Dancing with Difference
Culturally Diverse Dances in Education
Linda Ashley

As the global vicissitudes of migration unfold so does ethnic difference in the classroom, and this book offers a timely examination of teaching about culturally different dances. At a time when the world of dance is, on the one hand, seemingly becoming more like fusion cookery there is another faction promoting isolation and preservation of tradition. How, if at all, may these two worlds co-exist in dance education? Understanding teaching about culturally different dances from postmodern, postcolonial, pluralist and critical perspectives creates an urgent demand to develop relevant pedagogy in dance education. What is required to support dance educators into the next phase of dance education, so as to avoid teaching from within a Eurocentric, creative dance model alone?

An ethnographic investigation with teachers in New Zealand lays a foundation for the examination of issues, challenges and opportunities associated with teaching about culturally different dances. Concerns and issues surrounding notions of tradition, innovation, appropriation, interculturalism, social justice and critical pedagogy emerge. Engaging with both practice and theory is a priority in this book, and a nexus model, in which the theoretical fields of critical cultural theory, semiotics, ethnography and anthropology can be activated as teachers teach, is proposed as informing approaches to teaching about culturally different dances. Even though some practical suggestions for teaching are presented, the main concern is to motivate further thinking and research into teaching about dancing with cultural difference.

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my mother.
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INTRODUCTION

MOVE 1–SETTING THE STAGE: DANCE EDUCATION IN DIFFERENT TIMES AND SPACES

How can human behaviour be described? Surely only by showing the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together. Not what one man is doing now, but the whole hurly burly, is the background against which we can see an action, and it determines our judgement, our concepts, and our reactions. (Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1980, p. 97)

Stripping the context had no meaning for the children. (Liz, dance educator, 2006)

The concerns that Dancing with Difference explores become clear if philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein’s (1889–1951) suggestions are applied to teaching about culturally different dances. Liz, a dance educator from my ethnographic research, provides an educational perspective, and combining these two views sets the stage for the issues that this book examines. Dancing with Difference aims to provide empirical and theoretical accounts of issues that surround teaching about culturally different dances from contextual perspectives. In this section, in order to set the stage for the reader, I present a general overview of the setting for the book. Firstly, however, I present a personal narrative by which I hope to give the reader a sense of why this particular topic was of interest to me.

From my position, as having worked for over thirty years in dance and dance education in both the UK and New Zealand, my teaching has developed from: undergraduate studies at I. M. Marsh College, University of Liverpool; Masters studies at the Laban Centre, Goldsmith’s College and The University of London; and doctoral study at The University of Auckland, New Zealand. I also have a background in contemporary dance technique, choreography and performance. Since 1996, through my writing (Ashley 2003, 2005, 2005a, 2005b, 2007, 2008, 2011) and working life in various contexts, including schools, universities, teacher education, community and theatre in the UK and New Zealand, my interest has been drawn to consider how best to support learning about dance for a diverse range of students. I migrated to New Zealand in 1997 and worked in teacher education at the Auckland College of Education, specialising in dance education from 1998 to 2004. In 2005 I became Senior Lecturer, and Academic and Research Leader for the Bachelor of Dance programme at AUT University, Auckland. I have also worked in an advisory capacity for the New Zealand Ministry of Education, Te Tahi o te Matauranga, and have been employed in work relating to the Dance Achievement Standards for the New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA), National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) examinations. I see this
CHAPTER 1

touchstone of experience to be every bit as valuable as, and indeed informing of, theoretical and academic studies as associated with dance and dance education.

With the above in mind, let’s pause to consider the following story from my personal experience in dance education. In 2000, I was appointed Project Director by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, to make a video resource for teachers of dance in primary, intermediate and secondary schools. This video resource, Dancing the long white cloud (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2002), was designed to assist in the professional development of teachers, as part of the implementation process of the dance component of The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum, (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2000), and it was sent free of charge to every school in New Zealand. The video was not intended or appropriate for viewing by school students because of its focus on teaching dance and dance education. My story is about an incident that occurred during filming for the video resource:

2001—a fine, early autumn day in New Zealand, Aotearoa. A class of school children, aged between 8 and 10, are busy in a dance class at Green Bay Primary School, with their teacher Catherine Kelly. Their classroom is crowded with energetic movement. All the furniture has either been moved outside or squeezed up against the walls. Today they also have a film crew to fit in to their dancing space; four of us in all including a camera operator, sound engineer, film director and myself, as Project Director. In the classroom, Catherine Kelly and the children reconstruct, for camera, critical learning episodes from a unit of dance based on a theme of ‘Celebration’. They have studied the theme as part of a Social Studies unit and they describe their experiences of dancing in celebrations. We film one boy giving a particularly enchanting description of a bride and groom dancing at a wedding. However, as we filmed things took an unpredicted turn. An Afghan boy, Farcel, who had not been long in the country demonstrated, unannounced, a Snake Dance, a feature, he explained, of celebration during Nov-Ruz, the Afghan New Year, as being celebrated concurrently in his community. The class joined in with his dancing, attempting to imitate his movements. The Nov-Ruz from the Zarathushtrian calendar, celebrated at the Northern Hemisphere spring vernal equinox (March 21st in the Western calendar), intersected via a dance performance with the time zone of the ‘host’ culture in the public classroom space.

Day 2 of filming-location, the local beach. The class improvise movements based on seashore imagery and they dance the European processional folk dance, the French Farandole in warm sunshine along the shoreline. Later in the learning process the children create their own group dances to celebrate the natural world, incorporating props such as shakers and ribbons in a recognisably Eurocentric creative dance learning experience. Contextually, an impression that I was struck by was the making of dances that celebrate the natural world: New Zealand, Aotearoa is truly a beautiful part of the world. I reflect on how one could possibly feel quite bewildered by the criss-crossings of different curricular subject areas, time and space zones, and cultural heritages.
I think that telling this story brings to attention two important threads that underpin this book. First, that the position of dance, dancers and dancing as being part of society, and I would argue more importantly part of peoples’ lives, can become a lived spatial and temporal reality for viewers, teachers and learners. I am reminded of Edward Said’s (1991) intuitive conviction about coming to understand music in which he envisages that we are dealing with,

[n]ot the separation between art or theory and life but rather the already commensensical and experiential connection between them. There are reasons for, and there is interest in, separating them but, I maintain, these two spheres of human effort exist together, they live together, they are together. (p. 37)

Said also points out that this is an intuition he suspects is shared by others, of which I am one. Second, that if the former is the case, then in dance education recognition of cultural values and significances is crucial in a postmodern age where cultural plurality and difference are concomitant with social justice; the whole hurly burly.

Dwelling on the Snake Dance story just a moment longer, and with Said’s perspective in mind, I think that it sets the stage for the real life accounts, information, issues and ideas from New Zealand, as well as events from more distant shores such as the UK, that are included in this book. As part of a growing body of literature about dance education from New Zealand, Dancing with Difference is ground-breaking in its provision of in-depth, possibly controversial, and yet accessible coverage of a topic less widely covered internationally for far too long. Until recently, research into dance education pedagogy, and how it is manifested in teachers’ working lives, was predominantly focused on the educational or artistic benefits of ‘creative’ dance, improvisation, choreography and dance technical skills; these being based predominantly within a Western-based pedagogy and/or theatrical idiom. Relatively little research interrogates pedagogy that is designed specifically to develop understanding about dances from contextual perspectives, or which inquires into teachers’ thoughts about and experiences of such teaching. There are also questions surrounding how postmodern, pluralist, critical perspectives and other ‘bigger picture’ theoretical issues may be activated in teaching about dance contextually. My concerns encompass a range of such issues, particularly those relating to how practice and theory intersect when teaching about dance. In Dancing with Difference I set out to inform and support teaching about culturally different dances by showing how certain pertinent theoretical perspectives are active as teachers teach.

For the most part, the book scopes dance education research and associated literature from Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand where it is generally acknowledged that from the early twentieth century onwards there has been, and still is, some international consensus on teaching and learning in dance, and the arts in general, in formal educational settings. Other countries where dance education is located and active are made mention of in the book, as and when appropriate. Although dance education as a field of knowledge is key to this book, a shifting back and forth across other theoretical fields is, I suggest, unavoidable
because of the implicit, and sometimes hidden, implications emanating from the 
fields of anthropology and ethnography of dance, and socio-political, economic 
and cultural perspectives – the ‘hurly burly’. In calling on other disciplines, I could 
be accused of inappropriate appropriation from ‘other cultures’, specifically, 
aademic cultures. I argue, however, that attempting to extricate such a public 
phenomenon as dance from its dealings in society as a whole serves little purpose. 
This is also a reason why the theories of the late critical, cultural theorist Raymond 
Williams (1921–1988), that link arts with the hurly burly, are one of the important 
theoretical threads in this book. The semiotics of Charles S. Peirce (1839–1914), 
postcolonial theorist Edward Said and sociologist Anthony Giddens are also key in 
the book, and I find this combination of theories highly informing of the practice of 
teaching about dance. I believe it is important to consider an adequate and 
appropriate range of theoretical underpinnings, and, as John O. Perpener III (1999) 
points out, as he considers the importance of the complex relationships that are 
pertinent to examining dances as historical phenomena, confrontation of such an 
issue is likely to involve synthesis of a wide range of sources “beyond the 
customary boundaries of the discipline” (p. 336). He also suggests that in widening 
the range of disciplines, new and more inclusive bodies of knowledge may arise. I 
identify closely with his suggestions in what I feel is, arguably, an iconoclastic 
approach. The sources that I have chosen as key complement each other, and can 
bring to light ethical perspectives and analytical rigour to further inform teaching 
about culturally different dances in formal educational settings.

In making a contribution to dance education’s pedagogical and research 
footprints in New Zealand and offshore, the value of this book is threefold. First, it 
tackles difficult issues that dance education faces in the current culturally diverse 
and shifting landscape. The global vicissitudes of migration and migrant diasporas 
are contingent with increased cultural diversity in education, making this book 
timely, and a leader in its field. Wittgenstein’s ‘hurly burly’, therefore, has far 
reaching implications for this book. Second, the book presents findings from my 
ethnographic, interpretive investigation in which teachers in New Zealand teach and 
describe their teaching about dance. The teachers’ voices offer opportunity to probe 
into a wide range of implications for dance education, including opportunities to 
examine a range of pedagogical concepts, associated practical strategies and related 
theories as relevant to teaching about culturally different dances. Third, in providing 
consideration of a range of culturally different, traditional dance heritages and the 
dancers who are integral to those legacies, Dancing with Difference gives 
consideration as to how dance education could make a contribution to honour and 
sustain such traditions. In combination, I see these three threads as offering ways to 
test and interpret current dance education theory and practice, and also to address 
connected matters of social justice and cultural equity in the way in which culturally 
different dances and dancers are treated in educational settings.

Dancing with Difference is written with dance educators in mind, and by that I 
include anyone who may be studying, working or researching in dance education, 
but it may also be of interest to others working in the other arts or education in 
general. The issues that are discussed in this book are those facing dance educators.
and their colleagues in formal educational settings. Formal settings include primary, intermediate and secondary schools, as well as university and teacher education programmes, but exclude dance as taught or performed in informal education such as in private studios, recreational and community settings, professional or vocational training, and liturgical / ritual contexts. Dance specialists who work within their specific dance cultural heritages, however, may also find the book of interest in relation to how their dances could interface with formal education. The book, and the findings from my ethnographic investigation that it contains, offer opportunities to inform, complement, support and extend current pedagogy, such as identifying gaps in provision of support for such teaching. These gaps could be of interest to a range of stakeholders including: university dance students; generalist teachers; teacher educators; dance educators; in-service providers; providers of university dance programmes; professional development teams; curriculum designers; educational policy makers; and producers of resources.

MOVE 2–CREATING A RESEARCH SPACE: DANCE IN THE NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL CURRICULUM

No hierarchy in the strands but the new curriculum will have Understanding Context at the top because the National Facilitators regard the context is missing and so a lot of the rest doesn’t make sense. (Liz, dance educator, 2006)

I leave you to dream the dream that I and many friends have treasured throughout the years, that worthwhile elements of the old Māori culture, the things that belong to this beautiful land, may be preserved for the New Zealand nation. (Sir Apirana Ngata, 1964)

The concerns of the opening epigraphs are addressed in the inclusive, pluralist educational ideology underpinning The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum, (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2000, (hereafter ANZC)) and the revised New Zealand Curriculum (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007, (hereafter NZC)). The ANZC brought with it a twenty-first century, postmodern view of society and education, justifying why it is important to include culturally diverse dance in education, as part of a multicultural agenda. Taking such a position aligns with poststructuralist philosopher, Jean-François Lyotard’s, (1924–1998) identification of différence, wherein two parties may not be able to comprehend the ‘other’ because they do not share linguistic or cultural understandings. As a starting point for an arts curriculum, différence lays down some substantial challenges and these are addressed throughout this book. The pluralist intent of the ANZC and the NZC is indicated by the following list of cultures that all students should be given the opportunity to study during their school years,

the bicultural heritage of Māori and Pakeha as expressed through art forms, traditions and histories; the art forms of the Pacific Islands, and international and global art forms, including those of North America and Asia. (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 17)
CHAPTER 1

The specific mentions of both Māori and European legacies, or Pakeha as white people are called in Māori, are indicative of the bicultural status of New Zealand, Aotearoa, which is a fundamental principle of The Treaty of Waitangi, as signed by the British Crown and 540 Māori rangatira (chiefs) in 1840. New Zealand is also a culturally diverse society with a large Pacific diaspora, and increased migration brings with it other growing cultural influences. For teachers, I suggest that this range of cultures could represent either an exciting opportunity to enrich learning in dance or a challenge in terms of the range of skills, knowledge and cultural literacies that could be required.

Mandated by the New Zealand Government in 2003, the ANZC marked the first time that dance became nationally compulsory in schools. Dance had been taught in schools before the ANZC was written but inclusion nationally was patchy, and some argue it still is (Sansom, 2011). ANZC guidelines suggest how dance should be taught and indicate that the time given to teaching dance is at the discretion of each school. There is an expectation that all children should be given opportunities to learn in dance in primary and intermediate school years 1 to 8, and that secondary school students should be offered dance as an option in years 9 to 13. Alongside this breakthrough, dance was being developed in the form of Dance Achievement Standards for National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) examinations, and these were approved as a subject for university entrance in 2006. The growth in numbers of candidates achieving these examinations seems also to be contributing to the growth of study of dance at universities and other tertiary education institutions in New Zealand. It is worth noting that dance still has a place within Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999a) as part of a colonial heritage dating back to the early twentieth century (Stothart, 1974).

Dancing with Difference builds on previous research about New Zealand dance and arts education (Barbour, 2004; Bolwell, 1998; Buck, 2003, 2003a; Hong-Joe, 2002; Sansom, 1999, 2011; Thwaites, 2003). Broadly speaking, this relatively recent wave of research has been generated by the inaugural inclusion of dance in New Zealand’s national curriculum. The ANZC is also underpinned by the concept of multiple literacies (Hong, 2000; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999; Thwaites, 2003). ‘Multiple literacies’ broadens a received view of literacy as reading and writing, and is understood in terms of a multiplicity of socially constructed discourses specific to fields of knowledge, such as the particular sciences and arts that offer multi-modal ways of knowing the world (Eisner, 1991). Moreover, each art form is recognised as having its own language and grammar capable of carrying specific political, social and cultural significances, the meaning of which are context dependent. Dance literacy requires learners to encode or express, and decode or interpret dance, and these processes are portrayed as requiring semantic and syntactical translations, similar to those found in the alphabet and grammar of spoken and written literacy.

Teachers encounter the expectations of the ANZC to develop literacy in specific art forms mainly in the form of four curriculum strands that define key areas of
learning. The strands are depicted as intertwining during teaching in a spiral model of learning (Bruner, 1986) by which learners may revisit topics from different perspectives as they move through years 1 to 13. Within each strand, specific achievement objectives indicate the development of skills, understanding and knowledge as appropriate for the eight curriculum levels. The four strands of the dance component of ANZC, and the activities associated with them, are as follows: Developing Practical Knowledge in Dance (PK), which explores and uses personal movement in the Dance Elements, the vocabularies of others, dance techniques and technologies; Developing Ideas in Dance (DI), which is concerned with making dance; Communicating and Interpreting in Dance (CI), which involves performing, viewing and responding; and Understanding Dance in Context (UC), which focuses on theoretical and practical investigations into the roles that dance plays in, and the significances that it carries for societies.

Working within the context of New Zealand dance and dance education, I became interested in teaching dance from contextual perspectives in schools because of the inclusion of a separate Understanding Dance in Context (UC) strand in the ANZC. When I began my doctoral research in 2004 the ANZC was in an implementation phase, and so it seemed appropriate to investigate teachers who were implementing the dance component of the curriculum. I was interested in finding out more about how teachers saw their teaching of dance contextually, as the Understanding Dance in Context (UC) strand brought relatively new pedagogical and theoretical parameters. Before the ANZC, dance was likely to be the least familiar subject to many teachers, and less familiar even than the other arts, specifically drama, music and the visual arts (Buck, 2003a), but some teachers would have skills and experience in teaching creative dance (Sansom, 2011). However, teaching about a range of culturally different dances was likely to be new to many. In 2005, the New Zealand Ministry of Education set up an Arts Reference Group for The Curriculum Stocktake Marautanga Project to advise on the upgrade of the whole New Zealand Curriculum Framework that produced the revised NZC. The main brief for this group, of which I was part, was a rewrite of the Arts Achievement Objectives. In those meetings the arts educators discussed the need for more guidance for teachers in unpacking the UC strand of the ANZC across all four art forms. It became apparent that the strand was presenting teachers with challenges. In the ANZC (2000) the UC strand appeared as fourth in the list of strands. By 2007, in the revised NZC, the UC strand had been shifted to top of the list, and this move seemed to consolidate the provision of a suitable research space.

As I aim to reveal in this book, the UC strand holds some different challenges for teachers than the other strands. Implementation of the UC strand of the dance component of the ANZC is one of the major reasons for writing this book, and my aim is to help teachers and others in education who may encounter such difficulties in their working lives. In recognition of such problematic associations, the research question that was developed for my ethnographic, interpretive inquiry asked: What concerns, dilemmas and opportunities arise for teachers when teaching dance from a contextual perspective? The findings of my ethnographic investigation are captured in this book, and a main concern was that some teachers were not
teaching about culturally different dances. I depict the theoretical and practical expectations that underpin the UC strand as potentially problematic for some teachers and learners. Modernist, formalist concerns about analysing, interpreting and learning to dance culturally codified dances that require specific cultural knowledge and skills are just some of the challenges for teachers. In tandem are the postmodern perspectives of the curriculum including critical pedagogy, cultural pluralism, de-centring understanding of what art is away from a Eurocentric interpretation of the world, multiculturalism, conspicuous consumerism, digital technologies and social justice. The ANZC and NZC position learners as critical thinkers engaged in transformative learning (Mezirow, 1981; Pearse, 1992), but also recognise that the:

Challenges facing curriculum practitioners include the analysis of how to understand self, gender, knowledge and culture and relationships in ways that do not involve hierarchical, linear or binary ways of thinking. (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 9)

I suggest that if these challenges were made more overt, theoretically and practically, for teachers it could assist them to implement the UC strand. Also, it is crucial that these challenges be overcome if dance education is to avoid being limited to the exploration of creative, contemporary dance alone.

An important focus of this book is unpacking the relevant theory because on the pages of the ANZC, and the updated revised NZC, theory is not always clearly linked to the practice. The seemingly illusive link between theory and practice in teaching about culturally different dances prompted this sub-question: How can theory and practice interface when dance is taught from a contextual perspective? How teachers are implementing dance literacy from within the ANZC is a rich area of interest for Dancing with Difference. Linking theory with practice is key and this is how I set out to further inform and support the development of current pedagogy for teaching about culturally different dances. I came to appreciate that the UC strand encompassed pedagogical and theoretical issues—specifically, issues tied in with the notions of critical and cultural literacy—that were different from those associated with teaching creative dance improvisation, making dances or teaching dance steps by rote, although these pedagogies can overlap when teaching about dance. The theoretical aspects of understanding about dances contextually, and the need for physical skills in a culturally diverse range of dances, were two areas that seemed to warrant immediate further examination.

I suggest that the socio-political, critical, ethnographic and anthropological lenses that are inherent in teaching about dance also require further examination in relation to how they impact on teaching within the UC strand. Several other related issues emerged during my research. In the dance component of the ANZC document, the notion of context, as represented from within the UC strand, includes perspectives such as different forms of dance in the past and present, as well as concepts such as tradition and change; terms which themselves require certain theoretical understandings. Dilemmas of how to deal ethically with the traditions of others are presented as an area of potential difficulty for teachers as
they endeavour to honour diverse cultural protocols, values and meanings, and take on surrounding notions of appropriation, hybridity, authenticity, commodification, interculturalism and acculturation. Factors such as presenting a lived experience of ‘traditional’ dance vocabulary can be fraught with concerns about inappropriate appropriation in the form of intercultural borrowings—possibly resulting in detrimental effects on the lives of the dancers whose heritages have been borrowed and on the actual dances. Also, certain historical, genealogical and socio-cultural aspects of dance education, in terms of teaching about a full range of culturally different dances from contextual perspectives, play an integral part of the debates and questions that I explore in this book. Moreover, the challenges that teachers talked about in my research are depicted as having some similarities to those faced by the larger dance community.

As a consequence, in *Dancing with Difference* I set out to help teachers who may be facing such conundrums in two ways. First, I make pertinent theoretical underpinnings of the ANZC and the NZC more directly relevant to teaching about dance. I also propose that a wide range of theoretical perspectives need to be further examined and explained as they apply to the practice of dance education from within a postmodern, pluralist agenda. It is important to point out that this is not a ‘how to’ book, although I have included some practical teaching strategies that teachers may find useful. This is the research space that I carved out from within New Zealand dance education.

**MOVE 3–ALIGNING THE SPINE: KEY TERMS**

*Here language does not necessarily involve a neat unfolding towards eventual resolution and finality, but rather a navigation through a potential vortex of voices, a dissemination of sense in which we sometimes choose to halt, and at other times choose to travel.* (Iain Chambers, 1994, p. 26)

*If I don’t have the knowledge and it’s something that’s not easily accessible then how do you teach it?* (Jo, secondary school dance teacher, 2005)

In some ways untangling the contextual dimensions of dance, and for that matter the threads that are the spine of this book, could be depicted as navigating through a vortex of different voices. Some voices speak more clearly than others and listening becomes a vital way of making some sense of the known and unknown. Aligning them into a compilation that may be useful for the reader involves organising their differences as much as their similarities. One of the aims of this book was to present the reader with a wide collection of background literature, a veritable vortex of voices from different sources that are directly and indirectly relevant to teaching about dance in education. In addition to the theorists previously mentioned, I am concerned with presenting voices from the Pacific Island nations as a priority in this book because of the ethical obligation that I feel towards their respecting and honouring their heritages in dance education, and also
because internationally it seems likely that they are not so much heard. These scholars include; Johnathon Mane-Wheoki, Regina Meredith, Margaret Mutu, Kabina Sanga, Linda Tuhiiwai Smith, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi, Gurrum Yunupingu among others. I also draw on, dance educators and philosophers of dance and arts education including David Best, Ralph Buck, Kerry Chappell, Elliot Eisner, Thomas Hagoon, Tina Hong, Luke Kahlich, Adrienne Sansom and Edward Warburton. Emerging from the physical education field, Muska Mosston’s breakdown of teaching styles is an important thread in the book. From anthropological and ethnographic fields Theresa Buckland, Brenda Farnell, Laszlo Felfoldi, Joan Frosch, Anca Giurchescu, André Grau, Adrienne Kaeppler, Sally Ann Ness, Jill Sweet, and Drid Williams, present helpful perspectives which could enhance teaching about dance in educational settings. The different voices sometimes reinforce each other’s worldviews but at other times are in contention and conflict with each other. This may make the reader wonder about how to unravel any possible solutions as to how to teach about culturally different dances as appropriate for their worldview; I understand how you feel. When issues become less easy to resolve, I hope that readers can find springboards for their own research or teaching.

Also, like a central nervous system, the stories that the teachers in my study told about teaching dance from contextual perspectives run along the spine of this book. I aim to bring these voices to life from the page as much as possible, although it was not possible to include all the data collected in this book. This particular vortex of voices makes up the first part of each chapter in Parts I and II, and annotates the relevant theories and scholarly utterances that form the second part of these chapters. Significantly, this book is the first to present empirical data about teaching dance from contextual perspectives from New Zealand early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors, as well as the opinions of those who specialise in dance from their own ethnic heritages. I did not set out to evaluate the teachers’ teaching, but aimed to document their perceptions, problems and strategies in relation to the contextual aspects of teaching dance. A number of questions arose from these voices. What do teachers value in terms of a culturally diverse range of dance, and why? How do they see themselves as they teach dance contextually? How do teachers deal with the challenges of interpreting culturally diverse dances not as unchanging traditions, but by appropriating, or borrowing, traditions that may already be in their classrooms awaiting exploration? Do teachers fully understand the goals and underpinning concepts of including culturally diverse dances in an educational curriculum? Such questions raise the need for focused discourse about the impact of cultural diversity on teaching dance in schools and for more research into best practice in teaching about culturally different dances. New Zealand is ideally placed in this regard because of its bicultural foundational ideology in combination with its growing cultural diversity, juxtaposed with the development of dance as a standalone subject within its national arts curriculum. I set out to make more visible some teachers’ opinions and problems, and to raise new questions for future research about teaching of culturally different dances from contextual perspectives in dance education.
A third component of the spine of this book are some of the key terms. These include: culture; difference; dance education (and some related other terms); and ethnic dance and ethnicity.

I use an egalitarian notion of culture, to refer to how culture is made as people “remake and transform their understandings of how they properly should live together in the world” (Lindstrom & White, 1994, p. 40). This position recognises that culture is an interactive process resulting from people’s intentions and interactions, and is contingent with a pluralist, critical perspective for dance education, as expected from within the ANZC and NZC. Without deferring to a structuralist view of society, culture can also be deemed as having penetrating and dynamic influences on the human condition.

As identified by Raymond Williams (1976), culture is “one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language” (p. 76). Appearing in several different European languages, the root meanings of culture include, “inhabit, cultivate, protect, honour with worship” (p. 77). Early fifteenth century usage developed from the French meaning of culture as a noun of process, referring to agricultural cultivation. By the early sixteenth century, the word’s meaning had extended to apply to human development. Williams traces a decisive shift in usage in the work of German romanticist, Johann Herder (1744–1803). Herder’s innovatory usage of the plural ‘cultures’ heralded the now common anthropological and sociological uses of the word and the beginning of the recognition of cultural diversity. Williams identified a culture as a “realized signifying system” (1981, p. 207) possessing its own distinguishable language and ideology embedded within larger scale socio-political, economic or familial systems. Furthermore, similarly to Clifford Geertz, the noted early 1950s catalyst of what became known as ‘postmodern ethnography’, Williams insisted that human practices have had too little sociological attention. As with many critical theorists, Williams searched for means whereby counter-hegemony in ordinary human practices may oppose the dominant powers of mass culture and the ‘pseudo’ radical intelligentsia. He located such opposition in gossip, jokes, occasional dressing up, and everyday song and dance (Williams, 1983). From his perspective, culture is ordinary and it operates as both socially shared interactions and agentic, individual practices. I find Williams’ cultural theory to have contemporary relevance and potential to inform dance education in terms of ideas for teaching strategies and to provoke thoughts about the place of culturally different dance traditions in dance education from socio-cultural and economic perspectives. This is why I draw on Williams as a keystone for this book.

In this book, I defer to the use of culturally different over cultural diversity because I think that the former facilitates a more meaningful examination of teaching about dances in education. For some cultural commentators, such as postcolonial theorist, Homi Bhabha (1994), the term diversity, along with multiculturalism, is no longer helpful. Bhabha regards diversity as a redundant term preferring ‘difference’, in the sense of Jean-François Lyotard’s (1979, 1983) postmodern and poststructuralist theory because it emphasises naming, authorising and differentiating cultures at the cutting edge of translation. In this
sense, as also highlighted by Anthony Giddens (1987), ‘difference’ is also about power struggles, insofar as proximity to resources is connected to being empowered to act and to making any difference; such struggles feature in Dancing with Difference.

For the purposes of simplicity, I will use the nomenclature of ‘dance education’ throughout the book as it sets appropriate parameters for the context of this inquiry. Dance education is acknowledged as a subliminal underpinning of dance in the ANZC and the NZC. As a subject area it is historically associated with Eurocentric and North American legacies generated in the early twentieth century by pioneers such as Rudolf Laban (1960, 1971, 1975, 1980, 1988) and Margaret H’Doubler (1974). In this book, ‘creative dance’ is a term that is associated with explorations of movement for its own sake (as with an abstract set of concepts such as space or time), or with making dances about everyday themes, images or feelings using selected movement concepts, or with choreographic applications of recognised compositional devices and structures, or some combination of all three. Creative dance, along with associated terminologies such as modern dance, contemporary dance, postmodern dance (as anti-dance), all relate in some way to making dances in Eurocentric theatrical and/or educational contexts, and are positioned as playing similar roles in the dance component of the ANZC. Discussion about these interrelated creative dance practices occupies a large part of the relevant twentieth and twenty-first century dance literature, and, being a longtime practitioner in the field, I scrutinise some of the associated perspectives from a reflexive standpoint in this book.

In 1969, the ethnic dance of other peoples was identified by dance educator Alma M. Hawkins (2008) as the other main area of dance programmes in American universities. It is worth noting, however, that G. P. Kurath, generally accepted to be the founder of the ethnology of dance, raised the inadequacy of the term ethnic dance in 1960, and called for all dance, including modern creative dance, to be studied as ‘ethnic’ (Kurath as cited in Frosch, 1999). As will be revealed in this book, the term ‘cultural dance’ is, however, slippery in its vernacular usage, being used on occasion to indicate dances that are not Eurocentric in origin. Ethnicity itself is understood in terms of a group of people whose members identify with each other’s common heritage or ancestry (Banks, 1996).

Other key terms such as context and multiculturalism will be unpacked in the particular parts of the book in which they are most pertinent. Also, I include a glossary for the Pacific and Māori language that is used. In this book Māori words are not italicised because in New Zealand, Aotearoa, te reo Māori is an official language along with English and New Zealand sign language.

MOVE 4–FINDING A FOOTING: THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

_The greater part of our life is devoted to making sense of the world rather than telling the truth about it._ (David F. Pocock, 1975, p. 185)
Methods define the frames through which we construe the world. (Elliot Eisner, 2002, p. 215)

In juxtaposing these statements, I portray my research journey as an endeavour to make sense of the worlds of dance and education. Investigating the teachers’ thoughts about teaching dance contextually involved choosing frames by which I thought that I could best make sense of, for presentation to others, the worlds of the teachers from what they told me about their lived experiences. I also align the journey with a process of ‘worldmaking’, understood as starting “with the worlds already on hand; the making is a remaking” (Goodman, 1978, p. 6). In this section, I give an overview of the choices that I made on the research journey in order to help the reader to understand some of the steps that led to the writing of this book. I hope to provide some insights into my experiences of trying to make sense and meanings both from within the world of a researcher and across into the parallel worlds of the teachers and dance education. Both of these worlds also interface with dance education as a whole, the diverse cultures and people from which the dances originate, and other researchers who write about related issues and concepts.

I pause here to make a more general reflection on the writing of this section. I note that in her recent and refreshing book Pole dancing, embodiment and empowerment, Samantha Holland (2010) allocates a chapter to her methodology. She also alludes to the matter that presenting the methodology in a monograph is not usual but that she decided to do so because: “Methodology is the underpinning theory” (p. 8). As I was formulating the overall structure of this book, I too considered this same issue. I decided to include an outline of the methodology because I see it as helpful for the reader as an insight into the first steps of researching something that puzzles, intrigues or concerns the researcher. I also think that an overview of the methodology and methods that generate the data may provide the reader with some insights into the overall research journey experience and may make the ideas, concepts and discoveries that are in this book more meaningful. The methodological perspective alone may be of interest to some readers, especially those involved with dance as a field of inquiry, but possibly also for those to whom such endeavours in dance and dance education are relatively unknown.

As Eisner (1998) suggests:

Investigators who… engage in that craft called field work will do things in a way that make sense to them, given the problem in which they are interested, the aptitude they possess, and the context in which they work. (p. 169)

This introductory chapter resonates with Eisner’s suggestion, in relation to how I chose to go about making sense of a context in which I worked and a problem that I considered interesting, with my personal disposition that seemed commensurate with the associated issues. Now, this was in part how the whole investigation turned out but—and what I don’t have space to describe in this book—there were several surprises (not all pleasant), bumps, u-turns and dead ends experienced.
along the road. I mention this so as not to mislead the reader into thinking that research is a utopia of discovery, although it can be very enjoyable and can even become quite addictive at times.

Back to Eisner—in the investigation that underscores this book I chose to use a qualitative research methodology, because it is an appropriate frame within which to launch an exploration of the problems surrounding human interactions, particularly those that are complex and require a detailed understanding. I regard, as possibly do many others, the topic of teaching about dance contextually is complex. On occasions when colleagues asked me about my research, they responded with comments such as: ‘That’s a huge can of worms that you are opening there!’—I have to agree with them. The robust and demanding nature of this topic is well-suited to a qualitative inquiry.

Methodology, as an overarching concept, provides a frame to generate general theoretical perspectives and questions which drive the research. Fundamentally, I was concerned about asking: What is happening in this field? Why do these issues arise? Ontologically, this question requires consideration of the multiple realities of the participants, researcher and readers. In this book, the multiple meanings and approaches to reality that teachers generated in making sense of their worlds are carried by their dialogues about and personal reflections on their everyday working lives. This stance also fits well with research into arts education more generally, a place where cultural phenomena and ways of investigating them are likely to be rich and varied; and, I add, culturally different.

In 2004, as a means of examining teachers’ thoughts about their teaching as they implemented the Understanding Dance in Context (UC) strand of the dance component of the ANZC, I designed an ethnographic, interpretive investigation that ran until 2006. As sociologist, grounded theorist and feminist Kathy Charmaz (2003) points out, choosing this style of ethnography does not necessarily involve the traditional ethnographic strategy of “total immersion into specific communities” (p. 270). Rather, this ethnography collects data particular to a group who share a culture, and looks at “slices of social life” (Charmaz, 2003, p. 270). The empirical information, in the form of slices of teaching and dancing lives as presented in this book, covers a wider geographical area and range of educational sectors than do previous studies from New Zealand. I think it could be useful in providing insights into how the ANZC was being interpreted and implemented by the teachers in their work, but there are also aspects of the inquiry that may resonate with those in other countries who are involved with dance education.

With regard to an epistemological stance as appropriate to qualitative methodology, my understanding and knowledge of the world of dance education is as an ‘insider’, a position recognised as common in late twentieth century ethnography by ethnographer of dance Theresa J. Buckland (1999, 2006, 2010). This stance brings with it the recognition that “[t]he self is the instrument that engages the situation and makes sense of it” (Eisner, 1998, p. 34). The issue being that the combination of academic, dance and educational insider experiences that I draw on can facilitate insightful interpretation of the views of the teacher research participants; understanding and communicating these views is key to early twenty-
first century dance ethnography. I was aware that I brought to this research what I considered useful from my past. Ethnographically, therefore, as researcher I was positioned as an agent in the field, making sense of the world/s. Strictly speaking, in straddling the teachers’ worlds and mine of university dance study, I was positioned more as an ‘insider-outsider’ researcher. Shifts between insider and outsider positions are a recognised possibility in ethnographic inquiry, and can, arguably, lead to a deeper understanding than would research conducted by a complete outsider (Wolcott, 1994).

As an ethnographic researcher, whose personal experience related closely to the field, a reflexive view both of my own perspective, and of the research participants’ perspectives, was essential. Adopting a reflexive approach retains “an objective interest in the relation between the person and his or her role” (Varela, 1994, p. 63). Reflexively, researchers need to acknowledge “that what they see – and don’t see – rests on values” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 131). Therefore, axiologically, it was necessary to interrogate my own position as an experienced dance educator, and to question how this might affect my research and writing. In what ways, that is, might my position in the teachers’ ‘culture,’ and the values that go with that position, affect the objectivity of my data collection and interpretation? From a reflexive stance, as a researcher with over 30 years experience in the field under scrutiny, this axiological position offered possibilities for empathic, credible and convincing representations of the research participants’ thoughts and practices. Also, I felt that in some ways I was making sense of the demands of teaching about a range of culturally different dances much as the teachers were. Throughout this book you will find occasional personal reflections, however in real time these milestones of understanding the complexities of the topic were spread out over a number of years. I bring them together in the book in the hope that it can illuminate my personal research journey, and how it affected my practice, which ran parallel with discovering more about the research participants’ worldviews.

Methodology also directs the choice of methods for collecting and analysing data. In my investigation three sets of data were collected as follows:

1. Teachers on an in-service teacher dance education course, with the researcher in dual role as lecturer and participant observer (2004).
2. Questionnaires from teachers in schools across New Zealand (2005).
3. Four focus groups for primary, intermediate and secondary school teachers, tertiary dance educators and genre-specific dance experts, with the researcher as moderator (2005/6).

Each of these methods of data collection is described in more detail as and when it seems appropriate throughout the book. For readers who may wish to move directly to reading about the data collection you will find the methods described in the following chapters: the two sets of data collected during the teachers’ in-service dance course from a video critique exercise and a group peer teaching presentation are described in chapter three; the questionnaire and focus group methods are described in chapter four.
Multi-method data collection is recognised as suited to ethnographic investigation. The multi-method approach to data collection assisted in collecting diverse perspectives, and also meant that each different collection point shifted the position of the researcher in terms of the relationship with the research participants. As participant observer on the teachers’ in-service dance education course, it was as if I was looking over the participants’ shoulders (Geertz, 1983). However, physical proximity of myself and respondents varied according to the method of data collection. For instance, many of the questionnaire respondents did not know me, nor I them and they replied from different parts of New Zealand. Nevertheless, my position as researcher, when dealing with data from the questionnaires, would call on my insider knowledge of dance teaching in schools, which overlapped with the participants’ worldviews; a proximity of intent and/or interest. In the focus groups, I was quite well-acquainted with the participants’ teaching and brought a sense of empathy to their discussions.

Overall, ethnographic interpretation strives to make the invisible more visible (Denzin, 1989; Geertz, 1983). Acknowledgement that observation of the visible leads to interpretation of the hidden, could also imply that individual interpretation is a constant in empirical research. The researcher is positioned as interpreting insider accounts of experiences and as a constructor of descriptions, concepts and theory as held within the data. An interpretive paradigm, as Eisner (1998) describes it, involves contextualisation of an explanation or unpacking the participants’ perspectives. The interpretive ethnographer is assigned a responsibility to take a diligent approach to find answers to questions that are constantly being created, changed, simultaneously repeated, and can lead to new unknowns. For the researcher, such an interpretive approach is incumbent with balancing the discovery of surprising insights from the participants’ worldviews with the familiar and existing information and concerns; allowing the research experience to shape the journey and discoveries is key. Contradiction between the data collected, as much as correlation, became a feature of the journey.

Ethnographically, the question of how to increase the visibility and make sense of the research participants’ perspectives from within a qualitative framework raised considerations about the selection of suitable methods to analyse and interpret data. I selected a grounded theory method because it provided a systematic process of analysing the multiple perspectives of the participants and the researcher, and it created an “analytic-trail” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 145). Via analysis and interpretation, theory that was grounded in the data was extricated and revealed the multiple perspectives of the teachers. In keeping with grounded theory, data analysis was continuous and accumulative over the duration of collection and systematically used to constantly compare and, later, triangulate data (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1999). The sets of data were analysed and compared at each of the three points of collection between 2004 and 2006, and following the analytic-trail had a dual function. First, it provided a means to refine the next stage of data collection. As one stage of data collection informed the next, it was possible to design a coherent overall process based on both the data collected and my experiences of that time. Second, it provided the
basic building blocks from which to gradually construct substantive theory, as
grounded in the data, and identify key themes in relation to the research questions.
Ongoing identification, analysis and coding of data in a deduction-induction
“tango” (Donmoyer, 2006, p. 20) ensured that data and theory mutually informed
one another throughout the process of interpretation. Adopting the procedures of
grounded theory within an ethnographic research strategy integrates what may be
viewed as two distinct approaches. In opting to blend them, I was guided by the
suggestion that this is an acceptable option for more advanced researchers
(Creswell, 2007).

A helpful, and appropriate within the context of Dancing with Difference,
analogy of this analytic process is the Tongan *kakala*, the weaving of a fragrant
garland of flowers representing “integration, synthesis and weaving of knowledge”
(Vaiioleti, 2006, p. 27). The *kakala* is also compared to grounded theory when, as
theory and data interface “major themes are identified, developed and explained”
(p. 28). Ethnographer of dance, Joan D. Frosch (1999), employs a similar analogy
in her depiction of ethnography as attempting to “reveal cultures as dynamic
processes, made up of individual actors who represent a complex weave of voices
and viewpoints” (p. 260). Frosch ends with a reminder that also resonated with my
inquiry in a more general sense: “Tracing the weave of dance in the fabric of
culture is potentially the work of not only dance ethnographers, but dance
researchers of all kinds. Follow the thread” (p. 280). I suggest that this can refer to
educational researchers, and to teachers and learners, as they study dance
contextually.

As researcher, the ethnographic approach involved various activities that
attempted to make sense of the worlds under investigation, including: keeping
detailed field notes; moving across a variety of settings; taking on changing roles
as researcher; providing full descriptions of the phenomena; and maintaining the
momentum of data collection in the field, in synchronisation with data analysis and
interpretation. Data was collected in the form of memos, observations, reflections
and mini-narratives from the in-service dance education course. The focus group
discussion transcripts and data from the questionnaire represented important
information because these teachers were teaching dance in everyday educational
settings, and dealing with the possible isolation, restraints and limitations of the
culture of the classroom; experiences which may be familiar to many dance
educators. In line with The University of Auckland ethical approval, the teachers’
and dance educators’ commentaries are presented using pseudonyms. The only
exceptions to this were the three dance specialists Niulala Helu, Keneti Muaiava
and Valance Smith who requested that their names be used, and their instruction
was followed. (See Appendix A for their biographies).

The findings from my ethnographic, interpretive investigation have been
collated in order to shape a format that is suitable for this book, however, none of
the original sense of the data has been altered. Drawing on the findings I explore a
wide range of issues connected with teaching about culturally diverse dances. This
book examines problems of: how and when to include contextual perspectives in
teaching about culturally different dances; which dances to teach; the organisation
of teaching dance from contextual perspectives; issues relating to who is teaching; whether dance of another culture can be understood; the question of whether certain dances should be taught at all; finding approaches to integrate theory and practice in teaching; the practical application of critical pedagogy and transformative learning; the possible effects of working within a paradigm of multiple literacies; and related fiscal and policy matters. I hope that in covering these topics teachers may find something that resonates with them and that researchers can encounter new areas for their inquiries.

By way of closing this section, it is interesting to note how the definition of qualitative research has developed over time in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000, 2005). The emphasis has shifted from social constructivist to interpretive, and more recently, in emphasising the notion of social justice, includes transformative practices. When I set out on this research I had no specific transformative agenda. Later in the journey, however, issues of cultural ownership, appropriation and commodification came to the fore, and these required examination of how teaching about culturally diverse dances contextually could affect the lives and livelihoods of freelance dance specialists, teachers, learners and, indirectly, the actual dances. Therefore, a major feature within this book is the focus on not only the implementation of the UC strand but also the implications that different approaches to teaching about culturally different dances have for building a dance education that is socially just, ethical and sustainable.

**MOVE 5--THEME AND VARIATIONS:**

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The strength of ethnography, for all its flaws, is to throw light on and gain understanding of shared experiences that, at the same time, are rarely consensual but are conflictual, negotiated and emergent. (Theresa Buckland, 2010, p. 340)

I envisage teaching about culturally different dances from contextual perspectives as similar to the embodied experience of a hall of mirrors. Each new mirror can shape shift the intentions and the practices of the teaching; many variations can result. In the chapters of this book, I present each reflection as being full of refractions, distortions, compromises, beginnings, endings and contradictions: the topic is slippery, fascinating and full of surprises.

As reader, your interpretation presents another layer of possible variations of meaning, or as Barthes’ (1977) demise of the author and readers’ liberation front would have it, drives another nail in the author’s coffin. I have offered you, the reader, opportunities to bring yourself as a counter theme into the book by including questions or provocations, both theoretical and practical, at the end of each chapter. These could be useful as personal reflections or could be planned into learning experiences for you by your lecturer. They can be varied in terms of participation in that they could be group discussions or activities, individual written / practical exercises, or questions / tasks for assessment. The range of questions is designed so that different readers will find some more suited to their worldview and experience than others, so please be selective.
As this book reveals, the teachers’ stories surrounding teaching about dance from contextual perspectives are linked to a wide range of theory. Throughout the chapters, I integrate examination of the broader theories as relevant to understanding about dance in its socio-cultural context. I aim to do so in such a manner so that readers who may be otherwise unfamiliar with such concepts can find them accessible, although some sections are theoretically denser and may demand more of the reader than others. By including a broad scope of theoretical and practical concerns, I hope that a range of different readers may find something from which they can build their thoughts and approaches to dancing with differences.

The first part of the each of the chapters in Parts I and II, carry the themes in the voices of the teachers and dance educators from my ethnographic investigation, and are followed by examination of pertinent theoretical perspectives. This structure honours the participants’ voices from my research. The resulting juxtaposition of practice and theory can reflect the theme or vary it through temporal, spatial, artistic, educational, philosophical and cultural lenses; sometimes, conceptual embellishments can result. The format of Part III is different in that the teachers’ views are integrated with theoretical threads from Parts I and II. This weaving is intended to intensify the connections between theory and practice in a more direct way and to provide a sense of a nexus of understanding teaching about culturally different dances.

A brief synopsis of the book draws this introductory chapter to a close.

The book is in three parts, and, seen as a whole, these parts may be read thematically as repetitions, variations, embellishments and contrasts, not unlike the composition of a dance, if you wear those spectacles. In Part I, chapters two, three and four examine the inclusion of a range of culturally different dances in formal educational settings in New Zealand and other countries. Traces of historical genealogies and associated theoretical perspectives are used to identify some continuities that impact on present day embodied practices in dance education, as found in my ethnographic investigation. Chapter two is concerned with tracing educational values as associated with teaching European folk dancing and its spread during colonial expansion from the early twentieth century. Folk dance is depicted as an early example of including culturally different dances in education in different parts of the globe. Moving on to the later twentieth century, chapter three traces, in practice and theory, how teaching folk dancing survived in education during the gradual emergence of a progressive, liberal, learner-centred pedagogy. Chapter four traces the expansion of the range of culturally different dances in dance education in New Zealand, and internationally, in the later twentieth century. In all three chapters, the various socio-political and educational ideological backgrounds of the historical tracings provide glimpses of the ‘bigger picture’, whilst simultaneously the teachers’ voices ground the theory and provide a sense of some of the challenges faced in teaching about culturally different dances.

In Part II, chapters five to seven present the various concerns, dilemmas, issues and opportunities as expressed by the teachers, dance educators and dance genre specialists in my study. Chapter five brings us to the present day and a closer look
at the difficulties that teachers encountered as they went about trying to fulfil the expectations of the dance component of The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2000). In this chapter, the largely practical issues that teachers talked about are scrutinised in relation to wider theoretical implications, as found in writings of a range of dance educators and researchers, philosophers of dance education, and anthropologists and ethnographers of dance. In chapter six, the various successes that teachers talked about are presented and linked to theories of semiotics, language, ethnography and anthropology, in anticipation of the nexus model. Chapter seven closes Part II, shifting the focus specifically to examine the relationship between tradition and innovation as featured in the teachers’ commentaries and in relation to dance education more generally. In this chapter, related theoretical fields of critical cultural theory, ethnography and anthropology of dance are identified as having potential to be supportive of and activated during teaching about culturally different dances. The increasing connectivity of the theoretical and practical threads in Part II provides a suitable link to Part III, preparing the ground for presentation of a nexus model of understanding teaching about culturally different dances.

Part III synthesises the broader theoretical threads that have been running through the book with themes from the teachers’ perspectives into a nexus of connectivity. In chapter eight the nexus is envisaged as a kinetic, experiential model, depicting how different layers of practice and theory can intersect through space and time during teaching and learning about dance. In these teaching and learning journeys, I draw attention to teaching that activates theoretical fields, and has potential to engage both the teachers and learners as critical thinkers. Different practical strategies that are part of the nexus are unravelled and then re-connected to their underpinning theories. A number of practical ideas emerge that could inform, supplement and support implementation of teaching about a range of culturally different dances. The semiotic, critical and cultural theoretical perspectives of Peirce, Giddens, Said and Raymond Williams are revisited in Part III because they ground the issues that surround implementation of a critical pedagogy in dance education which underpins the ANZC.

In chapter nine, an outcome of engaging with these various intersections of theory and practice is to explore how dance education could play an active role in sustaining and supporting dancing with difference. I argue for some affirmations and re-examination of teaching about dance from contextual perspectives in pursuit of highlighting the importance of dancing with difference as a sustainable, socially equitable and ethical way ahead for dance education. From within the practice / theory synthesis of the nexus, matters surrounding language use in teaching about dance and Muska Mosston’s (1981) spectrum of teaching styles are examined. A key practical strategy for teaching that emerges from scrutiny of theory is how the current emphasis on creative thinking, from within a discovery, learner-centred educational ideology, may have potential to enhance teaching about culturally diverse dances, and dancing. I use the word ‘discovery’ here as a generic term referring to learning experiences in which knowledge production is the intended outcome, as featured in Mosston’s spectrum of teaching styles. Such learning
INTRODUCTION

contrasts to rote, reproductive learning of set dance vocabulary that is taught by what Mosston called Command teaching style. The latter, however, is not to be overlooked as playing a part in teaching about culturally different dances, and, in an effort to avoid mind/body dichotomies, I explain how the two need not be separate in learning and teaching about culturally different dances. This suggestion, I propose, offers a fresh approach to teaching about culturally different dances. Mosston’s spectrum of teaching styles is a useful thread that runs throughout this book, and it is used to scrutinise a range of learning experiences potentially available, although not thoroughly utilised, or at least not acknowledged, in present day teaching about culturally different dances contextually. Chapter nine closes with an examination of monetary and infrastructure issues that impact on teaching about culturally different dances. I tease out some practical suggestions for teaching about culturally different dances from contextual perspectives in response to some of the difficulties that the teachers talked about, particularly in terms of teaching theory with practice, or practice with theory depending on your semantic preference.

Chapter ten draws the book to a close. I summarise some of the ideas and threads that could further inform and support teaching about dance in formal educational settings. I also collate topics that could provide fertile grounds for further research. As with many projects of this kind, I leave more questions than answers along with the hope that other researchers may pick up where I leave off. A reflexive reflection on the process of research and writing, that culminated in this book, in the form of a short personal narrative about how I changed as I ‘danced’ with cultural differences closes the book.

Overall, the book is structured to take the reader on a journey in which the threads and their multiple intersections that make up the nexus are experienced as chains of causal interactions and concepts. The weaving of these threads becomes increasingly intertwined as the book progresses, as if the nexus was gradually being built during the reading. This structure is possibly what Elliot Eisner (1998) had in mind when he described research as compiling fragments of evidence that build to a compelling whole, rather like a detective novel.

Try to imagine a moment without a context…

Addendum – In the interim period between completion of my doctorate inquiry, recovering from the same, entering a phased semi-retirement from university life, embarking on the writing of and finding a publisher for this book, I belatedly discovered volumes of the Journal of Dance Education that had been published in 2010 (volume 10 issue 4) and 2011 (volume 11 issue 4). Both issues contain articles that are pertinent to the topic of this book from dance education researchers such as Bond, Musil, Risner, Stinson and Warburton amongst others. Interested readers would find much valuable commentary in these papers.
PART I

TRACING THE INCLUSION OF CULTURALLY DIFFERENT DANCES IN EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Moving from traces to tracing incorporates the tactile, and thereby refuses the traditional separation of object from subject. (Ann Cooper Albright, 2010, p. 103)

As suggested in the opening epigraph, tracing the inclusion of culturally diverse dances in formal educational settings from the early twentieth century to the present day in the UK, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand could be depicted as a refusal to recognise a Cartesian division of body from mind, and subject from object. In Part I, this move is embedded in acts of tracing dancing in education as a site where broader socio-political, ideological and cultural values are played out. In an effort to tell a fuller tale, I am presenting space and time not as abstract quantities but rather as connected and connectable properties in people’s lives, bodies, actions and histories, and also as they exist in dances and dancing. Linking theory and practice in this way establishes that “theory is a practice frequented by self-awareness” (Chambers, 1994, p. 42); you cannot have one without the other. The theory that frequented the practices of the teachers in my study is an important focus throughout the book, and is interpreted from the teachers’ own words as featured in the first part of each chapter in Part I.

In Part 1, traced in journeys through time and space, the inclusion of dancing cultural differences in formal educational settings is presented as an unfolding of certain embodied practices that are manifest in dance education. I am using ‘embodied’ from within a social model of the human condition, wherein embodiment becomes meaningful once understood as intentional action in a person-centred, sociocultural world (Barbour, 2004). In this world, people, as empowered agents can think both socially and reflexively in sharing practices of collectively understood systems such as language and movement. Embodied practice in this sense, is described by sociologist Charles Varela (1995) as:

For it is the person as the social actor in the local culture who has become knowledgeable and in some cases literate in its various semiotics and who has been enabled to display the cultural ways in which vocal (lingual) and nonvocal (action-sign) gestural acts can be and are significantly performed. (pp. 253–254)10

Embodied practices, initially produced in enculturation as in learning within our first-culture experience, are learnt in a process in which knowledge of self, other and the world are contingent with each other. The process is seen as the same when
applied to acculturation, as occurring through contact with cultures other than the one of one’s origin, a point with some import for what transpires throughout the whole of this book as people dance with differences. Of course, the notions of acculturation and cultures travelling globally are far from new, and in telling a story of the survival and development of culturally different dances in education in New Zealand, and offshore, I see history as “a multi-dimensional continuum” (Williams, 1991, p. 317) within which certain concepts are highlighted more than others at different times and eras.

Throughout Part I, the insertion of filmic flashbacks provides a closer look at the shifts in pedagogical emphasis over what is more than a century of dance in formal educational settings internationally. Tracings draw attention to the fact that broadening the range of dances culturally in dance education is a relatively recent phenomenon. In chapter two, the plot initially unfolds in New Zealand and with, what may seem as an unlikely choice, European folk dance. In highlighting this specific location and dance idiom, however, tracings also relate through space and time to dance education in other parts of the globe during the early part of the twentieth century. Depicted as a colonial, cultural import for some, the educational values that are associated with teaching folk dancing are presented as having contributed towards the longevity of its relevance in some educational contexts.

Chapters three and four move forward in time from the mid-twentieth century to the present day, tracing the effect of other Eurocentric pedagogical influences on the survival of the teaching of folk dance, and the increasing range of culturally different dances being included in dance education. Relevant socio-cultural contextual background information and pedagogical theory are explored.
CHAPTER 2

FOLK DANCE A SURVIVAL STORY

INTRODUCTION

We are thus brought to the conclusion that the present is connected to the past by a series of real infinitesimal steps. (Charles S. Peirce, 1892)\(^1\)

We don’t know about the past, except as we discover it. And we discover it from the now…. There are always ancestral footsteps behind me, pushing me, when I am creating a new dance. (Martha Graham, 1998, p. 70)

Chapter two presents a range of teachers’ views from my study about a dance genre that is reasonably well-known and loved by many—the social dance form of European folk dance. In a sense, my approach could be depicted as a search for the steps and memories of past dance educators as found in current embodied practices. Tracing the footsteps, that have been a part of the survival of European folk dance in New Zealand schools, reveals a collection of educational benefits for the learners that have been and are associated with teaching folk dancing. I suggest that depicting the teachers’ points of view, as gathered in my research, can connect the past to the present. In bringing to life ancestral footsteps that are treading behind these teachers, pushing them on in their everyday pedagogical practices, the underlying theories and histories that form the second and third sections of this chapter are charged into life. The background to teaching folk dance in the early twentieth century is presented in the shape of a theoretical examination of the embodied practices and thoughts of the New Zealand educators. Folk dance, as it travelled on colonial pathways, is depicted as a beginning of the cultural diversification of dances taught in schools, and in tracing New Zealand teachers’ perspectives on European folk dancing, clues reveal historical genealogies and continuities as they impact on present day practices in dance education in other countries.

NEW ZEALAND STEPS AND VOICES

It would probably be nearer the truth to assert that no form of art has been carried so far along the road of development by the unaided efforts of the folk than that of the dance. (Cecil J. Sharp, as cited in Sharp & Oppé, 1924, p. 7)

The folk whose efforts I am writing about in this section are the New Zealand teachers, dance educators and dance genre specialists who participated in my research between 2004 and 2006. As I present their ideas and approaches to teaching European folk dances in New Zealand schools, I feel the force of Sharp’s claim, and more specifically what he was most intent on—the survival and development of folk dance, which could be viewed as a remarkable survival story. A prequel of autobiographical flashback may, however, assist in the telling of the expanded story.
Stepping back in time to the 1970s as an undergraduate student in dance education at I. M. Marsh College, University of Liverpool, England, folk or national dance as it was known, was part of my studies. Lecturer Joan English, provided sessions consisting of an extensive repertoire of English and European folk dances. After many years of working in education and as a freelance dancer / choreographer / academic, I moved to New Zealand, Aotearoa. Working as a teacher educator at, what was then called, Auckland College of Education, before its amalgamation into The University of Auckland, School of Education, I was surprised when my folk dance repertoire was called upon. I included many of the folk dances that I had learnt in England in my teacher education classes because these were commonly taught in New Zealand primary and intermediate schools (years 5 to 8). Perhaps I should not have been so surprised given my awareness that these folk dances were not the only overseas import in what I taught, but more of that in later chapters. At the time, as a new migrant, I was taken off guard, I’d just arrived in the Pacific and was living in the Pasifika diaspora of Auckland which has a larger population of Pacific Island peoples than the Islands themselves. I was eager to know more about the dances and culture of New Zealand, and here I was teaching European folk dance.

Dance education in New Zealand schools has, to a large extent, retained its European heritage in several ways, one of which is folk dance. The cultural relevance of such heritage for some learners was brought to my attention in a questionnaire response when one teacher described folk dance as being appropriate for the year seven, intermediate school, students because it followed on from primary school dance and benefitted the students culturally as they were “mainly New Zealanders of European descent”. Primary school teachers, who participated in my research during an in-service dance education course, were actively involved in teaching folk dance. For instance, Lisa had been teaching it in schools for fifteen years, and Martha described how:

At our school, we place an important emphasis on the fact that folk dancing is a social dance, and the etiquette that is associated with it is taught too…. Once the children have overcome their initial shyness, the dancing is a huge success and a lot of fun for them. The community afternoon / evening seems a lovely way of having parental involvement.

As well as the cultural and social benefits that learning folk dances can bring for learners, the teachers also spoke about the importance of skill acquisition. A unit plan for folk dance, received in a questionnaire from an intermediate school teacher, sequenced the following skill-based activities: teaching polka, box, waltz and gallop steps; standard partner moves and figures; Circassian Circle; and The Bridge of Athlone. Another questionnaire respondent noted that year seven students benefitted from folk dance because “[t]hey achieve simple technical things like: Keeping in time and listening to the music. Simple, repetitive structure allows children to participate successfully”. Benefits were noted, such as: “Students improved their dance technique dramatically and learnt performance skills and disciplines. They also grew in confidence”.

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In contradiction to the questionnaire responses, a concern was voiced that learners may become disaffected if taught dance routines by rote, as expressed in a focus group by tertiary dance educator, Cath:

The only factor with a traditional style of teaching children the same steps, even in contemporary style of dance, is when you’ve taught them a sequence the children tend to look at each other and compare themselves to others. They can tend to lose a bit of confidence there.

Similarly, in the primary school teachers’ focus group, Anne was concerned that, in terms of dance education, using rote learning of skills in a Command teaching style (Mosston, 1981) for fitness could have a detrimental effect on learners:

Now they’ve asked if they could put dance into fitness time. We only do fitness 15 minutes a day. How can you expect nine year olds to do the Jibidi and just… so no it’s not such a positive thing at our school.

The teachers perceived a problem that reliance on Command style teaching and the associated rote skill learning, could have a negative impact on the inclusiveness of dance education, possibly adversely affecting the learner’s sense of motivation to learn. Teachers’ contrasting perspectives on the range of educational benefits of folk dancing, namely, supporting identity and cultural heritage, social awareness, skill acquisition and fitness, versus the possible negative effects, are read as representing the theory that frequented their teaching.

Folk dancing seemed to have benefits for teachers too, as expressed by one of the intermediate teacher respondents who observed how folk dance was “easy for year seven teachers to teach. You don’t need much knowledge / background to teach them.” The teachers’ skill sets and their perception of themselves as dance educators are factors that can exert considerable influence on which dances are taught, how they are taught and by whom.

In my investigation, I thought it important to give a voice to dancers in New Zealand who taught dances from their Pacific heritages. Māori performing arts specialist Valance Smith, Sāmoan dance professional Keneti Muaiava and Tongan dance expert Niulala Helu made up a focus group. At the time, they all lived in Auckland, although Niulala moved between his native Tonga and New Zealand. Niulala and Keneti were born in Tonga and Sāmoa respectively. The three Pacific dance specialists did not have New Zealand Registered Teacher Status and worked mainly on a freelance basis, in schools, tertiary institutions or in informal educational settings such as churches and community groups. At the time of the research, two were studying postgraduate qualifications and one ran a dance company. These dance specialists were educated, wholly or in part, in New Zealand. In a focus group discussion, they reflected on their own dance education from their New Zealand primary schools in the 1980s:

Keneti Muaiava: But for me that was my problem—I had a lot of teachers that thought that it was a waste of time y’know…. It was just funny because I grew up doing folk dance! Y’know they played this European
music from the eighteenth century, and I just remember the girl next to me skipping…

Niulala Helu: Ballroom dancing.

Keneti Muaia: At Holy Cross Primary in the eighties we all did folk dance. The only time we used to love it was when we used to do that (sings a Māori waiata [song]) and that stuff, y’know? But we’d focus on European folk dance, line dancing, waltzing. But it was like history and like school Social Studies we learnt about the American Indian, y’know? And here we had our own…

Such reflections illustrate their memories as learners and what they perceived of as the cultural irrelevance of their dance education in European folk dance in New Zealand; a somewhat different story from the one in the school teachers’ commentaries. Such differences, in the range of worldviews that the participants in my research voiced, are discussed as historical and contextual tracings in the following two sections.

TRACING FOOTSTEPS–EUROPEAN FOLK DANCING A SURVIVAL STORY IN NEW ZEALAND

*The horizon of the future curves back to intersect with what went before.*

(Anthony Giddens, 1993, p. 298)

In this section, we embark on a journey in space and time between Giddensian horizons of the now, as was once the future, and also of the documented past. The teachers who participated in my research, and taught European folk dancing are envisaged as a trace of the early colonial development of introducing culturally different dances in formal educational settings. European folk dancing is positioned as an early example of educational, cultural and political forces in action, as the following fragments of history reveal.

European folk dance is a longstanding feature in twentieth century documentation of teaching dance in northern hemisphere formal educational settings. British educational reformer, Robert Owen, set up *The Institution for the Formation of Character* in 1816, in which features of progressive education such as physical health and balancing individual with community interest were practiced. The institution provided education for toddlers and children who at the age of ten could be legally employed in cotton mills. Owen included Scottish reels, country dancing and quadrilles as part of the physical activities (Nicholas, 2007).

In recognising the plight of the poor much later in 1909, the social reforms of Lloyd George’s government in Edwardian England provided a package of measures aimed at improving the health, nutrition and education of children. In 1909, the Board of Education, as part of this package, took the initiative to establish a prescribed syllabus of physical education in elementary schools. Folk dance featured in this syllabus along with drill, games and gymnastics because it was considered important to offer children opportunities to benefit in different
ways not formerly emphasised such as physical enjoyment, emotional fulfilment, aesthetic sensitivity, social awareness and relative freedom. It was emphasised that simple dances should be selected so that both teachers and children could be comfortable in their execution, and thus avoid any awkwardness, self-consciousness or loss of confidence. Ballroom dancing was not considered suitable for reasons of lowering confidence and healthy mentality, presumably because of the increased degree of physical difficulty, the perceived morality and sensuality associated with such dances.

An early twentieth century book entitled *Rhythmics and Simple Dances* (Laing, n.d.) gives a helpful insight into the teaching of English folk dance and related dance activities in English primary schools. Although undated, the book refers the reader to the Board of Education *Syllabus for Physical Training*, 193315, giving a guide to the date of the text. Margaret Laing records a series of lessons that have an age related progression. In the foreword, Her Majesty’s Inspector of Physical Education, Mabel Allen, described the lessons as being “a joy from beginning to end [that] goes far beyond the physical training half hour”. She also made clear that the lessons in the book will have been successfully tried before it came to publication. Teachers are offered folk dances such as *The Girls of Dublin* and *The Leeds Polka*, as well as exercises to music, singing games, dancing steps and musical interpretation. The example of “The red Indian creeping through the forest” (p. 15) traces the genealogy of this book in context. The activities are designed to emphasise benefits for the learner as recommended in the Board of Education reforms for physical education from some years prior.

Parallel to the 1909 educational reforms, a folk dance and song revival was also in full swing in England, and the 1910 appointment of a leader in this field, Cecil J. Sharp (1859–1924), as an inspector of teacher training for the Board of Education marked a strong sense of approval for the inclusion of traditional English country and Morris dances for schools. Sharp started his own research and recording of English folk songs and dances in 1903, and founded the *English Folk Dance Society* in 1911 (Sharp & Oppé, 1924). At that time, pastoral folk dances were also linked to the revival of a rural idyll as a remedy to the harsh conditions that lingered from the Victorian industrial practices, lending a sense of nostalgia for a bygone era. By 1919, folk dances of other nationalities, such as Welsh and Scandinavian, were also included in order to avoid possible monotony and repetition of a small repertoire of dances. The inclusion of folk dancing in schools was recognised by the authorities of the time to be highly successful for teachers, children and dance heritage alike.

In connection with the more general revival of interest in folk dance, and of particular interest to this book, are two other priorities that were included in the later 1919, Board of Education *Revised Syllabus of Training for Schools*. First, the educational initiative was seen as part of preventing the loss of some traditional English dances. Second, the dances were seen as an important part of establishing racial identity, and the use of this dancing as nationalistic propaganda was not overlooked. Nor is the use of dance as a hegemonic, socio-political tool isolated to the United Kingdom. Similar instances can be found in the use of Indian classical
dances in India (Chakravorty, 2010), and the folk dance *dabkeh* in Palestine (Rowe, 2008), amongst many others.

Continuity of the rote learning of folk dances in physical education programmes in the United Kingdom is illustrated by this commentary from 1963: “In folk dancing, ballet dancing, ballroom dancing, or any other kind of dancing one is used to being shown a step and acquiring it by copying” (Preston, p. v). In a 2008 issue of the UK’s *National Dance Teachers’ Association* magazine, Rachel Elliott (*English Folk dance and Song Society*, Education Director) describes English folk dance as being regionally diverse and having developed over many centuries. In her article, amongst other ideas and information that are aimed at being useful for school teachers, instructions are given for two folk dances the *Circassian Circle* and *Devon Jig*. Elliott acknowledges Cecil Sharp’s work in reviving English folk dances that were dying out in the nineteenth century, and the longevity of such traditional dances as depicted in written and pictorial forms from medieval times. Putting a twenty-first century twist on the value of English folk dances, she notes that social folk dancing is still thriving and has potential as “[a] rich strand of our heritage that, in this multicultural society, can bring people of many backgrounds together in a joyful shared activity” (p. 6). Elliott could be depicted as one of the ‘folk’ that Sharp referred to as being responsible for developing folk dance through time and space, as could the teachers who teach these dances in New Zealand schools. Nowadays teaching folk dances in schools in the UK and New Zealand share similarities in the use of rote learning, Command teaching style and identification of similar educational benefits for learners. Moreover, these shared characteristics could be traced as continuities from the early twentieth century educational reforms in England.

However, the teachers in my study also showed concern for learners losing confidence as a result of skill learning activities. Recent research into teaching styles in physical education by Salvara et al. (2006) included some folk dance teaching and goes some considerable way to affirm teachers’ longstanding anecdotal observations about loss of confidence and interest in knowledge reproductive learning when skill-based tasks are concerned. Salvara et al.’s study investigated teaching strategies based on Mosston’s (1981) spectrum of teaching styles, and the learning achievements of four different groups of 11–12 year old boys and girls. Mosston’s theory identifies a spectrum of different teaching styles for use within physical education, in a range from Command style (behaviourist, rote learning, reproducing set skills) to the more divergent and discovery, knowledge productive styles. This classification system of teaching styles is set within a spectrum, teacher-centred, knowledge reproductive, convergent cognition at the one end and learner-centred, knowledge productive, divergent thinking styles at the other. Salvara et al.’s study found a decrease in interest to learn in the knowledge reproductive, Command style group in which teachers had emphasised repetitive learning of traditional Greek folk dances and aerobics, aiming for precise execution of steps, group unison and uniformity. Many dance educators have also noted the possibility of learners becoming disinterested in dance when taught using rote learning of ‘steps’ (Blom & Chaplin, 1982; Stinson, 1988).
The 1933 English Board of Education Syllabus for Physical Training was the model for physical education in New Zealand until the mid 1940s (Stothart, 1974). Folk dance is recorded as being the predominant dance form that featured in New Zealand schools in the early 1900s (Sansom, 2011). Colonial legacies are by now well-documented, nevertheless the survival of European folk dances through time and space is a recognisable example of what cultural theorist, Iain Chambers (1994) draws attention to here:

If we are to talk of globalism, it is a globalism which refers not only to powers and movement of capital and the international division of labour, but also to social and cultural forces, institutions, relations and ideas. (p. 109)

As Chambers further suggests, social, cultural and conceptual views of others are central, as cross co-ordinates indicative of our sense of time, place and identity; I add educational cultural differences to this already volatile mix and I am thinking of the three dance genre specialists with whom I spoke. Transposing of European folk dance to offshore destinations, which are culturally different and the same, may bring with it a perception of folk dance as a cultural ‘other’ for some. “Other” is a term that, in 1991, Edward Said referred to as “fashionable, but still useful” (p. 52). He points out that Western imperialism and the contingent dissemination of associated knowledge can bring both the subjection and transgression, or interruption, of cultural identity by, “the testing and challenging of limits… cutting across expectations, providing unforeseen pleasures, discoveries, experiences” (p. 54). The dance specialists in my research seem to have lived as both transgressors and subjects at different times in their lives, in different spaces, and in different eras of dance education in New Zealand. At the time of my research, their teaching in schools and universities was of their own indigenous heritages, namely Māori, Sāmoan and Tongan, even though their school dance learning experiences in New Zealand may not have emphasised, or even included, such dance. The dance genre experts could be portrayed as transgressive cultural and political forces in their teaching of traditional, Pacific ‘folk’ dances; as the European educators also once were.

The various issues discussed above form and inform the survival story in which European folk dances travelled globally.

VOICES AND STEPS FROM OTHER SHORES

Our dance experience in the schools began with the ‘Danish Dance of Greeting’ and ended with ‘Gathering Peascods’.... Like systems of gymnastics, dances had to have a foreign label to be acceptable. (Murray, as cited in Thomas Hagood, 2000/01, p. 22)

This American commentary from 1937 provides an interesting contextual perspective of its own. Importing European folk dance was by no means exclusive to New Zealand schools, and it is interesting to consider, if briefly, not only the spread of folk dances from their European beginnings to other parts of the
globe following colonial routes but also the survival of these dances in educational settings.

Folk dance is recorded as being a part of physical education in the United States of America from 1887, when the Director of the Brooklyn Normal School of Gymnastics, “Dr William G. Anderson, a pioneer physical educator… introduced Irish jigs, reels and clogs, the buck and wing, and soft-shoe steps” (Kraus & Chapman, 1981, p. 115). Americans, Burchenal and Crampton collected dances from Europe, and integrated them into American physical education programmes in the early twentieth century (Green Gilbert, 2006). This integration is further illustrated by an account of the inclusion of folk dancing in the women’s physical education courses at the University of California, Los Angeles in the 1930s (Foster, 2009). These dances were complemented by the USA’s own homegrown adaptation of the European ballroom dance, the quadrille, in the form of the American square dance.

After World War II, the ethnic diversity of dances taught in American physical education is reported to have increased, with dances brought by migrants from Eastern Europe (Kraus & Chapman, 1981). In more recent dance education texts from the USA a plethora of folk dances are listed. For example, the following folk dances are listed in Dance teaching methods and curriculum design (Kassing & Jay, 2003): Troika (Russia), Misirlou (Greece), Mayim Mayim (Israel), Seven Steps (Germany), Nebesko Kolo (former Yugoslavia), Doudlebska polka (former Czechoslovakia), Jessi polka (United States), Mexican waltz (Mexico), Journeyman’s Blacksmith (Germany) and Varsouvienne (Sweden) (p. 227).

Similar rationales underpin Australian accounts of how important it is to include dances from “other races such as Asian, African or Russian” (Farley, 1963, p. 8), as well as English and European folk dance. In 1974, we are reminded that: “in social studies, much can be gained by learning the folk dances of different nations, as this will acquaint students with the national characteristics which are invariably reflected in them” (Exiner & Lloyd, p. 68). In 1991, David Spurgeon, in Dance moves: from improvisation to dance, includes folk dance as one of the techniques that he recommends to supplement and complement creative dance work. He suggests that teaching technical skills Command style is something that learners may expect in their dance education, and also that dance technique can improve the fitness of the learners. Folk dance is also listed in the 2001 New South Wales primary school dance syllabus in Australia (Meiners, 2001).

By way of summary, the teachers in my study were both engaged in and aware that teaching folk dancing brought with it a range of educational benefits that were similar to those found in the early twentieth century. Internationally, the survival of European folk dancing as a component of dance education in schools over many decades is an impressive achievement. Recognising the physical, social, aesthetic, heritage and skill benefits that it can bring has been an important part of that survival within physical and dance education, but the story continues. This could be a timely moment to rewind to the story of the appearance of the Afghan Nov-Ruz Snake Dance, taught by recent migrant Farcel in a New Zealand classroom, as it brings a different pedagogical lens to bear on the peripatetic nature and
transgressive possibilities of teaching folk dance as part of more recent global migration. This Afghan folk dance was taught alongside the French folk dance the *Farandole*, and in conjunction with Eurocentric creative dance in which the learners were making their own dances. Tracing the cultural exportation of a different Eurocentric pedagogy, as associated with creative dance making in dance education, is the focus of the next chapter.

**REFLECTIONS AND STUDY QUESTIONS**

Consider your experiences of dance as part of timetabled lessons when you were at school. How were you taught? What dances were you taught? How do you think that you benefitted or were affected adversely by your learning experiences? What do you think could have been done differently and why?

What similarities and/or differences can you identify in the way that you were taught dance in school and the way that this chapter describes the teaching of folk dance?

Do you think that dance should be included in the school curriculum? If so how could it be beneficial for learners? If not why not?

Finish this sentence: Dance in school can be…

How do you think dance education in schools has changed since you were at school?

Consider what issues may be encountered and benefits provided by teaching European folk dancing to non-European learners.

Teach a European folk dance to a small group of your peers. Afterwards discuss what teaching styles were used and their effect on the learners and the learning.