndrome, physical disabilities such as paralysis, muscular dystrophy, and other disabilities).	The perspectives of artists with disabilities on meaningful experiences, barriers, and needed changes in the performing arts. Research goal: To understand the lived experiences and perspectives of artists who are deaf or have disabilities in the performing arts, and to deconstruct and analyse what made their experiences meaningful and integrated or distancing and not inclusive, in order to illuminate needed changes in the field.	Seven performing artists with disabilities.	The artists strongly expressed (to the researcher) that the resulting dance and spoken/signed word video articulated their points of view and recurring themes of exclusion and ableism in the dance/performing arts fields, and as such would be a strong tool for advocacy. They found it cathartic. Affirmation was gained from being heard/seen/witnessed.

Project	Target Group	Issues Explored	Size of Group	Benefits for the Target Group
3. Dance and Healing	Women of colour who have experienced trauma.	Integration of dance, mental health and inner healing tools within the choreographic process to aid in the healing of women of colour who have experienced trauma.	Two African American female dancers.	The dancers benefited from the healing tools and were able to begin thinking about how these experiences within a community of support could be implemented and cultivated in their daily practices.
4. Dance Learning at Home	The project participants and co-researchers were Grade 5 students at a bilingual, independent school in Brooklyn. The bilingual education attracts international families to the school. Many students have at least one parent from a country in Western Europe. In addition, some have parents from South America, Asia and Africa.	My research question was: How is the way that students learn dance in their home communities different or similar to the way that they learn dance at school? The following related questions supported the inquiry: If students engage in community dance practices at home, what practices do they learn? What changes in a dance practice when it is brought into school? Is there anything else that we want to note about our experiences in this research project?	Two classes of Grade 5 students. Each class had approximately 15 students who met weekly for one 45-minute dance class on Fridays.	The students said that they had fun. They had an opportunity to reflect on learning at home versus learning at school. In their own words, they got to learn “new material” and “about other cultures”.
5. Dancing at the Feet of Our Elders	Black public school teachers.	This project addressed the participants’ well-being, sense of self and inspiration for teaching.	Five participants.	Three benefits were identified by the participants as being most effective. The first was the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues. They commented that teaching can be such an isolating space and the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues on this project was welcomed. Next, the participants reflected on their career choice. Writing letters to their mentors allows them to experience reflexivity on a visceral level (Leavy, 2017). The participants expressed a desire to continue this work and make this workshop an ongoing process.
6. Dialogue and Community Involvement	Former students who had completed a BFA in Dance.	Research question: Can dialogic spaces help assess students’ <i>physical, emotional and cognitive</i> aspects of their wellbeing?	Two students: one male and one female.	The dialogic space as an inner reflection allowed the students to organise their often only “felt” responses to a larger continuum and articulate them.

Project	Target Group	Issues Explored	Size of Group	Benefits for the Target Group
7. Youth Participatory Action Research	Middle school students.	How does collaborative dancemaking help students develop social-emotional decision-making skills? The purpose of the study was to illuminate the intersections of decision-making and collaborative dancemaking, and to develop decision-making skills and embodied-researcher skills.	Eighteen middle school students	The results showed noticeably increased references to the youths <i>solving problems by striving for equality</i> . The most identified problems related to <i>collaboration</i> , especially in <i>synthesising ideas</i> . There were higher levels of self-awareness than social awareness reported in the participants' identification of problems. The results showed problem-solving during collaborative choreography required almost equal self-awareness and social awareness. <i>Collaboration</i> was the most referenced problem and the most referenced way to solve problems.

Discussion

The specific goals of the present research project were (a) to assess the level of community engagement present in seven Studio Seminar projects, (b) to determine whether or not the criteria of “evocation and illumination” were fulfilled in the Studio Seminar projects, and (c) to determine the knowledge gained by the participating students who conducted and reflected upon the Studio Seminar projects.

The results of the project support previous research and writings that indicate the importance of community engagement experiences for postgraduate students (Matthews et al., 2015; O'Connor et al., 2011; O'Meara et al., 2006). As educators and scholars, the participating students will be prepared to conduct projects that are mutually beneficial for the community and for the scholar. Each of the projects required the students to be organised and flexible, as they worked with a variety of schedules and individuals. However, they were able to co-create, co-implement and co-assess their projects. Dissemination was more limited due to the 15-week timeline of the semester for Cohort 3. However, the students from Cohort 1 were able to disseminate their work more broadly.

Although the projects differed in goals and objectives, the inclusion of improvised and structured dance movement allowed each project to embrace dance as a method of arts-based learning. The comments from the participants clearly described the impact of the embodied arts-based methods on their knowledge. This aligns with the arts-based criteria of evocation and

illumination, as described by Barone and Eisner (2012). The results also align with previously published work by indicating the meaning derived from participating in dance-based methods (Moffett, 2025; Overby, 2022; Wilson & Moffett, 2017).

The community-engaged projects contributed to the growth of the students as engaged scholars. The responses to questions 5 and 6 from the Community Engagement Questionnaire, in which the students provided examples of their knowledge gained and plans for the future, make it clear that this experience will prepare them for future projects in academia and in the community. As future university/community researchers and practitioners, they will have the skills and knowledge to conduct projects that are rigorously designed and assessed in alignment with the requirements of higher education evaluations (Moffett, 2025; Overby, 2022; Wilson & Moffett, 2017). Although this was an exploratory project, the information gathered supports the contention that community engagement can be assessed, and that by applying the tenets of Community Engagement Assessment, the individuals gain knowledge that they can apply to current and future projects.

In summary, the postgraduate dance education students gained valuable experience by conducting the arts-based community engagement projects, and plan to continue conducting this work in the future. The projects have become an impetus for future projects and the culminating dissertation.

Conclusions

When artists combine their artistic creations with high-level community engagement to foster deep reflections on issues surrounding the world, their community and within themselves, everyone benefits.

We live in a world where the creative arts are viewed as a nice advocacy or recreational pursuit; rarely do we consider the power of the arts to create the change that is needed in the world. The results of the present exploratory study indicate that by providing postgraduate dance education students with experiences in arts-based research and community engagement, they receive a deep understanding of how to work collaboratively with community partners in a reciprocal and embodied manner.

Figure 1*Embodied Expressions*

Note. Photo credit: Francine E. Ott, photograph by Hayim Heron. Reproduced with permission.

“When I move with my community partner to find solutions to problems, I am an engaged dance scholar” (Authors) – as indicated in the photo above, the ability to engage with communities in a collaborative and embodied manner promotes beneficial effects for the community partner and for the facilitator.

The conclusion will be structured to include (a) limitations, (b) ways we can build on this exploratory study with future teaching, research and policy considerations, and (c) a roadmap for becoming an engaged dance scholar.

Limitations

The limitations of the present study are primarily connected to the fact that the data were based on the work conducted in one semester and one course of a postgraduate programme. This fact impacted the sample, which was small, non-randomised and limited to 15 weeks. Another limitation was the use of the community engagement rubric. Although this rubric has been used by hundreds of students and faculty as a guide for the development and evaluation of various community engagement projects, the present study was the first time it had been used as a research tool. Finally, because the projects were conducted within a university course, dissemination of the results was limited.

Future Teaching, Research and Policy Implications

Teaching

The criteria for high-level community engaged teaching and learning should be shared with anyone who desires to do this type of work. The course

work should include adequate time for reflection and critical analysis of the experiences, which may be part of a course, a creative project or a research study. Resources exist that can help faculty who are adding a community engagement experience for their students. For example, in the book, *Public Scholarship in Dance* (Overby, 2016), there are guidelines for incorporating community engagement in teaching. In addition, specific examples may be found in the work of Duffy (2019), Mabingo (2018) and Giguere (2019). As Risner (2010) suggests, preparing dance students beyond performance should be an imperative for the future employability of dance majors.

Research

Future research in this area should include a larger number of participants. Interviews and focus groups can reveal more information, while quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods should be utilised. For instance, the community partners and dance facilitators could be interviewed to determine the impact of the community-engaged work in achieving specific goals, while surveys could indicate the changes that occur through participation. Longitudinal studies could be conducted to determine the impact of the experience after six months, a year and several years.

Policy

As future higher education faculty members, training in community engagement through an embodied arts-based research approach promotes the development of the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the multidisciplinary landscape of colleges and universities. Dance educators/researchers will need to advocate with departmental, college and university level committees regarding the rigor of this work. The use of specific criteria and evidence will demonstrate the ways in which the faculty member, students and the community gain in a mutually beneficial manner. This information can be shared with faculty senates and promotion and tenure committees at the departmental, college and university levels.

The first author of the present paper was successful in adding language to her university faculty handbook that now recognises community engagement as a form of scholarship that should be acknowledged and rewarded. She also designed an annual university-wide award in community engagement for faculty and postgraduate students who conduct high-level community engagement. Finally, an annual workshop series has been created to promote knowledge of community engagement for all faculty and postgraduate students.

As a final recommendation that has evolved from this project, we have created a roadmap for becoming an engaged scholar for dance education students and faculty members.

Roadmap for Becoming an Engaged Dance Scholar

Postgraduate dance education students need guidance in ways to conduct projects that are embodied, artistic and connected. As indicated in the CE Rubric, projects can be conceived in a low level/outreach model or developed with a focus on a particular problem, or as a high-level idea that benefits the community and the future faculty members' scholarship. The following suggestions are presented as a roadmap of considerations for the scholarly implementation of arts-based, community-engaged projects.

First, read and become knowledgeable about community engagement and arts-based research. This will provide you with ideas for future projects based on successfully completed projects. Next, in developing scholarly projects, include the tenets of high-level community engagement in co-creating, co-implementing, co-assessing and co-disseminating community engagement projects. As you are creating the project, consider the forms of assessment to be included, e.g., interviews or videos for qualitative data, surveys that will yield quantitative data, or include a mixture of methods to enable you to present a broad view of the many dimensions of your project. As you become more involved in this form of scholarship, connect with organisations that have a community engagement and/or arts-based research focus, e.g., The Engaged Scholarship Consortium or the Arts-Based Educational Research Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association. Finally, as you become faculty members, share your knowledge of engaged scholarship with faculty senates, and promotion and tenure committees at the departmental, college and university levels.

By completing this exploratory research project and developing this paper, with a great deal of assistance from internal and external editors and reviewers, the instructor of the Studio Seminar, and lead author of this paper, gained knowledge about the best strategies for assisting students in completing arts-based, community-engaged projects. The lessons learned, as outlined in the present article, can assist higher education dance educators in conducting high-level community engagement as they become impactful engaged scholars.

Ethics Statement

This study was approved by the University of Delaware, USA.

Disclosure Statement

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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Appendix A

Data from the questionnaire that formed the basis of the numerical value included in the Community Engagement Table

Low-level Community Engagement = 1 Mid-Level Community Engagement = 2 High-Level Community Engagement = 3

	Cohort	Co-creation	Co-implementation	Co-assessment	Co-dissemination
Project 1: Dance and Injury Rehabilitation	3	3	3	3	1
		"She was very interested in what my research subject was and how we, collectively could expand how pre-professional dancers navigate the dance related injury practice."	"The researcher and co-researcher (participant) decided to create a short film to depict this process."	"The researcher and co-researcher had regular 'check-ins' on the project. They would move one day and then a few days later have a discussion about it. They culminated the project with a viewing of the draft of the video package and a wrap up discussion that was then incorporated into the final short film project."	"This work has not been widely disseminated yet (beyond one conference), but I do see myself sharing more of this content on social media, where pre-professional dancers are highly engaged on a regular basis."
Project 2: Artists with Disabilities	3	1	3	3	1
		"Some also chose the option of creating a general movement response to the narrative as a whole, rather than to specific sections, giving the participants freedom to kinaesthetically respond as fully as they could."	"The dancers were able to create the movement themselves at whatever location indoors or outdoors that they chose and video tape themselves, giving them full creative control over their movement videos."	"All participants were able to review the edited movement video and give feedback, which was incorporated into the final dance video. I felt that my role as a researcher was to let their stories shine and let the commonalities and shared themes surface through data analysis of the interviews and for me to 'stay out of the way', so to speak."	"This part was not successful for me in the slightest. All participants and myself (and our fellow Studio Seminar classmates, I should note) wanted to share the final dance video at a number of conferences and with online communities, but we are not permitted to do so. So, there is no dissemination unfortunately."

	Cohort	Co-creation	Co-implementation	Co-assessment	Co-dissemination
Project 3: Dance and Healing	3	2	3	3	1
		<p>“Through the pre-assessment interviews, I was able to hear their stories and the ideas that they have about healing, and the frustrations they have had in trusting people enough to allow an authentic community to emerge.”</p>	<p>“The dancers benefited from the healing tools and were able to begin thinking about how these experiences within a community of support could be implemented and cultivated in other dance spaces and daily practices.”</p>	<p>“The dancers participated in four- two-hour choreographic sessions, a pre-assessment interview, and a final interview via Zoom, all were video recorded. The interviews were transcribed, and the video-recorded sessions were observed to generate themes within the research process, along with the dancers’ reflective conversations, voice notes, and text messages.”</p>	
Project 4: Dance Learning at Home	3	2	3	3	1
		<p>Created based on knowledge of the community</p>	<p>“Students brought ideas to class.”</p> <p>“Student responses informed the direction of the class.”</p>	<p>“During each class, I made time for student discussion. During discussions, I took notes on the board, for transparency, and then copied the notes to my files for documentation.”</p> <p>“Throughout the process, I checked in with students.”</p>	<p>Formally shared the project as an in-class presentation</p> <p>“The students, my co-researchers agreed that the best way to share our outcomes was through personal conversations with people, including their family members, friends and bus driver.”</p>
Project 5: Dancing at the Feet of Our Elders	1	2	3	2	3
		<p>“I focused on issues pertinent to the group’s needs and concerns, taken from our conversations.”</p>	<p>“The teachers in this group were eager to explore strategies to help them recognize and honour those who had impacted their choice to teach.”</p>	<p>“I will give time for reflection during the workshop. Our reflection happened after the seminar. It would have been helpful for participants to hear others’ reflections in real-time.”</p>	<p>“Yes. The Black Teachers Alliance helped to spread the word about the workshop. They arranged a meeting space and ensured all participants were present.”</p>

	Cohort	Co-creation	Co-implementation	Co-assessment	Co-dissemination
Project 6: Dialogue, Community Involvement	1	2	3	3	3
		“My project involved two former dance students reflecting in diverse embodied ways on their dance education and how it affected their well-being and future goal-making.”	Dancers embodied their understanding	“I assessed my project with the participants and audience members who watched the final performance. Its value and importance for future projects were expressed.”	“Based on the successful undertaking of my pilot and dissertation project, further discussions on community projects at Lake Studios, Berlin, are underway and planned for the fall or winter of 2024/2025.”
Project 7: Youth Participatory Action Research	1	3	3	3	3
		“[Students] worked with the principal investigator to identify the issue to be researched, collect, analyse data, and report results.”	“The curriculum includes collaborative brainstorming ... poetry...written reflections, generating new movement phrases.”	“Data collection methods are self-reports, questionnaires, five focus groups, and content analysis. Data were analysed and coded phenomenologically by participants and the principal investigator.”	“The end report is a lecture-demonstration dance performance for community audiences, narrated PowerPoint, and written paper.”

Biographical note

LYNNETTE YOUNG OVERBY, University of Delaware Professor (UD) Emerita of Theatre and Dance, and Research Associate of The Arnhold Institute for Dance Education, Research, Policy & Leadership at Teachers College, Columbia University. She is a graduate of Hampton University (BS), George Washington University (MA) and The University of Maryland, College Park, (Ph.D.) Lynnette is the UD Former Director of The Community Engagement Initiative and Founding Director of the Dance Program. She also serves as Artistic Director of the Sharing our Legacy Dance Theatre. Leadership roles in Dance Education have included service as President of the National Dance Association, President of the Michigan Dance Council, and President of the Delaware Dance Education Organization. As author or editor, Overby has published 16 dance education books. In 2021 she was confirmed by the US Senate to become a member of the National Council of the Humanities.

DIANA CRUM is a doctoral student in the Ed.D. Dance Education Program at Teachers College. Informed by years of experience as both a dance artist and an educator in NYC public schools, her research considers marginalized learning spaces and methods of study.

JILL GRUNDSTROM is an Associate Professor, Artistic Director, and Assistant Department Head in the Department of Theatre and Dance at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, MI. She is also a doctoral candidate at Columbia University. Her main areas of research include dance-related (DRI) injuries, DRI rehabilitation, and leadership in dance and dance education.

FRANCINE E. OTT received her B.F.A degree in Dance from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and her Masters degree in Mental Health Counseling at Nyack College. She is currently a third-year doctoral student in the Ed.D. Dance Education Program at Teachers College, Columbia University. Though beneficial to many, her doctoral research is centered on creating holistic and healing experiences for black women dancers and educators who have experienced trauma, pain, and more by creating a community of support and safety for them.

MELISSA VAN WIJK is a Doctoral Candidate in Dance Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research interests center on adolescents and young adults with disabilities, transition (services) to life after High School, disability and employment history, post-work constructs, participatory action with minors and individuals with disabilities, and entry into all aspects of the performing arts field.