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African American Adolescents at Risk: Their Stories Revealed Through Dance/Movement Therapy

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**AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS AT RISK: THEIR STORIES REVEALED
THROUGH DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPY**

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Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Columbia College Chicago

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

Master of Arts

in

Dance/Movement Therapy and Counseling

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was originally to support the voices of African American adolescents and the emergence of their stories through the use of mentorship, dance/movement therapy, and the production of an artistic performance. But what I truly found was that through parallel processing this study turned into an artistic inquiry that helped me uncover more insight about my own story: a story of loss, isolation, rejection, recovery, independence, support and acceptance, and confidence.

As a result of the artistic inquiry I was able to see the value of my knowledge from integrating my experiences. I developed confidence in my ability to transition from my role as teacher/mentor to dance/movement therapist. It helped me to increase awareness of how I incorporate my past experiences, skills, and world view to become a better therapist utilizing dance/movement therapy to facilitate the authentic expression of African American adolescents. I facilitated the performance of their movement stories which were presented to their families and communities.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Columbia College Chicago, the Dance Movement Therapy and Counseling Department and Staff, and my classmates for preparing me personally and professionally for a career as a dance movement therapist. I would like to thank my family and friends for the support, prayers, and talks over the years as I completed my thesis. I want to thank my husband and daughter who gave their time, love, and encouragement as I completed my master's degree. I want to thank the student dancers who gave their creativity, emotion, and love of dance to present the issues teens face. Most of all I am thankful to God for his favor, for providing me with everything I need, his presence during my never ending story, and being my guide throughout this dance called life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	7
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	20
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	26
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	33
REFERENCES	38
APPENDICES	42
COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO ELECTRONIC THESIS APPROVAL FORM	58

Chapter 1: Introduction

According to my experiences adolescents are a population at risk. At the sites where I worked, adolescents are acting out and being disruptive to their educational process, their peers, home environment, and other social contexts. They are participating in more destructive behaviors such as gang violence, drug usage, and promiscuity.

According to a press release from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2003), high school students have decreased their risky health behaviors over the last ten years, but many students continued to engage in risky behaviors according to the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System's (YRBSS) results of a survey in 2003.

Although the data from this survey did suggest that over the last ten years that there was a decline in the risk behaviors engaged in by adolescents, African American adolescents continually tend to have higher percentages than the total average of all teens and their white and Hispanic counterparts. Therefore, attention needs to be focused on African American adolescents who are more vulnerable for engaging in high risk behaviors and are in need of information, activities, and services in hopes of decreasing these risky behaviors. Impoverished black communities suffer from an increase of gang activity which has been attributed to the lack of viable options for employment, the under education of black adolescents, and the lack of youth-oriented program facilities within urban communities (Weddle & McKenry, 1995).

I believe there is a decrease in the amount of safe, appropriate space and opportunities for adolescents to authentically express themselves. There has been a reduction and/or elimination of the practice of creative arts and physical education in curriculum in urban areas. According to research by After School Matters, about eighty four percent of teens in Chicago Public Schools are considered low income and affordable out of school programming options are often very

limited in communities where financial resources are scarce (Afterschoolmatters.org). I believe that risky behaviors decrease when there are opportunities for constructive self-expression.

Millions of United States children, about twenty five percent of the total youth population, find themselves without adult supervision during after school hours, (Afterschool Alliance: Policy and Action Center) usually during the after school hours from three to six in the evening when the rates of violent crime against minors are the highest (Chaplin & Hannaway, 2000).

In addition, there seems to be a culture clash between African American adolescents and the educational system. Education systems have become learning environments where success is bound by structure, discipline, conformity, and uniformity without concern for creative or abstract thinking, individual learning style, multiple intelligences, spirituality, or culture (Davidson, 2004). “By middle school, children confront a growing emphasis on competition and comparison; less willingness to accept and deal with individual differences in learning speed, style, capacity, and motivation, as well as with language difficulties; less attention to how an individual child is faring; less room for the knowledge and experience children bring from their home communities.” (Halpern, 2003, p. 4). “In some urban schools and school systems, these inherent attributes are complemented by military style discipline; lack of recess, arts, and physical education (Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Linver, & Hofferth, 2003); and anxiety associated with the threat of being held back or of being singled out for summer school or afterschool remediation” (Halpern, 2003, p. 4).

According to the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System’s (YRBSS) survey in 2003, the total average of students who received grades of mostly D’s and F’s during the past 12 months was 11.3 for African American high school students across gender divides. The total percentage for all high school students in Chicago that participated in the study across race and

gender divides was 10.8.

According to Devries and Kohlberg, “Piaget argued that an individual’s right to education should not be limited to acquisition of subject matter such as reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, but must necessarily extend to nothing less than the totality of intellectual, moral, and affective development...Societies obligation is not only to instruct, but to provide a formative milieu in which an individual’s potential may be developed and not destroyed or smothered” (Devries & Kohlberg, 1987, p.19).

In Piaget’s own words, “Full development of personality in its most intellectual aspects is indissoluble from the group of emotional, ethical or social relationships that make up school life” (Devries & Kohlberg, 1987, p.19).

As an educator, I am drawn to the behavioral change procedures and the treatment techniques of cognitive behavioral theory (pinpointing behavior, positive reinforcement, and charting, the ABC’s of behavior). Utilizing techniques in CBT allow the therapist to educate the client on alternative behaviors and activities that can aid in symptom relief are practical and attainable while preventing the relapse of problematic behaviors and cognitions such as building of self-esteem, reduction and management of tension and stress, improved social skills, and assertiveness training (Ivey, DeAndrea, Ivey, 2002).

I often reflect on how I use aspects of these techniques in my daily life as a teacher, dance instructor, and mother. Although I may use aspects of these techniques with my daughter and some of my students who may require similar types of interventions, use in therapy is quite different. These techniques used in therapy are more extensive and are made with the knowledge and acceptance of the client to help achieve change. In order to do this, the client has to willingly address the behavior and intervention or the intervention is ineffective and the behavior relapses.

I would not use this technique solely because it may help only to alleviate symptomology that is more visible and problematic. These techniques alone may not address the underlying issues that may have attributed to the development of the behavior.

I am drawn to the existential-humanistic approach because I think I am understanding, a great listener, and communicator. This approach helped me to really look at my listening, attending, and interpreting skills which are important in any communication and relationship whether it be social or therapeutic. These skills helped me to build rapport between client and therapist. The existential -humanistic approach was great because it stresses that therapists utilize empathetic and accurate listening skills, and attending skills while interpreting or reframing the clients' meanings as I take in all spiritual, cultural, environmental, and emotional aspects of the client (Ivey, 2002).

The existential-humanistic approach is one of the first approaches that I read that analyzed the meaningfulness of the spiritual experiences of the client. This approach includes logotherapy and gestalt therapy which support a rich, meaningful life. These approaches are more direct and support the client speaking to those aspects of themselves and their lives that they want to change. The existential-humanist approach does help the clients find their voice, and integrate themselves, while finding meaning in their lives.

I would not choose to use this approach solely because the client may not be at the level where they can express what they are going through verbally. They may only have a heart- felt sense or a kinesthetic sense of what is bothering them. This approach is centered on the clients talking and the therapists listening.

I am very proud of my heritage. I have a very diverse cultural makeup and I realize that this collage of influences based on my family, spirituality, community impact my expression and

view of the world. The multicultural approach to therapy seeks many therapeutic strategies to liberate the client and takes into account the person within their social and cultural context. This approach seeks to provide culturally appropriate techniques, strategies, and solutions for clients. The approach also supports resolution, reconciliation, cooperation, harmony.

The benefits of the multicultural approach are that it addresses seeing and helping the clients in a holistic manner by pulling in many resources in the life of the clients including family and community. This approach is the one of the most integrative approaches that I have researched. In order to utilize this approach, therapist need to be very flexible and open to new and inventive approaches as a means for reaching clients (Ivey, 2002).

All of the approaches that I have mentioned are centered on verbal therapy. The Multicultural Therapy is the one approach out of all the mentioned therapies that I have described that most closely resembles what I am striving for as my personal approach to therapy. If I am to be existential-humanistic, multi-culturally sensitive, empathetic therapist, how can I help clients who have difficulty using words to express their feelings? Many of my clients are uncomfortable using words to access their emotional worlds. Because of these issues, I became very intrigued with using dance as a part of culture that can be used as a therapeutic approach for treating clients. This is one of the primary reasons why I became a dance movement therapist.

Bennett Prologue, PhD, a clinical psychologist, states that when choosing a psychotherapist, “what counts, ... is not the therapist’s theoretical orientation or technique, but whether he gets through your resistance and then “clicks” for you on a gut level. Period. If it does not, all his theory, expertise, advice, counseling, and coaxing, will not lead to much change in your feelings and behavior. This is why so many practitioners are eclectic; that is, they may have a theoretical orientation that is closest to their heart, but they believe in many systems and

practice with a variety of techniques” (Prologue, 2005).

My thesis attempted to address the following issues: How can I use artistic inquiry to help me integrate my experiences as a facilitator of the Leaders of the New School Movement Story Project? How can the artistic inquiry method help me gain insight into how I can better provide structures that protect the safety of the adolescents while providing opportunities for authentic expression? How can artistic inquiry help illuminate the process of my transition from a dance teacher to a dance movement therapist?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This review of literature will account for a preliminary survey of the research on the topics of adolescence, high risk behavior, hip hop culture, performance as therapy, artistic inquiry, and dance/movement therapy. Literature in these areas is limited. The field needs to conduct more research concerning therapies such as Afrocentric therapy, narrative therapy, and performance as therapy to assess how these modalities can address the emotional, social, and cultural issues of African American adolescents.

Adolescence

Adolescence starts around the onset of puberty which can range from about 11 to 18 years of age (Hair, Jager, & Garrett, 2002). During this stage not only are adolescents making the adjustment from elementary school to high school, they are faced with the demands of more advanced educational expectations. Adolescents are also on the verge of changes in personality, cognitive development, hormonal levels, emotion, spirituality, and physical appearance (Hair, Jager & Garrett, 2002). During this time adolescents are on the path to discover their identity, learn independence from the family, and assume more adult responsibilities and roles (Brown, 1999). Typical personality characteristics of adolescence are that they challenge authority, are argumentative, indecisive, hypocritical, self-conscious, self-centered, spontaneous, and energetic (Papalia & Olds, 1996). Adolescents may exhibit behaviors such as boredom, anxiety, fear of self-disclosure, fear of being left out, resistance to authority, partial or no participation in activities (Payne, 1992).

There are many theories about the major developmental tasks that need to be met during the adolescence stage. According to Piaget, adolescence is marked by the capacity for abstract thought which he termed formal operations (Papalia & Olds, 1996). Through this change in

cognitive maturity, adolescents are able to think abstractly, test hypotheses, and view the world through infinite possibilities. Cultural, educational, and peer interaction can help adolescents to advance in this developmental stage (Papalia & Olds, 1996). According to Erickson's theory of crisis of psychosocial development, the adolescent must effectively resolve the conflict of identity versus identity confusion. In order for the adolescent to determine a sense of self and identity, the ego organizes the person's desires, abilities and needs and aids them in adapting to the demands of societal influences (Papalia & Olds, 1996).

African American Adolescents

From my experience working with African American adolescents, some of the high risk behaviors that I have seen are involvement in gang activity, drug usage, promiscuity, verbal and physical altercations, poor school attendance, and dropping out of high school. I believe that African American teens are more at risk for high risk behaviors due to lack of positive adult supervision, lack of knowledge, involvement in safe and age appropriate activities, and knowledge of how involvement in high risk behaviors will impact their lives now and in the long term. Many children-about seven million kids nationwide have little or no adult supervision after school, putting them at greater risk for behavioral problems and drug use (Nutkis, 2007).

I also believe that African American adolescents may have a more difficult time with the adolescent stage of development due to lack of support as a result of low income, poverty, under education, lack of parental involvement, lack of awareness and access to needed programs, adolescent rebellion, feelings of rejection and isolation.

Adolescence is a time of transition from the ways of a child to the ways of an adult. Adolescents are having a difficult time finding safe and appropriate venues where they can still play and learn the skills they need to transition into adulthood due to increased violence in and

around their schools and homes. It is important to investigate the importance of play and its role in the development of adolescence.

African American Adolescents and Play

Human rearing of children and the use of rituals, rites of passage, and the use of movement and dance, even in primitive man, help initiate, educate and prepare the youth for the issues of life. Dance, movement, and play (games) have been used to convey the beliefs, morals, ways, and skills needed for life in the community as well as the world outside the community (Laban, 1950). Laban felt that through this humane effort, primitive man was able to achieve the goals of conveying the ethical standards through the development of effort thinking through dance. The role of dance and play can be considered a source of movement education and individual self-development. He also believes that human effort is capable of resisting the influence of inherited or acquired capacities (Laban, 1950).

I believe when African American adolescents have positive and meaningful relationships with adults, a safe place to cultivate their talents and skills, and a place where they can just have fun there is a decrease in high risk behaviors. In an article by Phyllis Nutkis, she researched and discussed seventy three after school programs that focused on one or more personal or social skills including problem solving, self-control, leadership, and self-esteem. Her research states that participation in well run and well-designed after school programs improved children's social behavior, attitudes about school, grades and achievement test scores. It also reduced problem behaviors like aggression and drug use (Nutkis, 2007).

According to research conducted by After School Matters, adolescents that participate in extracurricular activities are six times less likely to drop out, two times less likely to get arrested, and seventy five percent less likely to smoke or use drugs (Wilson, 2006). Teens who

participated in After School Matters for four or more semesters had better school attendance, failed fewer courses than students, and graduated from high school at higher rates than students who did not participate in the program (Cusick, Gladden, George, & Wasserman, 2007).

A study by Dr. Robert Halpern of the Erickson Institute concluded that the After School Matters Programs produce positive effects in several areas such as improving teens' abilities to work in groups, communicate effectively, plan and meet deadlines, and cooperate with flexibility; teach students about a specific discipline that was the focus of their program (e.g. arts, technology), and how to approach tasks related to the discipline, such as conducting research or envisioning the end product (Halpern, 2003). They also enhance students' knowledge of various vocational skills such as how to apply and interview for a position, the importance of regular and prompt attendance, and guidelines for appropriate behavior (Halpern, 2003).

Indigenous tribes still practice rituals and dance in order to convey the ideas of their ancestors, the ways of the tribe, celebrations, and just for a good time (Laban, 1950). In these tribes you will see it in its purest form at this time, but dance and play are still very poignant in conveying the ideas of the time as well as used for recreation (play) in industrial countries. It is through play that the youth of a species practice skills that they would need to master and use in their adulthood and adult activities (Laban, 1950).

Dance Movement Therapy

I believe the innocence of this generation of children is being stripped and/or being replaced with responsibilities and restrictions before they have mastered the skills they need in order to positively interact and compete in the world. These students have a chance at touching their innocence again while tapping into their creative, expressive, dynamic, energetic, limitless, effortful, and expansive movement potential. "If left to choose, children instinctively seek the joy

of movement” (as cited in Halpern, 1998, p. 2). An introduction to dance/movement therapy techniques may assist the educational community in assisting the needs of the inner city adolescent.

Dance/movement can help African American adolescents increase awareness about themselves and their relationship to others around them, increase their verbal and movement repertoires, increase opportunities for creative exploration, development and expression. All these benefits are transferable skills that can support academic, social, and personal development in the educational community. In my opinion, dance/movement therapy is more effective at addressing the needs of African American adolescents because it can bypass the resistance that teens display and can get to embodied issues. Dance/movement therapy is a psychotherapeutic use of movement as a mode of identification, transformation, and integration of the mind, body, and spiritual selves (American Dance Therapy Association, 2004). Laban Movement Analysis aids in that identification, (observation and categorization) for the therapist and client, and provides possibilities for body action interventions (Levy, 1988). Laban Movement Analysis gives a verbal language in relationship to the body’s language. This communication aids the client and therapist toward the goals of transformation and integration of the mind, body, and spiritual selves.

According to the American Dance Therapy Association, dance/movement therapy (DMT) is “the psychotherapeutic use of movement toward the physical and psychological integration of the individual” (American Dance Therapy Association, 2004). There are many pioneers in the field of DMT such as Alma Hawkins, Blanche Evan, Lilijan Espenak, Mary Whitehouse, Trudi Schoop, and Marion Chace. Each pioneer has various theories and methodologies. Recognized as a major contributor to the field of DMT, Marion Chace mentored

and trained many therapists and her work continues to be used in the education of Dance/movement therapists today. Marion Chace's work included four concepts: body action, symbolism, therapeutic movement relationship, and group rhythmic relationship. Short term and long term therapeutic goals can be set for clients based on these concepts. Body action is a "psychomotor therapeutic intervention" used to gain access to thoughts, ideas and feelings bound by rigidity in the human body (Levy, 1988). Through this verbal intervention, clients can explore change in levels, directions, efforts, and connectivities. Body action can help clients to become self-aware, mobilize energy, improve posture, coordination, expand movement repertoire and increase expressivity. Symbolism uses imagery, the imagination, to call upon memory and past experience to help clients express inner thoughts and feelings, gain insights, and resolve conflicts through movement. The therapeutic relationship can be established using the body and tone of voice to convey to the client that he/she is being heard, understood, and accepted at that moment. The client can develop trust, foster independence, and establish and maintain their own identity while accepting social influences (Levy, 1988). Group rhythmic movement relationship uses the support of the group to facilitate further expression in an organized and controlled manner. Within the support of a diverse group, clients can become energized; can develop awareness of shared feelings, experiences, which can lead to openness for new learning and acceptance of self (Levy, 1988).

Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) includes analysis of Effort and Shape, Body and Space. LMA is a movement language system that allows analysts to record and analyze clients' movements. LMA is based on the work of Rudolph Laban and Warren Lamb. LMA also incorporates the work of Irmgard Bartenieff and her fundamentals. There are many pioneers who have used and expanded Laban and Lamb's work such as Irmgard Bartenieff, and Marion

North. LMA can be used in different venues such as enhancing expressivity in performers, physical and occupational therapy, dance education, recreation, relaxation and many more.

There is potential to fully integrate LMA with DMT theory and practice. LMA can stand alone as a psychotherapeutic philosophy, a DMT methodology in its own right. It can be used to systematically record patients' movement dynamics, provide a format for treatment plans, analyze patient/therapist interactions, and develop therapists' ability to observe themselves and research. Many see LMA as an integration of different views of life that have philosophical, anthropological, psychological, and physiological facets (Levy, 1988).

According to Carol Lynn Moore (1988) there are some basic premises that guide the principles of LMA application. Movement is a process of change. Change is patterned and orderly. Human movement is intentional. The basic elements of human motion may be articulated and studied. Movement must be approached at multiple levels if it is to be properly understood (Moore, 1988). These principles of LMA lend this theory to be helpful in the creative process as well as the therapeutic process in DMT. I believe these principles are why therapists use dance and movement as their modality for intervention and change. LMA has provided a common language and system of observation which allows therapists to meet their therapeutic goals. LMA can enhance the experience of DMT, improve communication between therapists, and give description to the movement of the body. DMT uses dance/movement as a mode of change in its approach to therapy. LMA uses effort and shape as a mode of observation. DMT has provided a venue for LMA to be used, increasing the awareness of LMA and how it can be utilized with people of different demographics.

Whether it is an everyday movement, creative process, or the therapeutic process, movement is the link. DMT is a psychotherapeutic use of movement as a mode of identification,

transformation, and integration of the mind, body, and spiritual selves. LMA aids in that identification (observation and categorization) for the therapist and client, and provides possibilities for body action interventions. LMA gives a verbal language in relationship to the body's language (Moore, 1988).

Dance/movement therapy with African American adolescents incorporates the body, mind and emotion. These components are culturally determined. Dance can convey events, ideas, and feelings. Hanna believes that given African American cultural diversity, dance therapy should be seen in the context of a culture's criteria for who participates in dance, when, where, and how, and what movements are preferred, prescribed, and proscribed. This knowledge can determine how dance is used...opt for creative or imitative techniques and individual or group interaction (Hanna, 1993).

Dance Movement Therapy in Treating At-Risk African American Adolescents.

According to the research of Madeline Farr, dance is as natural and instinctive for blacks as conversation. Practically every human emotion...joy, sorrow, anger, fear, pity, religious ecstasy... is habitually displayed in daily discourse through dance..." (Farr, 1995, p. 85). In the African American community, dance has played an ancestral role of aiding adolescents in channeling their aggressive behaviors, sexual energy, and rebellion into a non-violent manner (Farr, 1995). The cultural orientation of African Americans' toward physical expressiveness and creativity through dance are supported in dance/movement therapy; interaction, improvisation, integration of music and dance into daily life, and expression of emotion (Farr, 1995). Farr states that a direct, assertive, and engaging therapeutic style is needed to build a therapeutic relationship with African American adolescents. Psycho-educational approaches with therapeutic interventions that are expressive and visually pleasing are recommended in order to

attract and to keep the attention of the energetic African American youth. Dance/movement therapy provides a medium for the form of African American cultural expressions well as supporting the expression that is suppressed in traditional settings. Dance/movement therapy supports the African American adolescent's cultural needs to be connected, affiliated with others, supportive of other ways of knowing such as sensing and feeling, focus on the here and now, and validation for who they are. These African based principles can be supported in the dance/movement therapy session; rhythmicity, group interaction and cohesiveness, and improvisation (Farr, 1995).

Music is often used in dance/movement therapy sessions. There is a close relationship between musical rhythms and rhythmic body action in dance. The music that is chosen for a session should be appropriate for movement and be universal to accommodate individual expression while maintaining group rhythmic action (Sandel, Chaiklin, & Lohn, 1993).

Adolescents tend to identify with the popular musical and or dance culture. This identification is helpful in developing a movement attitude in dance/movement therapy sessions especially when the adolescents are allowed to bring in the music of their choice (Payne, 1992).

Hip Hop and African American Adolescents

The hip hop culture is very important and influential in the lives of today's urban youth. It is a very effective medium conveying its beliefs, desires, and identifying its members. Hip hop culture according to Greg Kot, Chicago Tribune Music Critic, "like blues before it, hip-hop was basically a form of folk music, a community talking to itself through music made with readily available instruments...turntables and microphones... An intricate urban culture emerged that also encompassed break-dancing and graffiti art" (Kot, 2010, p. 10). The hip hop culture is perpetuated worldwide through television and radio, using music and dance to communicate to

its audience. Hip hop culture is eclectic enough to reach across race, culture, and economic status. Hip hop is the anthem where youth declare what they want and their desire to get it no matter what. Their belief system of material wealth and status, external beauty, disregard for authority, freedom of expression, primal expression, ambivalence, creativity, pride, defiance, and instant gratification, etc. have impacted the lives of many adolescents and is one of the subcultures by which they identify. Not all of these beliefs are positive toward their mental, emotional, and bodily images, nor are they widely appreciated by mainstream society (Byrd & Soloman, 2005).

Peer recognition and acceptance is one of the pillars of their success matrix. Society mistakenly identifies this affiliation as mob action. Use of positive aspects in the hip hop culture, including freedom of expression, creativity, pride, persistence, peer support, and loyalty can help to balance the negative aspects of the genre that are perpetuated in the media (DeCarlo & Hockman, 2003). Acceptance, unconditional positive regard, and incorporation of hip hop culture would give African American adolescents a sense of freedom and empowerment (DeCarlo, & Hockman, 2004).

Heuristic Research, Artistic Inquiry and Dance/Movement Therapy

Just as important as it is to have culturally appropriate, creative, expressive, and therapeutic options for African American youth, such as dance/movement therapy, it is also equally important that research done with therapists working with African American adolescents encompasses the same qualities in order to research, evaluate, and describe therapy with this population. Heuristic research can be a very effective qualitative research method to utilize. Heuristic research involves the researcher being open and receptive while delving into self-awareness and discovery. Through this internal search, the researcher seeks to gain awareness

about a question that has been a personal challenge through one's senses, beliefs, and experiences (Moustakas, 1990). Clark Moustakas believed heuristic research was that "in every learner, in every person, there are creative sources of energy and meaning that are often tacit, hidden, or denied" (cited in Hiles, 200, p. 2). There are core processes and phases that are involved in heuristic research. Identify with the focus of the inquiry, self-dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, indwelling, focusing and the internal frame of reference. These core processes entail infusing the question into your being and becoming one with it; openness of the researcher to the knowledge that emerges as a result of self-exploration; allowing intuition in the researcher's own experiences: continuously delving deeper for understanding and meaning in one's experiences; steady inward attention and clarity and insight to make shifts, the results of the heuristic research evaluated from within the researcher and not from influences outside of the researcher.

The phases of heuristic research include initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, creative synthesis, and validation of heuristic inquiry. Immersion involves any content that is connected with the question. Incubation is a departure from the immersion to allow for increase in knowledge and intuition for greater understanding. Illumination occurs when the researcher is open and receptive to intuition and new awareness. Explication involves fully examining the awareness that has emerged and an organizing of the description of the core themes. Creative synthesis occurs when the researcher puts the components of the data and core themes into a creative form. Validation of the heuristic inquiry takes place when the researcher receives feedback and validation from the creative synthesis accurately depicting the meaning of the experience.

Dance movement therapists like Lenore Hervey saw the value in these creative sources of

meaning and was inspired by heuristic research to develop a research methodology that engages in and acknowledges a creative process where artistic methods for gathering, analyzing, and presenting data are used and is motivated and determined by the aesthetic values of the dance/movement therapist researcher (Hervey, 2000). Hervey suggests fourteen examples: aesthetic values are the image of health, freedom of form, meaning in form, patterns, story, authenticity, depth, vitality, the body, wholeness, context, music, skill and discipline, and the general in the particular. Hervey suggests that it would be most appropriate to use these aesthetic values when evaluating artistic inquiry in the field of dance/movement therapy as well as the venue where it is presented. Hervey believes that the body is valuable for expression and information and dance/movement therapists believe that the movement and expression of the body reveals truth. Therefore it should be considered a reliable source of information and data analysis: “dance/movement therapists also value the body as a vehicle of expression and a rich source of information. Assumptions such as ‘the body doesn’t lie’ and concepts like ‘body memory’ are generally accepted; Dance/movement therapists assess meaning through the expression of the body. Therefore they trust the body as a source of data and rely on their understanding of body experience as a form of data analysis” (Hervey, 2000, p. 83).

Artistic inquiry is an evolving method where research questions can be formulated, data can be created and collected and presented throughout the making of any art medium at any time during the art making process by the researcher, subjects, or co-researchers. When art is made in response to a research question it can be considered as utilizing the artistic inquiry method of research in dance/movement therapy (Hervey, 2000). In order for something to be considered a work of art there are steps that a skilled person must follow according to Hervey. These steps entail initial awareness, de-contextualization and intentional re-creation, appreciation and

discrimination, refinement and transformation, and re-contextualization. The researcher is intrigued about something, decides to recreate the thing of interest, evaluates whether the recreation addresses the question, is of value, and decides whether to keep or discard, or change the work. The work is then continuously honed until the work meets the researchers' liking and is in its completion. The researcher then places this work in a venue that would best showcase the work for all to see. These steps are an important part of the artistic inquiry process.

Chapter 3: Methods

Artistic inquiry can be seen as a form of heuristic research. Both forms of research methodology require that the researcher seeks to gain awareness about questions that are challenging through self-reflection. Heuristic research focuses on inquiry, intuition, self-knowledge, and tacit knowing. The stages of heuristic research involve engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, creative synthesis, and validation of heuristic inquiry. The stages of artistic inquiry are similar. They involve initial awareness, de-contextualization, recreation, transformation, and re-contextualization. With artistic inquiry, art is made in response to research questions and is a form of knowledge. I was attracted to the methodology of artistic inquiry because I felt that it was culturally sensitive. I used it in my work with youth as discussed below in the description of the Leaders of the New School Movement Stories Project. My work on the Leaders of the New School Movement Stories Project served as inspiration for this study. The methods of artistic inquiry were used to help me integrate my experiences as a facilitator of the Leaders of the New School Movement Stories Project.

The leaders of the New School Project was designed to provide safe, artistic venues for adolescents to authentically express themselves by using culturally appropriate therapeutic and educational approaches geared to African American adolescents. More specifically, I hope to bring attention to the need to integrate programs and curriculum that meet the physical, emotional, educational, and spiritual needs of African American adolescents.

Through this project I sought answers to the problem of providing a structure that would protect the safety of African American adolescents while providing opportunities for authentic expression; what stories can be ethically and safely presented to their communities in the form of movement stories; and how can their dance performance assist the participants in telling their

stories.

Five students from a Chicago public high school, Harlan Academy High School volunteered to participate in this project. These participants were African American high school students whose ages ranged from fourteen to seventeen years old. The students were part of the Performance Dance: Express Yourself Internship sponsored by After School Matters. The Performance Dance: Express Yourself Internship was facilitated by me and another dance instructor. Some students expressed interest in further exploration of LMA principals. At Columbia College Chicago, I developed the Leaders of the New School Movement Story Project which would allow them to explore themes which emerged during the Performance Dance: Express Yourself Internship where I took the role of dance/movement therapist. Students at the high school were informed of the project. A focus group of interested students was conducted to survey their views and concerns as well as gather information about their important issues. At the end of the program, those students that were interested in participating in the project met with me and we went over the project in more depth. Participation consent forms were administered. I asked the students to take the consents home to discuss the project with their parents. Signed consents were then to be returned. Permission was obtained from the school and the students' parents (see Appendix B). Five students, three girls and two boys, participated in the new project. These students continued to meet on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for group dance/movement therapy sessions from 3:30 to 6:30 starting on June 7, 2006. Only three of the students participated in the performance. The two boys who participated in the dance/movement therapy sessions but not the performance were honored in the first scene of the performance. Shirts with their nicknames were draped over chairs to represent their presence and their input in the creative therapeutic process.

The purpose of the Leaders of the New School Movement Story Project was to support the voices of African American adolescents and the emergence of their stories. Through the use of dance/movement therapy and Laban and Bartenieff Fundamentals, I was able to support teens as they increased their movement and verbal communication repertoires. I was also able to aid them in refining their ability to fully and authentically express themselves. I helped facilitate this project along with the youth, in hopes that they would be empowered to affect the quality of their experiences and feel that they are truly seen and supported for who they are and not just who adults want them to be. Through our mentor/mentee, therapeutic, and creative relationships, combined with the love of music and dance, I believed that the insights we gained would positively impact and influence other areas of their lives. I believed that the project would reveal stories of the youth and would foster an opportunity for the public school system, the community, and the family of these youth to see these teens and the issues that are of importance to them from the perspective of the adolescents themselves.

Data was generated and utilized through journal entries, poems, and personal interviews with participants as well as questionnaires and surveys (see Appendices C-H) given to students, parents, and teachers. Data was analyzed and utilized in art work, set design, costume design, and musical selection. School records including grades, attendance and discipline reports, and discipline referrals were not available because the project took place over the summer. Sessions were videotaped and audio taped.

Sessions were used to discuss and rank the important issues in the lives of the adolescents and discover the truths about their experiences through the use of dance/movement therapy. Music was played to support movement of their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about each of the issues and authentic movement pieces were developed. The pieces were observed by the

dance/movement therapist and recorded and then played back for review by the participants. We viewed and discussed the videotaped sessions while looking for themes. We explored and interpreted the meanings in the movement we reviewed. The group then determined which themes, meanings, movements, and/or parts of movements were important to be shared in the performance.

After the participants agreed upon what was to be shared, we discussed how they wanted to share that information, what they thought the movement was saying, and their perceptions of how their movements might be perceived by their audience. Movements were repeated and refined and developed into dances which portrayed their movement stories. These movement stories were choreographed to convey the truth of the participants' experiences in an aesthetically acceptable manner which would protect their confidentiality. The group presented their work as a performance at Madden Park on July 15, 2006, from 6-8 pm.

Working with teens in the Leaders of the New School Project was a very involved project. It marked a time of growth, transition, and change for both me and the teens. It was my last year with After School Matters and with these teens. The teens were being promoted to a new grade and the school would be under new administration and the Leaders of the New School Project final performance had ended. I received a promotion and made a decision to end my annual program with afterschool matters after seven years in order to focus my energies on home and my new position. During this time, I had time to reflect on my life experiences and personal goals, my desire to continue working with teens and dance, my professional aspirations as a dance movement therapist, and the next steps I was going to take. During this time away, incubation, allowed me to gain awareness about the teens from the project and learn about their reflections and any new awareness they had about the project. I also gained more awareness of

myself, personally and professionally. In the Spring of 2010, inspired by my work with The leaders of the New School Project, I started to explore how I incorporate my past experiences, skills, and world view to become a better therapist utilizing dance/movement therapy to facilitate the authentic expression of African American adolescents through artistic inquiry. Artistic inquiry facilitated my process of creatively synthesizing the data collected. I chose artistic inquiry methodology as a research method because it allowed me to use a creative medium which I had been working with for many years as well as provided me the opportunity to use my authentic voice and movement to evaluate and present my findings in a creative manner. I believe this method was helpful because it allowed me to have access to familiar and varied forms of communication and creative mediums.

Working with African American Youth and dancing had become my life's passion. I felt like I was very confident that I could work with youth. But the questions that burned inside were how can I integrate my experiences as a facilitator of the Leaders of the New School Movement Story Project and gain insight into how I can better provide structures that protect the safety of the adolescents while providing opportunities for authentic expression? How can I show the process of my transition from a dance teacher to a dance movement therapist?

Clark Moustakas states "The heuristic researcher is not only intimately and autobiographically related to the question but learns to love the question. It becomes a kind of song into which the researcher breathes life not only because the question leads to an answer, but also because the question itself is infused in the researcher's being. It (the question) creates a thirst to discover, to clarify, and to understand crucial dimensions of knowledge and experience" (Moustakas, 1990 p. 43). Artistic inquiry a creative research methodology developed by Lenore Hervey can be considered a form of heuristic research. Through this research methodology

research questions can be formulated, data can be created, collected, and presented through works of art (Hervey, 2000). There creative characteristics of artistic inquiry are what interested me about this research method and I felt that it could be a culturally sensitive one to use when researching myself as a dance movement therapist working with African American youth.

During the artistic inquiry, I was the object of the research. In the Leaders of the New School Project my focus was on the teens and their therapeutic processes. I needed the opportunity to gain awareness about my processes as the dance movement therapist. Three movement sessions were filmed by a family volunteer. Two movement sessions were information gathering and the final movement session was a final dance performance culminating the artistic inquiry experience (see accompanying video). After the first movement session, I journaled, reviewed the movement session video, and then journaled again. I then would take movements and emotional themes that emerged and keep them in mind as I moved in the next session. Again I would move, journal, review and incorporate the new awareness and experiences. The second movement session was a synthesis of the movement, journal writing, observations, and new insights. Through the final dance performance, I chose to summarize and embody my movement story which explored how I use my experiences, skills, and world view to become a better dance/movement therapist when working with African American adolescents (see accompanying video: Final performance-DMT_2010Williams_Alicia_03.mpeg).

Chapter 4: Results

Through artistic inquiry, I sought to gain more insight about my own story and to increase awareness of how I incorporate my past experiences, skills, and world view to become a better therapist utilizing dance/movement therapy to facilitate the authentic expression of African American adolescents. Throughout my life, I had always been interested in many things and able to do them with relative ease. When I invested time in the many activities, I felt I did not do them as well as I would have liked. I could not give each of the areas the attention and care I thought they deserved. I wanted to make sure that in my career I could integrate my psychology degree, my love of teaching youth, case management, and dance as my therapy.

I believe that through this artistic inquiry, it has allowed me to see myself more fully. I was able to observe myself in the experience. In my sessions, I saw that as I progressed through movement I could see the development and expression of a wider range of movement, use of space, and emotions. I was able to evaluate my movement and decide if the movements were congruent or incongruent with what I was feeling and trying to express. I could see how the movements painted a picture of the conversation that was going on inside my body and mind. And through self-witnessing I was able to gain awareness about the meaning of those conversations. I then was able to explore those themes more deeply while bringing the inner dialogue outward into physical expressivity, dance.

Hervey (2000) speaks of six phases that the artistic process would go through: inception, perception, inner dialogue, illumination, and expression. In the inception phase my initial curiosity was sparked by witnessing how dance had been an integrative, therapeutic, transforming force in my life. I witnessed the way dancing would change the dispositions of teens I worked with who came into dance class. I wondered how dance and movement could be

used to help the teens I worked with authentically express themselves. In the time and space before I began to move in session 1, there was a need to be still and quiet. During this time, when my body was still, my mind was moving and the questions came to be loud in my mind. The first moments were of remembering the time I was with the teens during the projects. Then I started to remember the intense emotions the teens would have. Next I started to remember my experiences and the emotions that accompanied them. The questions became more evident. What were the experiences and what did I learn from them? What were my skills and how do I use them? What was my world view and how do I view others?

More recently I became more interested in learning to gain more awareness of how I was using and could use my past experiences, skills, and my world view to be a better therapist where I could help teens to authentically express themselves. What was I doing that was working so well with these teens? What were the qualities and skills I demonstrated that allowed me to develop a positive and therapeutic rapport with youth?

From the moment that I defined my question, I realized that I had been moving the artistic inquiry process for a long time. Every job, every after school activity with youth, and every circumstance in my life, has been a valuable source of knowledge and inspiration. I began to wonder what elements I was using from past experiences, my skills, and world view. I believe that I was using the pain, the isolation, the inability to see beyond the current situation, and to accept myself.

Naturally, after you ask a question, you seek information in order to formulate an answer. Every moment becomes an opportunity to come closer to the answer. Perception is the information and gathering stage for me. What did I see and feel? As I sat on the floor waiting for the music to start, I needed to quiet myself and begin to listen. I had to be still. My life is a

constant dance of multitasking. I am hardly ever still. But I do know from past experience, that I function better when I have a chance to be still. I have a chance to process the day. I also am more effective at managing internal and external demands. As long as I am in constant motion my attention is focused on everything around and outside of me. When this happens I make great strides to care for others but I am not as attentive to my personal needs. When I am quiet and still there is more internal attention, internal dialogue, and self-awareness. I recognize the need for self-care and the time to practice it. I have gained a chance to rejuvenate and have more to give. The stillness also brings awareness to the need to manage the internal and external demands in order to maintain balance in my daily life. In the stillness there is also a yielding that takes place in my body. I believe that yielding is being okay in the process that is about to take place. My eyes are closed at first. Why close my eyes? In my journal I wrote “can’t see others can’t see me. I wanted to get in touch with the feelings and emotion tied to my experiences.” Reflecting on my journal writings from my first movement session I wrote, “My first inclination is inward; drown out the noise, the distraction. I’m being watched. Was the mirror my friend or foe?” When I taped my first session, I was in a room using a mirror. I initially did not look into the mirror. I was in the midst of the emotion. My attention was directed inward and my dialogue was with myself. I was not ready to open my eyes and see what was taking place. I also was very aware of the camera and shied away from it. I didn’t feel as if I was in the room. I was just in my imagination and emotion.

As I wrote in my journal it became more apparent to me how much every movement and expression was mirroring a part of my experience and as one movement transitioned into the next so did the phases of the artistic inquiry. The more I danced the more the inner dialogue and my movement began to change. I noticed that when I reviewed the video in the middle of session

2, I smiled as I watched myself. I looked different. I saw inner conflict of emotional vulnerability and isolation shift and change to outward expressivity of acceptance and confidence. My movements were near in kinesphere and my eyes and gaze were lowered and unfocused. I would look to gain awareness of where I was in space but not to look at myself in the mirror. I also noticed that I did not smile until the end of the dance.

In the first movement session, I caught a glimpse in the mirror and realized that I needed to see myself. I needed to see what others saw. I began to become more aware of the journey, the changes that were happening as I was beginning to actively witness myself in the dance. I noticed that my gaze was more outward. I began to use more mid and far reach space. I also began to locomote with clearer purpose instead of wandering. Through this opportunity to observe myself, I could observe how I was filtering my own experience of witnessing as well as filtering what I witnessed in the dance. I could use this opportunity to strengthen my ability to self-regulate and gain awareness of areas of growth while working with clients.

In the inner dialogue phase, I noticed that through the movement I was able to be more accepting of myself. I initially noticed it when I wrapped my arms around myself as seen in session 2. My touch felt normal. It was not a new sensation but a new awareness that I am more accepting of myself now than I had been in the past. The more I set limits and stood my ground in my movements to emphasize the words in the song, the more the words in the song resonated with me and my movements. I felt assertive, and empowered. I said the words that “It’s gone” and mirrored those sentiments in my movement. There was an inner voice that said “you’ve conquered that.” I noticed that when I was moving to let go of hurtful experiences I also was able to embrace myself. I noticed that in my artistic inquiry, I was very present. Being present had been a struggle for me. I was always multitasking. Everything was always important.

Everyone else was important. It felt good to be grounded and focused with my attention on me.

This process was beginning to show me that throughout the process of dancing I was integrating my experiences as seen in session 2. My movements, thoughts and emotions were becoming apparent and congruent. When I was happy the emotion was on my face instead of just inside or vice versa. When I was confident you could see it in my walk and stance. As I gained more awareness of my emotions, body movements, and experiences I was able to use that self-talk and become more purposeful and expressive in my movements.

After a situation happens you have the opportunity to reflect and analyze your behavior within that situation. When those experiences were fully integrated I felt I had more freedom of expression, more range of motion and emotion to utilize as evident in session 2. This is where I realized I transitioned into the illumination phase. The more I witnessed the more intentional I became. The inner dialogue began to change and become intentional and outwardly expressive. The acceptance of myself, the good, the bad, were all learning experiences that I could use to enhance my ability to see my clients, feel comfortable being with them where they were, and be more genuine and present. I felt that it was not just a letting go but an embracing, an acceptance of self that enlivened my dancing. I felt an acceptance of how far I have come and an expectation of more positive things to come. The knowledge I gained from my experiences were more tools to use when working with clients.

I am transformed from knowing that the many parts of me are integrated and accessible. I am open, flexible, and have an increased range of expression. Without the physical movement I could not see where the movement had stopped in my progress. My movements in the final dance were that there was still a part of me that was holding on to the past experiences, restricting my ability to let go, fully accept that it was time to move forward, and then take the

steps to move on. I really could see how much I had matured. I moved in far reach space with ease. I move in free flow and with no restriction of time. I was not preoccupied with the past. I am enlivened in the present and far reaching movements are able to take flight. I am convinced that it is time to fully embrace the woman I am today and the dance/movement therapist that I have become. If I truly believe that I am a dance/movement therapist I must use everything, even this thesis to gain insight to my process that will propel me to the next level. I have practiced and revised enough. With each new experience, I am to integrate and begin anew. I learned I do not look as bad as I thought I did. I was a lot harder on myself than anyone else could be. I had not allowed anyone else a look. Taking the role of researcher allowed me a different perspective in which to view myself more objectively. Again this experience mirrored to me what I saw in the youth with whom I worked. At the end of the final dance I cried. They were tears of release and I was left with a feeling of acceptance. It was done. I felt a sense of accomplishment and confidence. It was not just that I danced but that I used all of me. I allowed myself to be seen. I accomplished what I would ask my clients to do. I was open to the experience and embraced fear, isolation, doubt, and was able to use it to gain acceptance, confidence and a deeper connection with self and a willingness to connect with others.

Ultimately this artistic inquiry has enabled me to find the written voice that I had not been able to find a connection with throughout the thesis project. Dancing the final dance allowed me to not only feel but express my acceptance of self and confidence, a reconnection to my passion, creativity, and to dance/movement therapy and counseling. I had not danced in a while due to illness and injury. Journaling helped me find the words, "I was made to do this!" Everything I am and have been through has helped form the person and therapist I am. I felt at the end of our project. I was very proud of what the students had accomplished but it was

definitely beneficial to feel the same emotions they felt after finishing the project after I finished my final dance. A sense of satisfaction and release created room for more growth.

Chapter 5: Discussion

When I started the dance/movement therapy program in 2003, I was sure I had found the program that could help me integrate all of my loves. I loved psychology. I fell in love with the field when I took my first psychology class in high school. I received an undergraduate degree in psychology. I love to dance. I have been dancing since a young child, throughout high school, and throughout college. Dance in college had been my way to express myself. I was free when I was dancing. I was powerful. I could express things that I might not ever say to other people. Dancing was my release. It was my passion.

I sought a way to integrate what seemed like two very different worlds. Psychology was my head and dancing was my heart and my emotions. Dancing allowed me to delve into a deeper relationship and connection with my spiritual and religious beliefs. One day I searched the internet for dance and psychology and found my way to the dance/movement therapy department at Columbia College Chicago.

Because I was working with youth and movement for long periods of time, it was hard to write about it. It became part of me, my way of being. It was hard to discern my therapeutic techniques from my normal way of interacting and relating to youth. Time away from the Leaders of the New School Project and working with youth and dance gave me a chance to rediscover my need to dance, rekindle my passion for working with youth, and fulfilling my career goal as a dance/movement therapist. When I finished my course work and internship, it was a sigh of relief. I could let go of some things. I was overloaded. I was a single working mother in a master's program as well as a teacher and a mentor to many youth. I internally struggled with how I would make the transition to be a practicing dance/movement therapist. What was the transition if any? How could I move from being a dance teacher to being a

dance/movement therapist? How could I explain how dance/movement therapy could help these African American adolescents? It was not just the teaching of dance that drew these youth to me. It was not just the 1-2 step that made them listen to me when they wouldn't listen to others. I always knew it was the relationship, but what about it? Was it just part of my personality? Maybe I was just good with youth. However, I noticed that my relationship with adolescents was therapeutic for them and encompassed my normal style of interacting with them. If you practice something long enough it becomes habit. I had been working with youth and dance so long it was hard to flesh out what was my normal way of doing things and what were the techniques of a dance/movement therapist.

I felt like I needed time away to understand my experience as a dance/movement therapist first by using art in the form of dance. I felt a need to move my experience in order to better understand it. The words were in my head and my heart but I felt that there were a lot of issues in my life that have created barriers to me fully and effectively communicating my thoughts through the form of a written thesis. I felt that dancing and performing my movement story would help me to reveal the truth of my experiences, the movement stories of the teens with whom I worked, as well as address the questions which were important to my professional growth. I have more answers to the questions of why dance/movement therapy is not only an effective, culturally appropriate modality and therapeutic technique for African American adolescents but also effective for the African American adolescent within me.

When I initially started, I was intimidated by feelings that I would not be able to complete my thesis and my natural voice would be drowned by the jargon of my discipline. I began to realize that the voice I used that allowed me to build therapeutic relationships with adolescents was my movement voice. I could tell my story by showing and performing it.

Movement helped me make connections and develop insight. I could communicate without interruption, be in the moment, and have no fear of judgment in that space and time. Through movement, my internal and external critics had little power over me. Movement could help me remember the same feelings that the youth I had worked with experienced. I could rank the issues, and decide which issues to explore first. I could also help the adolescents decide which issues could be presented to the community.

The method of artistic inquiry helped me to explore how I could reveal important issues to the larger community, effectively, appropriately and in a way that allowed me and my clients to feel safe presenting emotions and thoughts using movement stories. This artistic inquiry helped me to produce a form that would show others the essence of my experience as a dance therapist and what my work has been like with African American adolescents. I chose artistic inquiry as a research method because I felt it would allow me to use mediums that were creative, familiar, authentic, and least restrictive. I could use, evaluate, and present my research in a way that was meaningful to me and the adolescents that I worked with in my afterschool programs and on this project. I appreciated being able to be authentic, have the freedom in the forms of expression, being able to visibly reveal my story and show the amount of energy that I have invested in this work and the level of growth that has taken place. In my research I found a quote from Mary Starks Whitehouse that seemed very similar to my experience. “For me a theory of what is now called dance therapy came out of years of doing, of learning by action and experiment, rather than thinking, reading, or being taught by other people. It came out of taking seriously the questions and needs of people along with what they produced in me...I have to be honest, presenting a polished theoretical model to students interested in dance therapy, without admitting that it is achieved in the first place alone with pain and struggle, may not be true for a

second generation but needs to be known” (Adler, Chodorow, & Whitehouse, 1999).

My experience with artistic inquiry left me with a sense of increased freedom, confidence, inspiration, and re-confirmed for me that life is the management and understanding of our existence and purpose. Without purpose there is no drive to live and without a vision there is no hope or plan for the future. I am the person that I am today due to the sum of my experiences. I bring all of myself to all areas of my life, whether it is my personal life, career, extracurricular activities, and emotional, intellectual, and/or spiritual life. I use my life as a resource not a hindrance. As I have grown in wisdom over the years, I have learned to view every experience as a learning experience. That no matter how circumstances might have appeared on the surface, they were designed to be for my good. I learned that I can gain insight and strength needed to achieve my life goals. I am intelligent and able to think on my feet. I function well under pressure and I can accomplish what I set out to accomplish. I have always wanted to help children to help themselves by empowering them to achieve what is difficult. I believe that the power to attain anything we want in life is within each of us. We just sometimes need a little help. At times, we may only need a different perspective to help see what is inside.

Knowledge, empowerment, and the will to change and achieve one’s goals are a part of the philosophy I bring to my role as a therapist. My experiences in life and who I am in the world will positively influence my role as a therapist allowing me to act as a resource to my clients to help them to tap into the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wealth inside of them. As I incorporate and have full access to my past experiences, skills, and knowledge of my worldview; I continue to become a better and more confident therapist utilizing dance/movement therapy to facilitate the authentic expression of African American adolescents by being observant, intentional, flexible, genuine, accepting, respectful, compassionate, and with the

belief that they can become their best selves.

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Appendix A

Definition of Terms

Adolescence is the period of physical and psychological development between puberty and maturity, roughly ages 13-19, secondary or high school aged youth.

Hair, E.C., Jager, J. & Garrett, S. B. (2002). Helping teens develop healthy social skills and relationships: What research shows about navigating adolescence (Research Brief).

Retrieved December 4, 2004 from <http://www.childtrends.org>

African American can be defined as persons of African descent that were brought over to the United States during the slave trade from Africa and their descendents, not persons of African descent that are recent immigrants to the U.S.

Artistic Inquiry is inquiry that is aesthetically motivated and determined; that uses and acknowledges a creative process; and uses artistic methods of data collection, analysis, and presentation.

(Hervey, L. 2000). Artistic Inquiry in Dance Movement Therapy: Creative research alternatives. Springfield, IL. Charles Thomas.

At risk- the possibility of suffering harm or loss; danger Characterization of person or property subject to unique jeopardy or threat, as in the case of youth “at-risk” for increased likelihood of delinquency due to home and environmental factors, or finances.

Webster's Online Dictionary. Retrieved August 17, 2010 from www.websters-online-dictionary.org.

High risk behaviors are certain behaviors that are often initiated while young that put people at high risk for premature death, disability, or chronic disease. High risk behaviors include but are not limited to smoking, improper diet, lack of physical activity, abuse of drugs and alcohol, not

utilizing medical assistance for preventing the diagnosis or treatment of disease, engaging in violent and reckless behaviors. (www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/bb_brfss_yrbss/index.htm)

Higher risk- Highly possible of suffering harm or loss, danger

(www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/bb_brfss_yrbss/index.htm).

African American Culture can be seen as the interaction of a heterogeneous combination of family, socio economic status, community, and spirituality.

Dance/Movement Therapy according to the American Dance Therapy Association (1986) is defined as the psychotherapeutic use of movement as a process which furthers the emotional, physical, and cognitive integration of the individual (ADTA Manual, 1986).

Laban Movement Analysis LMA is based on the work of Rudolph Laban and Warren Lamb.

LMA also incorporates the work of Irmgard Bartenieff and her fundamentals. Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) includes the Effort and Shape Analysis. LMA is a movement language system that allows analysts to record and analyze clients' movements.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: African American adolescents at risk: Their stories revealed through dance/movement therapy

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR: Alicia Williams (773) 860-2053

RESEARCH ADVISOR: Lenore Hervey, Ph.D., ADTR, Dance /Movement Therapy Department, Columbia College Chicago. (312) 344-8458. lhervey@colum.edu

INTRODUCTION

You are being asked to take part in a research study as part of the investigator's master's Thesis at Columbia College Chicago. This consent form contains information you will need to know to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what I may ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When I have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to support the voices of these African American adolescents and support the emergence of their stories through the use of mentorship, dance movement therapy, and the production of an artistic performance. Through the creation of this venue, the stories of the youth being revealed will foster an opportunity for the public school system, the community, and the family of these youth to see these teens and the issues of importance to them from the perspective of the adolescents themselves.

<u>Participant's initials</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>Parent/Guardian's initials</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>Investigator's initials</u>	<u>Date</u>

PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

- Attend mentor group and group sessions on time. Mentor group meets every other Wednesday during restructured/workshop days during 3rd period from 10:06-11:20 a.m. Group sessions will meet Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 3:30 to 6:30 pm. Locations are still yet to be reserved.
- Give permission for the mentor groups and group sessions to be audio taped and or videotaped for research purposes only.
- Be respectful toward your mentor and others participating in the group. Be respectful of what is shared within the group which includes not disclosing anything that goes on in the group to others outside of the group or talking with other group members about what goes on in the session while not in a group session under the supervision of the mentor.
- Wear comfortable clothing that is appropriate to each movement session.
- Give permission for the artistic works including drawings, poetry, journal writings, and dance movement sculptures that are produced during the mentor and group sessions to be included in this research study.
- Give permission for your school records including grade reports, discipline referrals to be included in the research data.
- Give permission for a videotaped copy of the final dance performance to be included as part of the thesis which will be available at the Dance Movement Therapy Department and Columbia College Library at Columbia College Chicago.

POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS

The physical risks in this study are minimal and will involve no more than the usual physical risks in physical education classes.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

The possible benefits of being in this study include you will have the opportunity to work with your peers and present issues you feel are important from your perspective, using your talents, to your family, friends, and school community through your performance. You may gain new awareness about yourself including what's important to you, how you express yourself, how you want to be seen in the world, and how others see you. You will have another opportunity to further explore dance, music, art, writing, and other means of expression. You may get to know and interact with yourself and others in a new way.

-

Participant's initials	Date
Parent/Guardian's initials	Date
Investigator's initials	Date

CONFIDENTIALITY

Everything that is said and done in the group sessions including artistic work, content, survey, and questionnaire data, and interviews will remain confidential. The investigator will change the names and other identifying information of the participants when writing about them in the thesis or when talking about them with others, such as the investigator's supervisors and thesis advisor. The data (information) that comes out of the study, both in writing, artistic drawings and work, audio, and videotapes, and copies of school records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and may be destroyed at some point in the future. No one else besides the investigator and the investigator's supervisor and thesis advisor will have access to the original data.

This study will result in an artistic presentation to our family, school communities, including Global Vision Academy Bowen Campus and Columbia College Chicago. Participants' artistic works or words if selected by the participants' to be used in part or whole in the artistic presentation will be viewed by others at the presentation.

As a Chicago Public School's substitute teacher and mentor at Global Visions Academy, I am a mandated reporter. If one of the subjects presents danger to themselves or to others, shows evidence of abuse or being abused physically or emotionally during this research study, I am mandated by the State of Illinois to report this information to the school administration and proper authorities.

If any participant expresses the need or problems that may need to be referred to the counseling department at the school, I will make a referral. At that time the school's counseling department will talk with parents and provide further referrals if needed.

RIGHTS

Being a research participant in this study is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty. You may also refuse to participate at any time without penalty. Although participation in this study is voluntary, it is common courtesy to inform the investigator of the intent to withdraw or not participate and reasons for the participant's decision. If you choose to withdraw from the study please contact me directly and talk to me concerning your reasons for withdrawal. If you choose not to participate in the study please contact me to inform me of your reasons for not participating. I am aware that emergencies, illness, or other responsibilities may prevent participation.

I may contact you to determine your reasons for withdrawing or not participating. If you have any questions about this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the researcher or the research supervisor listed above.

Participant's initials	Date
Parent/Guardian's initials	Date
Investigator's initials	Date

COST OR COMMITMENT

The costs that may be incurred during this research study may include costume or products that you desire and feel are needed to present your stories.

The commitment would be that you put forth your best effort to see that your story and your artistic presentation is seen in its best form. It requires time, patience, a level of persistence, seriousness, and enjoyment. What you put into this study you will get out of this study.

SUBJECT'S STATEMENT

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research or my rights as a research subject, I can ask one of the contacts listed above. I understand that I may withdraw from this study or refuse to participate at anytime without penalty. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Printed name of co participant

Signature of co participant

Date _____

Printed name of Parent/Guardian of

Signature of Parent/Guardian of

Date _____

Printed name of principle investigator

Signature of principle investigator

Date _____

Appendix C

African American Adolescents Focus Group Survey

Results of Individual Survey Questions

Question: What do you believe are the important issues that teens face?

Question: What are the issues of importance to you?

Question: Please rank in order of most importance to you with number one being the most important issue.

Question: Out of the list above which issues do you feel are the issues we want to explore?

Question: Out of the list that you as a group want to explore, which issues do you want to present to the public i.e. family, friends, and others in the community?

Question: How can we reveal these issues of importance to the larger community effectively, and appropriately, and in a way that you feel safe presenting your emotions, thoughts, and view through your movement stories?

Appendix D

African American Adolescents Focus Group Survey Results

Results of Individual Survey Questions

Question: What do you believe are the important issues that teens face?

Teen pregnancy, teenagers getting pregnant, pregnancy
Sex period, sex, sex, being sexually active at a young age, sex
Peer pressure, peer pressure, peer pressure
Low self esteem, low self esteem
Drugs/alcohol, drugs, drinking, doing drugs and alcohol
Hard decisions, making important decisions
My man/love, my other half
Relationship with our parents
Family issues, problems at home, family problems
Friend issues (choosing the right ones)
School pressure
Dropping out of school, dropping out
Gangs
Having fun, partying
Driving
Juking
Spitting game
Dancing
Sports

Question: What are the issues of importance to you?

Sex, drugs/alcohol, low self esteem
Family issues, school pressure, friend issues, peer pressure, my life
Gangs, sex, drugs
Finding jobs, making important decisions, being responsible enough, keeping education in mind, having fun, being treated like your age
Have fun, my other half

Question: Please rank in order of most importance to you with number one being the most important issue.

My man /love, sex, low self-esteem, drugs/alcohol, relationships with our parents, family issues, school issues, friend issues, self-esteem, relationship issues, jobs, gangs, drugs, sex, peer pressure, problems at home, drinking, being responsible, keep education in mind, making important decisions, finding jobs

Have, fun, my other half, family problems, dropping out, sex

Results of Group Survey Questions

Question: What are the issues of importance to the teens in this group?

Sex, drugs/alcohol, low self esteem

Family issues, school pressure, friend issues, peer pressure, my life

Gangs, sex, drugs

Finding jobs, making important decisions, being responsible enough, keeping education in mind, having fun, being treated like your age

Have fun, my other half

Juking

Sex, peer pressure, drugs/alcohol, problems at home, low self esteem, teenage pregnancy, intimate relationships

Question: Rank the issues of importance to this group with number 1 being the most important

1. Sex
2. Teenage pregnancy
3. Drugs and alcohol
4. Intimate relationships
5. Low self esteem
6. Problems at home
7. Peer pressure

Question: Out of the list above which issues do you feel are the issues we want to explore?

All unanimously

Sex, Teenage Pregnancy, Drugs and Alcohol, Intimate relationships, Low Self-Esteem, Problems at Home, Peer Pressure

Question: Out of the list that you as a group want to explore, which issues do you want to present to the public i.e. family, friends, and others in the community?

All unanimously

Sex, Teenage Pregnancy, Drugs and Alcohol, Intimate Relationships, Low Self-Esteem Problems at Home, Peer Pressure

Question: How can we reveal these issues of importance to the larger community effectively, and appropriately, and in a way that you feel safe presenting your emotions, thoughts, and view through your movement stories?

?????????? Deferred

Appendix E

African American Adolescents Audience Survey

LEADERS OF THE NEW SCHOOL AUDIENCE SURVEY

How did you hear about the performance?

Please check: Flyer___ Park district personnel___ Cast member___
Text message___ e-mail___ other___

How do you know the performers?

Please check if you are: parent___ family___, friend___,
High school community___, park district community___,
Other___ (please list)

How did you like the performance overall?

What was your favorite piece?

What message caught your attention most?

What were the messages, themes, or issues you saw during the performance?

After seeing this performance has your perspectives of young adults changed?

Yes___ No___

Explain

After seeing this performance, has your perspective of the issues that young adults face changed?

Yes___ No___

Explain

Would you like to see more performances like this? Yes___ No___

If yes please provide all your contact information so that we may inform you of future performances and events.

Name___

Address___

City, State___

Phone number___ e-mail___

Appendix G

African American Adolescents Follow Up Question Survey

African Americans at Risk: Their Stories Revealed Through Dance Movement Therapy

Questions for participants in the thesis project:

What were your thoughts in the beginning about doing the research?

What were your thoughts, feelings during the sessions?

What were your thoughts, feelings preparing for the performance?

What were your thoughts, feelings during the performance?

What were your impressions?

What memories do you have about the sessions?

What memories do you have of the performance?

What were your parents' impressions?

How did your parents respond to the performance?

Have there been any lasting impressions?

What did you take away from the performance from the experience?

What did you keep what did you discard?

What helped?

What didn't help?

What would you differently if anything?

Why did you want me to do the research again?

What was the experience like for you?

Did the experience, performance have an effect on your relationships, school performance?

Appendix H

African American Adolescents Follow Up Question Survey Results

What were your thoughts in the beginning about doing the research? I thought that it was going to be an easy task.....

What were your thoughts, feelings during the sessions? Some sessions actually helped me with some personal issues.

What were your thoughts, feelings preparing for the performance? I was sort of nervous especially about the piece that introduced who you were.

What were your thoughts, feelings during the performance? With all the excitement around me I had no choice but to be amped up even though there was still some nervousness.

What were your impressions? I was shocked at how well we did even though at the performance we were missing 2 people we pulled it together and still put on a great performance...the show must go on!

What memories do you have about the sessions? I remember us talking about self esteem and by the time we finished we all were in tears. I think we each had a small breakthrough that day

What memories do you have of the performance? I remember the praise the instructor gave us afterwards and I also remember how great I felt being a part of this performance that was about real life issues instead of mediocre anecdote displayed in a fiction tale.

What were your parents' impressions? At first my mother was just glad that I was leaving the house and her alone lol however later she was so proud that I was doing something constructive instead of the negative thing forced on the youth of today's society.

How did your parents respond to the performance? She invited my favorite aunties to come and enjoy the performance.

Have there been any lasting impressions? The issues that we talked about in our sessions have progressed tremendously! i.e. my self esteem is higher than it's ever been.

What did you take away from the performance from the experience?

What did you keep what did you discard? I still have both notebooks we wrote in and my Brit Brat shirt.

What helped? The notebooks/ journals where we wrote in daily helped me a lot....I do this to this day now.

What didn't help?

What would you do differently if anything? I think we should've had more people I know if it helped me I could've helped a lot more teenagers

Why did you want me to do the research again? because it was a great experience from beginning to end

What was the experience like for you? It was a learning experience for me I learnen more about myself and my strengths than anything.

Did the experience, performance have an effect on your relationships, school performance? This experience actually got me out of a really bad relationship....tying in on that session of

" I HAVE MAGICAL POWERS THAT I USE TO FIGHT OFF THE FORCES OF EVIL

"

Appendix I

Performance Flyer

African American Adolescents At Risk
Their Stories Revealed Through
Dance/Movement Therapy &
Counseling

Alicia M. Williams

Presents

“The Leaders of The New School”

In

“The Issues”

Madden Park

3800 S. Rhodes Ave.

Chicago, IL 606

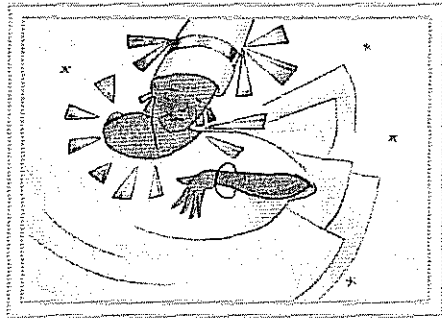
Saturday July 15, 2006

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Appendix J

Performance Program

The Leaders of the New School and Ms. A Williams present the
"Issues"



Madden Park
3800 S. Rhodes
6-8 pm
Saturday July, 15, 2006

PROGRAM

African American Adolescents At Risk:
Their Stories Revealed Through Dance Movement Therapy And Counseling
A Thesis Proposal
presented to
Columbia College Chicago
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Masters of Arts Degree in Dance Movement Therapy and Counseling
By Alicia M. Williams

Dance Movement Therapy is defined by the American Dance Therapy Association as the 'psychotherapeutic use of movement as a process which furthers the emotional, cognitive, and physical integration of the individual.

Issues High

Leaders of the New School

Class Schedule

6:00 Orientation

1st period- Advisory Homeroom-Leaders of the New School

2nd period- S-E-X

3rd period-Teenage pregnancy

4th period- Drugs & Alcohol

5th period- Intimate Relationships

6th period- Self Esteem

7th period- Lunch

Intermission (10 minutes)

8th period- Problems at home

9th period- Peer pressure-The Pressure

10th period- Recess

11th period- The Process-Unwritten

12th period- ACT Prep/Local Community Council

8:00 pm Dismissal

Leaders of the New School

Jellie
Brit Brat
Phat Face
Elmo
Boo Man
Ms. Wheels
The Crew
V., Breezy, Nae Nae, Hi
Support Staff
Marvin Gaye, Dem Franchise Boys, Avant, Yung Joc, India Aire, Nelly, Tupac, Kanye West,
J Kwon, Afro Man, Mary J. Blige, LL Cool J, E 40, BuckWheat Boys, Natasha Bedingfield, Melanie, Will Smith,
Ohio Players, Escape, Maxwell, Franckie Knuckles, Kelis, Tye Tribette
SPECIAL THANKS
TO
Mr. Harden
Dr. Hill
Srgt. Jeffries
Mr. Colosso
Mr. Jordan
Mr. William Foster
DJ E
Ms. Beckie Carter
Ms. Jerry Gaitor
Ms. Jessica Young
Ms. Takada Epps
Columbia College Chicago
Dance Movement Therapy & Counseling Department
Harlan High School
Madden Park
Parents, Family, Friends, community members
Everyone
Thank You For Your Support!