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Dance/Movement Therapy As a Tool to Address Racism and Injustice in Service Learning

Capstone Thesis

Lesley University

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Dance/Movement Therapy

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Author Note

Abstract

This author developed a community engagement project within a predominately white, higher education service-learning course to explore racial identity, unrealized bias, and privilege through movement and other artistic modalities. The students explored how movement could aid in fostering community dialogue, bring awareness to their racial identity, and create a more empathetic and compassionate campus community. Through the exploration of a traditional service-learning program delivered in a primarily dominant group, this research investigates how applying a critical service-learning model in conjunction with dance/movement therapy theory may strengthen the understanding of personal and community values around racial awareness and how shared art can increase the stakeholder involvement. The movement-based community engagement project implemented for this research supports and informs the students' process in increasing their awareness to systemic racism, dominant voice privilege, and the ongoing work of ally-ship.

Keywords: service-learning, dance/movement therapy, embodiment, racial identity

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Introduction

Historically, universities have perpetuated institutionalized oppression and have built learning experiences that have often been academically and emotionally debilitating to any non-privileged person or community (Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005). Despite increased diversity on college campuses, research suggests that members of underrepresented groups continue to experience an unwelcoming and unsupportive campus climate (Worthington, Loewy, Navarro, & Hart, 2008). The dominant voice on campus may be unaware of how "the impact of oppression directly affects nonverbal communication, limiting access to genuine expression and human connection, further isolating the oppressed" (Cantrick, Anderson, Leighton, Warning, 2018, p. 196). This complexity of invisible stress results in many individuals feeling alienated from themselves, others, and society. Movement and shared art-making can build community to move individuals out of isolation while simultaneously inviting individuals to reclaim their power, voice, and identity. There has been very little research done to examine the racial attitudes on primarily white campuses and the effects of the campus climate for culturally different students, specifically regarding conceptions of social dominance and color-blind racial attitudes (Worthington, et al., 2008). These unexpressed racial attitudes have the power to impact student connection to their university community and can further contribute to feelings of oppression, marginalization, and isolation (Schultz, 2018). The accumulation of these "behaviors perpetuated by a privileged group toward the oppressed are defined as microaggressions" (Leighton, 2018, p. 19) and continue to contribute to feelings of unworthiness, anger, and isolation.

When a student is unaware of their racial identity and biases, then:

power differences are less apparent to the privileged, who can more readily accept a view

of American society as classless and color-blind - the myth of 'the level playing field'.

Such a view, however, ignores the unrelenting experience of inferior status, economic

discrimination, marginalization and injustice that many people of color and other

oppressed groups encounter. (Akamatsu, 2000, p. 83).

This author identifies as a white, privileged, cis-gendered, female, dance/movement therapy

student, and an adjunct professor at a small, private, co-ed, primarily white, northeastern catholic

university. A central belief of this author resides in the awareness that the subject matter being

taught and how it is being taught directly impacts the inclusive levels of the classroom and the

campus climate at large. By acknowledging the authors need to decolonize the educator role and

continue to uncover the internal biases, the author aims to encourage a greater sense of justice

within the service-learning pedagogy implemented in instruction. To disrupt the dominant voice

within the classroom community, "service-learning pedagogy requires a shift from traditional

methods of lecture and knowledge acquisition toward a pedagogy that incorporates personal

reflection, experiential activities, action in community, and examination of values and attitudes"

(Motoike, 2017, p. 133).   Through the literature review, this author hopes to inform ways for

university professors in general to adjust their patriarchal and colonized pedagogy (Müller, 2017)

by emphasizing the community perspective in service-learning course development and the

impact of students' unrealized bias and racial identity. The author intends to develop a service-

learning framework that infuses a community engagement project with movement and dance as a

mechanism for addressing the students' unrealized biases and building authentic and

collaborative community partnerships. Embodying racial identity and the societal effects of

doing so, poses an opportunity to form a deeper correlation between race, power, privilege, and

oppression in education. The author's suggested community engagement service-learning model

incorporates Dance/Movement Therapy theory to build experiential learning protocols and an

authentic community partnership. Further, Critical Service Learning (CSL) and Critical Race

Theory (CRT) may offer opportunities to reflect participants' lived experiences and interactions

and may offer insight into the complexities of the systemically entrenched position of the

privileged (Müller, 2017). The rationale for integrating community engagement with critical

service-learning pedagogy is to explore how the inclusion of dance and movement can address

the students unrealized bias and racial identity while building greater connection, empathic

understanding, and awareness within the campus community and beyond.

Literature Review

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

In theory, "service learning is an experiential, community-based approach to education

that seeks to meet the needs of a local community while simultaneously supporting a course's

learning objectives" (Reed-Bouley & Kyle, 2015, p. 20). The inclusion of service learning in

undergraduate pedagogy is believed to aid students in embodying a more civic minded

citizenship (Blouin & Perry, 2009). Incorporating service-learning courses in higher education

undergraduate curriculum has become increasingly more popular in the United States (Blouin &

Perry, 2009). As of 2008, Campus Compact, the coalition of college and university presidents

committed to fulfilling the public purposes of higher education, reported 98% of their nearly

1,100 member institutions were offering service-learning courses, a 60 % increase from the

previous five years (Blouin & Perry, 2009). As this trend continues to rise with a focus on

forming mutually beneficial partnerships between the university and the community, it is

necessary to honor and acknowledge the data on which historical black colleges and universities

(HBCUs) were originally founded (Gasman, Spencer, & Orphan, 2015). According to the

literature:

> contemporary scholars writing about civic engagement have overlooked black colleges,
>
> despite a well-documented history of civil rights activity on their campuses … a larger
>
> oversight in the civic engagement literature is in glaring lack of historical memory about
>
> the Civil Rights Movement and how it relates to modern organizing and civic activities
>
> (Gasman et al., 2015, p. 349).

Systemic racism is not defined as isolated acts of violence, but rather as invisible and persuasive

systems which confer the power of the dominant voice (McIntosh, 1990). Due to HBCUs'

commitment to racial equality, civic engagement work has been a necessity for survival; in

contrast, historically white institutions added service-learning activities to enhance their

curriculum (Gasman et al., 2015).

Traditional Service-learning

Since their inception, HBSUs have already developed and mastered ways through which

their institutions can be engaged with their communities and form mutually beneficial

relationships with their citizens (Gasman et al., 2015). That is, service-learning courses included

in higher education curriculum have been designed to support community engagement and civic

responsibility, with the intention of forming mutually beneficial partnerships between the

students, university, and community partners at large (Blouin & Perry, 2009). Despite the

increased language on community partnerships and the practical and progressive pedagogy that

has been designed to meet societal needs, the focus and outcomes have been based on the

success and benefits of student learning rather than "a connection between server and the served"

(Stoecker, p. 61, 2016). When implementing traditional service-learning, the coursework favors

students' and the university interests rather than the benefits of community impact and societal

change (Blouin & Perry, 2009). This traditional model has the potential to increase students'

cultural awareness while also strengthening their leadership and communication skills; however,

this traditional service-learning model has been criticized for "its reinforcement of social

hierarchies, patronization, and deficits-based approach to community service" (Mitchell, 2007, p.

101). The traditional service-learning model utilized in the United States has perpetuated a

client/service provider model which shifts the power to the students and disempowers the

community intending to be served (Gasman, Spencer, & Orphan, 2015).

To address previous research limitations of the impact of service-learning courses on

community partnerships, the University of Indiana conducted in-depth interviews with 20

different community partners which had engaged in prior coursework with their students (Blouin

& Perry, 2009). The sample included an array of community organizations from historically

marginalized populations and consisted of interviews with a variety of staff experienced in

engaging with the service-learning students. The sample only included the community-based

organizations' staff and volunteers, and did not consider the perspective of the community

members whom the organization and service learners hoped to serve. The racial diversity of the

students and community organization staffing was not identified, another major limitation of the

study. The interview analysis revealed that the community organizations found the partnerships

to be positive overall and identified communication and preparation as essential to building a

mutually beneficial relationship (Blouin & Perry, 2009). Blouin and Perry (2009) suggested that

future research should emphasize the community perspective in service-learning research and

that those findings could then inform service-learning pedagogy and the relationship between

service and learning outcomes.

In developing a more inclusive service-learning model within higher education, the absence of HBCUs' history and practice of being civic-minded can no longer be omitted from the conversation (Gasman, et al., 2015). Thus, when designing and developing service-learning courses, it is imperative to consider the partnership between the university and the surrounding community and also how race may play a role in student identity (Gasman, et al., 2015).

In general, most universities promote mission statements that intend to focus on social justice issues while building more socially-aware students (Reed-Bouley & Kyle, 2015). After several decades of insight gleaned from educators leading service-learning courses, the consensus is that not all courses produce positive results for the community hoped to be served (Reed-Bouley & Kyle, 2015). Instead, service-learning coursework has reinforced racial stereotypes and white privilege (Reed-Bouley & Kyle, 2015); "white privilege refers to unearned advantages and benefits, often invisible to the dominant group, afforded to whites within a system of institutional racial oppression" (Case, 2007, p. 231).

In two recent empirical studies conducted by Seider and colleagues, it was found that students who participated in a service-learning course focusing on direct contact with community members of lower socioeconomic status became more aware of the structural inequalities of economic disparities and questioned the societal structures supporting such disparities (Reed-Bouley & Kyle, 2015). Seider's study (as cited in Bouley & Kyle, 2015) concluded that transforming the abstract nature of invisible social issues within the United States, such as poverty and inequality, offered students a clearer and more accurate perspective. This study showed that it is possible to change students' understanding of the societal structures through service-learning, however this traditional model is not effective when challenging student views on racism and white privilege (Reed-Bouley & Kyle, 2015). Rather, studies done by other

practitioners critical of service learning have revealed a multitude of risks that perpetuate themes of racism and white privilege, which have "reinforced white students' stereotypes and sense of themselves as unfairly maligned by marginalized groups" (Reed-Bouley & Kyle, 2015, p. 22). It is recommended that service-learning educators supplement their course resources with other teaching strategies to increase the opportunity for transforming student mindsets in relation to racism and privilege (Reed-Bouley & Kyle, 2015).

Campus Climate & Privilege

There has been very little research done to examine the racial attitudes on primarily white campuses and the effects of the campus climate on college students of color (CSC), specifically concerning conceptions of social dominance and color-blind racial attitudes (Worthington, et al., 2008). A study in which the authors attempted to advance previous research and examine perceptions of campus climate by investigating social attitudes (i.e., social dominance and color-blind racial attitudes), hypothesized that white college students (WCS) would report more positive perceptions of the environment than college students of color due to the benefits of unrecognized privilege. Accordingly, results revealed that due to a "greater unawareness of racial privilege, institutional discrimination, and blatant racial issues" WCS reported a more positive experience as members of the campus community as compared to CSC (Worthington, et al., 2008, p. 13). However, significant limitations of the study include that data was collected from a single Midwestern university, CSC were oversampled, and self-selection bias was present among study participants (Worthington et al., 2008).

Past research has indicated that CSC and WCS are motivated to attend college for different reasons, and that these reasons impact individual college success (Guiffrida, Gouveila, Wall, & Seward, 2008). College students of color who experience hostile campus climates

experience a higher risk of attrition (Gruiffrida, et al., 2008). Campus climate research seeks to

identify ways through which students form motivation orientation (social, cultural, and academic

connections) at college (Gruiffrida, et al., 2008). In a study conducted by Guiffrida, Gouveila,

Wall, and Seward (2008), the authors developed and tested the Need for Relatedness at College

Questionnaire (NRC-Q) as an instrument to assess college student motivational orientation

toward relatedness needs in ways consistent with self-determination theory (SDT). Gruiffrida et

al. (2008) asserted that SDT recognized the ways in which culture shaped student motivation for

attending college, which had been missing from previous research. With limited quantitative

research studies that identified the unique needs of CSC, the researchers attempted a culturally

sensitive approach to understanding how motivational orientation toward relatedness could

illuminate the key differences of college experiences between CSC and WCS. Possible cultural

limitations of the study include that content validity was established by selected consultants

familiar with the SDT, initial tests of validity and reliability were conducted on participants

recruited by college faculty and staff, and final test feedback only included 24% from CSC, all of

which are factors that could promote a lack of cultural humility. It was expected that the NRC-

Q, utilizing the construct of relatedness, could illuminate the key differences in college

experiences of CSC and WCS (Gruiffrida, et. al., 2008). With further research, this instrument

could provide a "first step toward understanding the impact of cultural norms and home and

university social systems upon student motivation and subsequent academic commitment,

performance, and persistence decisions" (Gruiffrida, et al., 2008, p. 259). This study

demonstrated the limited nature of the available research, the need to identify and understand the

college campus climate, and the need to understand how to respond appropriately to a diverse

student body to enhance the learning experience. In sum, how and what an educator teaches directly impacts the inclusivity of the classroom and the campus climate at large.

It may be challenging for white students to identify and acknowledge their racial identity and unrealized biases since "racism and white privilege are hidden from most white students, so the first challenge is to make these realities visible" (Reed-Bouley & Kyle, 2015, pg. 23). The educator leading the service-learning course within the higher education system has a responsibility to personally examine "their overall understanding of their racial identity; the ideologies with which they enter the classroom; explore the impact of those ideologies on their teaching practices and their interactions with students" (Solomon, et. al., 2005, p.149). A sample of 200 teacher candidates, 60 of color and the remaining 140 of European descent, were enrolled in a pre-service education program to provide an understanding of "equity issues and increase their skill level for working with diverse student populations in an urban context" (Solomon et. al., 2005, p. 149). White educators were found to be lacking the tools and strategies needed to incorporate equitable teaching practices within their classrooms and establish a reflective space to unpack their own unrealized bias and racist mindset (Solomon, et. al., 2005). The study effectively utilized the cross-race dyad approach and confirmed the necessity of paring different racial groups to challenge and destroy the negative stereotypes across races (Solomon, et. al., 2005). However, additional research is needed to uncover effective strategies for white educators to better understand the notions of race, racism, and whiteness, and how to best serve their students and their community.

Critical Service-Learning

Past research has shown that numerous traditional service-learning frameworks exist, but that models for employing "a social justice orientation that 'redirects the focus of service

learning from charity to social change" (Mitchell, 2007, pg. 105) are largely missing. Critical

service-learning "emphasizes social justice outcomes" (p. 101) over the traditional service-

learning goals, and is defined by its "attention to social change, its questioning of the distribution

of power in society, and its focus on developing authentic relationships between higher education

institutions and the community served" (Mitchell, 2007, p. 101). Students are challenged to

reflect on their privilege and racial identity, to uncover the systems that perpetuate the needs of

their community partners, and how to move from awareness to action (Mitchell, 2007). The CSL

framework offers an opportunity for the educators and students to focus their coursework on the

needs and experiences of their community partners while recognizing their own unrealized biases

and placing "social justice as central to the interactions between students and community

members" (Warren-Gordon & Graff, 2018, p. 20). This model offers a solution to "deliberately

integrate pedagogy centered on social justice frameworks used to raise critical consciousness in

order to take purposeful action against structural injustice or violence" (Warren-Gordan & Graff,

2018, p. 20). Research has suggested that this model encouraged a "commitment to service and

to the ideals of social justice" (p.102) and sought "to develop in students the skills, knowledge,

experience, and commitment to work collaboratively with others for social change in

communities" (Mitchell, 2007, p. 103). A 2002 research study, conducted by the University of

Massachusetts Amherst (as cited in Mitchell, 2007) sought to uncover how the Citizens Scholars

Program (CSP), which follows the CSL framework, could deepen student understanding of

social justice over the course of four semesters. Most service-learning research focuses solely on

a single semester and offers quantitative data about the program impact; in contrast, this study

aimed to address the specific processes of pedagogy and explore how they impact students'

learning over four semesters of service-learning utilizing the CSL framework (Mitchel, 2007).

The study focused on the second cohort from the Citizens Scholars Program during their final

semester of the program. The sample was comprised of 11 participants, 10 of which self-

identified as white women and 1 which self-identified as a woman of color (Mitchell, 2007). In

regard to socioeconomic status, two students identified as low-income, one student as lower-

middle class, four students as middle class, and the other four as upper-middle class. The

research examined students' program applications, written reflections over a four-year time span

during which they were involved with the program, and a final exit interview completed as part

of the course (Mitchel, 2007). The data was analyzed using "grounded theory methodology to

explore the impacts and possibility of CSL pedagogy of the Citizens Scholars Program as a

practice for social justice" (Mitchell, 2007, p. 105). The data revealed that after finishing four

semesters in the Citizens Scholars Program, all 11 students "expressed a commitment to social

justice and were able to articulate ways they would live their commitments" (Mitchell, 2007, p.

109). Thus, the CSL pedagogy has the potential to produce responsible citizens working towards

justice and a more equitable community with an authentic commitment to social change

(Mitchell, 2007).

Critical Race Theory

>   The goal of creating a social justice-minded service-learning course should be:
>   enabling people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand
>   oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems, and to develop a sense
>   of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in
>   themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part. (Pulliam,
>   2016, p. 417)

A service-learning pedagogical model informed by Critical Race Theory (CRT) offered a more thorough framework to emphasize diversity and social justice as the course goals (Pulliam, 2016). Critical race theory provided both educators and students with scaffolding to understand that taking action is necessary when approaching oppressive models at individual and institutionalized levels (Pulliam, 2016). Additionally, the critical race theory:

> paradigm reflects a clear commitment to the pursuit of social justice for those encountering oppression. Based on this commitment to changing social institutions, CRT seeks to uncover the mechanisms and structures that actually disadvantage people, even those ostensibly designed by societal institutions to serve the needy. (Pulliam, 2016, p. 418)

There are a number of ways CRT can be included into the service-learning curriculum to effectively implement a social justice model, but CRT's use of storytelling is thought to optimize implementation in the classroom and present a logical model to seamlessly infuse CRT into the course design while simultaneously supporting the course learning outcomes (Pulliam, 2016). A piece that appears to be missing from the literature's best practices is finding a way to embody the CSL & CRT frameworks to deepen the work while developing authentic relationships and an organic sense of community through the use of the body.

Embodiment and Dance/Movement Therapy

Incorporating an embodied practice offered an opportunity for movement to be an integral part of deepening awareness and self-reflection, as "that human meaning grows from our organic, sensorimotor, and emotional transactions with the world" (Koch & Fischman, 2011, p. 61). Embodiment is defined as the "bodily phenomena in which the body as a living organism, body movement, and person-environment interaction play central roles in the explanation of

perception, cognition, affect, attitude, behavior, and their interrelations" (Koch & Fischman,

2011, pg. 60).   Therefore, embodiment invites the individual to explore the interconnectedness

of their mind and body while making space for new discoveries to emerge, as "embodiment is

not perfect health but rather a consciousness of wholeness and relatedness, a standing in the

center of many polarities as an inventive, curious presence in a state of spontaneous play"

(Conger, 1994, p. 10).

   Embodied storytelling could offer a bridge to understanding and empathy while

uncovering an individual's cultural values, fears, goals, and identity (Pulliam, 2016). The use of

embodied storytelling could then enhance the inherent "difficulties in talking about racism and

other oppressions where people whose identities are the same as the dominant group might feel

defensive or resistant, and people whose identities are the same as minority groups may feel

unsafe or silenced" (Pulliam, 2016, p. 420). By combining CRT with a performative art form

like movement, the process of exploring race becomes an embodied relational interaction

between two bodies focused on the process rather than an absolute (Mayor, 2011). Incorporating

more exploration, creativity, and reflection into the space may provide opportunities for social

change and understanding, and multiply the possibilities of identity (Mayor, 2011). By including

movement in the process of storytelling, the creative exploration allows for the possibility of

transformation and gradually expanding beyond a more rigid definition of identity and race.

   Applying dance/movement therapy (DMT) and embodiment may help the students to

become more aware of their own biases and racial identity and shift their unconscious nonverbal

behaviors towards empowering others while dismantling power differentials (Cantrick,

Anderson, Leighton, Warning, 2018). Dance/movement therapy principles suggest that:

(a) dance is communication; (b) body and mind influence each other reciprocally; (c)

emotion is expressed through movement; (d) art and aesthetic expression are resources

for health; (e) the therapeutic relationship promotes trust through mirroring, attunement,

and kinesthetic empathy; and (f) movement is presymbolic but paradoxically full of

meaning. (Koch & Fischman, 2011, p. 61)

Incorporating the body and movement may help educators and the students to uncover the larger

systemic issues that encourage unwelcoming spaces and which continue to perpetuate oppressive

dynamics within the classroom and beyond (Cantrick et. al., 2018). The impact of

microaggressions, unwelcoming spaces, and oppression are often invisible and leave an imprint

on the body (Leighton, 2018). This imprint directly affects authentic human expression and

interaction further isolating the individual. Dance/movement therapy principles offer an

opportunity for students to become "more aware of their bodies, increase tolerance for sensation,

access greater movement repertoire, and reclaim some bodily authority or agency within their

lived experience of oppression" (Cantrick et. al., 2018, p. 196). Including an embodied practice

in service-learning provides a strengths-based formation of personal identity alongside an

individual's interaction with the larger community. Thus, combining the two may be necessary

to facilitate positive social change and "furthermore, critical analysis of the body and its

development of 'growth-fostering relationships' has the potential to impact the ways in which

larger, social domains operate and contribute to oppression (Cantrick et. al., 2018, p. 198). This

combination may offer an additional opportunity to form an authentic, mutually beneficial

relationship with a community partner that is imperative to the success of service-learning work.

Combining dance/movement therapy principles with CSL and CRT has the potential to not only

address identity formation and oppression and power in service-learning, but also emphasizes

that "the body must be included in our understanding of oppression and provides a medium in which we can reduce the harmful effects of oppression" (Cantrick et al., 2018, p. 193). Therefore, it is essential to incorporate a body-based social justice model in service-learning in order to cultivate inclusive spaces while addressing power, privilege, and oppression (Cantrick et al., 2018).

Transforming the paradigms of whiteness and embodied privilege requires the building of community through safety, trust and authentic cross-cultural relationships (Leighton, 2018). It is essential for students and teachers to examine, critique, and transform paradigms of whiteness which are traditionally muted by liberalist notions of meritocracy that discourage responses to privilege and ideological incongruence (Solomon et. al., 2005). The use of arts-based research methodology holds the potential for educators and students in higher education to explore their identity and inform ways to challenge their mindsets (Müller, 2017). Art-based education helps unpack identity and offers insight into the complexities and intricacies of systemic racism (Müller, 2017).

Arts-Based Pedagogy

To begin unpacking decolonization within higher education, pedagogy needs to be transformed into relational encounters that expand beyond the classroom borders (Müller, 2017). Thus, transforming pedagogy into a fluid entity provided the potential to open up dialogue around colonized ideals and their contribution to privileged identity and practices (Müller, 2017). A white, female, South African professor created a fictional narrative exploration and followed an arts-based qualitative approach to explore how innovative methodologies can impact socially-just pedagogy (Müller, 2017). The researcher intended to offer methods of creative exploration into innovative methodologies that offer guidance into the intricate and uncertain spaces of the

white supremist higher education landscape (Müller, 2017). The research does not provide definitive answers but supports the necessity of an arts-based methodology to make academia more accessible and dismantle the patriarchal and colonial nature of higher education institutions (Müller, 2017). The fictional narrative explores the process of developing socially-just pedagogy and "illustrates the tension that might exist between students and the academics in trying to negotiate our everchanging roles and power relations in the higher education landscape" (Müller, 2017, p. 234). This implies that innovative methodologies provided an opportunity for the educator "to bring forward something needing to surface and become visible" (Müller, 2017, p. 234). This new awareness of the educator's racial identity has the potential to influence a movement towards socially-just pedagogy.

Some educators may feel uncomfortable moving away from a post-positivist educational tradition, cling onto the firm foundation of data, and fear the uncertainty of looking at knowledge as a process. The academic and support staff at a university in the United Kingdom used the arts-based research method of cut up and collage to explore their role in supporting tutors' development rather than using traditional surveys and interviews. The academic participants felt patronized by the research methods and stereotyped the use of art for individuals who struggle to express themselves verbally (Burge, Godinho, Knottenbelt, & Loads, 2016). The researchers took partial responsibility for these negative responses due to their failure to fully brief participants on the methodology underlying the research process. The racial identity of the participants is unknown, but the researchers disclosed that university's staff primarily have traditional researcher and lecturer identities (Burge et. al., 2016). This study supports the notion that the arts-based method of research can uncover surprising information in both helpful and unhelpful ways (Burge et. al., 2016). The study provided participants with a moment to pause

and reflect upon patterned assumptions and provide the potential for coming to new conclusions of old thought patterns (Burge et. al., 2016). Overall, the uncertainty and ambiguous nature that arts-based research reinforces fueled a variety of fears in the study participants surrounding the meaning of traditional higher education roles and the loss of control (Burge, et. al., 2016).

Exploring the course topics through movement, it may provide an authentic piece of data to reflect on and process since:

> our character is evidence of our accommodation to a world that denied honest expression. In an analytic bodywork, we must protest at the site where our submission was demanded. We hide our protest through control, collapse, displacement of affect, and acting out. (Conger, 1994, pp. 142-143).

Arts-based research methodology has the potential to be a reflective tool for the oppressor and an invitation for the oppressed (Burge, et. al., 2016). Higher education pedagogy thus could be transformed into a fluid structure in an attempt to dismantle the ideology of maintaining the power and control that has infiltrated the culture of higher education classrooms and educator mindsets. In utilizing an arts-based methodology, the focus of the work would be on the process rather than on producing a final product.

Arts-based inquiry, movement, and community-based participatory research (CBPR) offered an opportunity to fill the void of previous research limitations. "Moreover, arts inquiry is uniquely positioned as a methodology for radical, ethical, and revolutionary research that is futuristic, socially responsible, and useful in addressing social equities" (Thomas, 2015, p. 179). Movement offered participants the opportunity to experience an embodied kinesthetic empathy, which allowed educators and students to gain more insight into their own identity and others' lived experiences through artistic and somatic exploration (Thomas, 2015). Though the use of

dance and movement is gaining more popularity as a legitimate tool for the building and

reflection of learned subject matter, it is still underutilized as a research tool (Thomas, 2015).

Previous research specific to service-learning coursework has lacked data regarding the

communities served and whether they were actually helped by the project in an authentic

relational manner.

      At an urban middle school for adolescent girls, the administration, faculty, and

counseling department identified the need to delve deeper into issues of race and gender in order

to "discover concrete ways to address and resolve them" (Thomas, 2015, p. 180). The school

community was aware of these social injustices but unclear as to how to take action and

dismantle them.   To examine racial inequity with the little time and resources educators have

available to them within the classroom, a study utilized embodied narrative (a movement-based

intervention) led by a Dance/Movement Therapy intern to directly explore the issues of race and

gender (Thomas, 2015). Data collection utilized the qualitative research method of community-

based participatory research (CBPR) that was "developed to support and empower communities"

(Thomas, 2015, p. 179). This research model invites participants to be a part of the research

process from the "initial identification of a problem, to the final analysis and application of the

research results" (Thomas, 2015, pg. 180). Community-based participatory research is a

proposed solution to the call for a collaborative approach to research that involves all partners in

hopes of honoring and empowering the community being served. Thomas (2015) "envisioned

the participants discovering movement and movement sequences that embodied a felt sense of

their racial identity" (p. 189), in contrast the students in the study struggled when it came to

examining their racial identity. However, the final portion of this project was concluded with a

performance in which the students told their stories of identity through movement and spoken

word (Thomas, 2015). Thomas (2015) reported, "the performance allowed the participants to

simultaneously present their authentic voice through somatic and verbal narration … the

participants in this project indicated that the response from the audience felt empowering,

supportive, and uniquely reflective of their experience" (p. 190). Similar to the power of the

witness in DMT's authentic movement, the audience as witness provided "kinesthetic seeing and

kinesthetic empathy" (Levy, 2005, p. 182). This case study used movement and performance to

examine identity and performance which allowed each student to "be heard and witnessed" by

the researcher and the participants community, suggesting the need for future CBPR that is based

in nonverbal expression of the self through movement and performance (Thomas, 2015, p. 194).

Emphasizing why movement may be a crucial addition to the success of the service-learning

model for:

> our bodies produce a language and a thinking by which we coordinate with others to
>
> build a mutually committed future, or not. When we allow ourselves to be touched by the
>
> rhythm of life, by sensations, streaming waves of excitement, and fields of energy, we
>
> grasp the possibilities of becoming self-healing, self-educating, and self-generating.
>
> (Caldwell, 1997, p. 91)

Judith Lynne Hanna's words offered a reminder that "to dance is human, and humanity almost

always expresses itself in dance" (Thomas, 2015, p. 179). The use of embodied artistic inquiry

within service-learning pedagogy may prove to be a challenge for the participants', but those

who engage in the process may be motivated to explore their racial identity, unrealized bias, and

privilege to increase their self -awareness (Hervey, 2012).

Methods

This arts-based community engagement project aimed to encourage the students to embody the principles and practices of critical-service learning to develop critical thinking ability, communication, collaboration, leadership skills, increased cultural and racial understanding, and an awareness of social responsibility. The author offered a service-learning course at a small, private, co-ed, primarily white, northeastern catholic university and seven female white and white-passing students registered to be a part of the course and community engagement project. The associate vice-president of Student Affairs, a man of color, was invited to serve as the project's community partner to offer data and perspective about the campus climate and to guide the students' exploration of race.   The community engagement project's four lessons (Table 1) were designed to emphasize the importance of integrating course content with community engagement, stress the careful development of building community, and establish critical self-reflection through movement (Motoike, 2017). Through this investigation, the author hoped that the students would both consider and make use of the arts as tools in their own social and cultural development within their campus community. The inclusion of dance and movement was hoped to foster future community dialogue, bring awareness to issues of the campus climate and race, and make the invisible visible to support the voices within the community which have been overlooked historically. The four lessons were designed to build upon each other developmentally and are based on a critical service-learning model which integrates dance/movement therapy theory and an embodied approach to aid in creating more empathetic and compassionate community partnerships, promoting deeper self-reflection, and enhancing the power of the witness in future public performance in order to inspire community conversations. These four lessons are the first installment of a larger body of work; future

research will include a complete curriculum to move beyond exploring the students' unrealized

biases and racial identity to focus on "service and social responsibility, community and social

justice, and multicultural community building" (Motoike, 2017, p. 136).

Table 1

Movement with a Mission**:** Community Engagement Project Lesson Plans #1-4

Lesson #1 **Building Community &** **Exploring Identity**	**Action**	**Outcome**
Warm Up (20 - 30 min)	**Feeling/Gesture Mirror Dance** - Go around the circle each student share one word for how they are feeling in this moment - 2nd time around the circle each student shares one gesture to embody feeling - Students mirror each gesture as each person shares - Repeat gestures w/out speaking **Create Classroom Community Shared Agreements** - Students pull a colored piece of paper from the center of the circle - Each student (anonymously) writes what they need to create a safe/brave space for our classroom laboratory - Facilitator reads each agreement aloud &	- **To develop safety and trust** - **To build community within the classroom** - **To increase self-expression**

	requests group to uphold each agreement - Students respond	
Experiential (60 min)	**Defining & Embodying Identity** - Review: Dimensions of Personal Identity (appendix 1) - students define their identity in writing - students embody their defined identity - students create & share a movement snapshot of their embodied identity phrase in circle - observers' respond w/ movement/gesture from dancers' phrase they witnessed - students film their identity snap shot for future reference - Students write a "Where I'm from" poem (appendix 2)	- **To develop safety and trust** - **To build community within the classroom** - **To increase self-expression** - **To explore identity**
Closing (10 min)	- Share a word and/or movement with one take away from today's session	
Materials	- Journal - Photo copies of: Dimensions of Personal Identity & "Where I'm from" poem for each participant - Phone to film movement	

Lesson #2	Action	Outcome

Introduction to the Community Partner & Community Engagement Project		
Warm Up (20 min)	**Introduce Community Partner** - Associate VP of Student Affairs **Rhythm Name Dance** - Student create a rhythm to match their name - Observers mirror name/rhythm - Repeat to create a group rhythm dance **REVIEW: Classroom Community Shared Agreements**	- **To develop safety and trust** - **To build community within the classroom** - **To increase self-expression**
Experiential (90 min)	**Community Partner introduces the community engagement project** - Exploring the Black experience in America through music & movement to create an embodied story - Community partner choses the music, students create the movement - Students listen to each song & hear why the community partner has chosen them - Song list (appendix 3) - Students write in journal key words or phrases that stand out to them while listening - Students embody the words & phrase that they have written	- **To develop safety and trust** - **To build community within the classroom** - **To increase self-expression** - **To build creative problem-solving skills**

	- Students work in dyads to explore ways to connect phrase work through movement - Students video their movement phrases **Journal Self-Reflection** **Pre – Survey Questions** - What are your thoughts on the project? Please list any fears and/or excitement? - What are your thoughts on the black experience in America? - What are your thoughts about your identity, your biases, and your privilege?	
Closing (10 min)	- Share a word and/or movement with one take away from today's session	
Materials	- Journal - Song list downloaded - Bluetooth speaker/connection to speakers - Phone to film movement	

Lesson #3 Research & Development of the Project	Action	Outcome
Warm up (20 min)	**Feeling/Gesture Mirror Dance** **Rhythm Name Dance** - Add feeling from above instead of name	- **To develop safety and trust** - **To build community within the classroom** - **To increase self-expression**

Experiential (90 min)	**Music Research** - Students divide the songs & each research the historical background & reflect upon the black experience in America **Rhythmic Storytelling** - Students share their research and create historical narrative - Students edit the music to support their narrative **Embodied Storytelling** - Students embody their historical narrative research - Students work together and use the music and their movement to choreograph & create their embodied story - Students film their work	
Closing (10 min)	- Share a word and/or movement with one take away from today's session	
Materials	- Journal - Edited song list - Wireless speaker/connection to stereo - Phone to film movement	

Session #4 Performance & Self Reflection	Action	Outcome

Warm Up (20 min)	**Feeling/Gesture Mirror Dance** **Rhythm Name Dance** - Add feeling from above instead of name	- **To develop safety and trust** - **To build community within the classroom** - **To increase self-expression**
Experiential (90 min)	**Perform Embodied Story** - Students write what came up for them in journal **Journal Self-Reflection** - Students review written & filmed journal entries from the past four lessons - **Respond to self-reflection post - survey questions**: - What are your thoughts on the black experience in America? - What are your thoughts about your identity, your biases, and your privilege? - What challenged you, what inspired you during this process?	- **To increase self-expression** - **To explore identity** - **To build creative problem-solving skills** - **To increase self-awareness**
Closing (10 min)	- Share a word and/or movement with one take away from today's session	
Materials	- Journal - Edited song list - Wireless speaker/connection to stereo - Phone to film movement	

Results

Upon review of the students' pre- and post- self-reflection surveys, emerging themes were prominent across all participants' experiences within the community engagement project. Due to being blinded by their whiteness, participating in the four lessons made the invisible visible due to a new awareness of race and privilege. Since the students identified as white, they never had to confront looking at race or question the dominant culture. As shown in Table 1 the intended outcomes of the community engagement project lesson plan were to: (a) develop safety and trust, (b) build community within the classroom, (c) increase self-expression, (d) explore racial identity, (e) build creative problem-solving skills, and (f) increase self-awareness. Students shared in conversation after completing the post reflection survey the need to look at race from a non-dominate voice based historical perspective to explore their own privilege and understand the impact of systemic racism. By participating in this community engagement project, the students discussed feeling more comfortable talking about race then they had previously.   Their new awareness fueled a desire to speak up and take action and sparked conversations around how to be an ally with this newfound knowledge and awareness. The students' racial awareness after participating in this community engagement project presented a commitment to deepening the work by examining oppression and seeking to understand their observations of systemic racism.

This author observed discomfort when the students talked about race and they became immobile when trying to move through their embodied narrative. When questioned, the students felt uncomfortable taking action through movement due to fear of offending others in the community. The students were able to acknowledge this discomfort and articulate the importance of building connection amongst themselves and with the larger campus community

to continue to support the work. The students requested the inclusion of more racially diverse

voices into the space and the utilization of movement to begin building authentic relationships

and connection within the campus community seems a necessary next step toward this end. The

students also articulated the importance of developing spaces to work through white privilege

and unrealized bias to be more self-aware without causing more harm through taking action.

Embodiment and movement offered an opportunity for the students to reflect on and process

their racial identity and privilege; as suggested in previous research, students are more apt to

experience guilt and anger rather than an understanding of how to use their knowledge of their

unrealized biases and privilege without a space to process their experience. The inclusion of

embodiment and movement offered an opportunity for the students to explore, reflect, and

process their racial identity, unrealized bias, and privilege.

Discussion

This research project speaks to the author's acknowledgement of white privilege and

beginning the process of decolonizing the self, the educator, and service-learning pedagogy

within an undergraduate service-learning course. As the educator leading this service-learning

course, the author intended to explore through movement the students' "overall understanding of

their own racial identity; the ideologies with which they enter the classroom; and explore the

impact" (Solomon et. al., 2005, p.149) and how these ideologies influence race and injustice in

service-learning. The community engagement project utilized an embodied practice of critical-

service learning and dance/movement therapy theory to guide the students' exploration of the

Black experience in America and deepen the awareness of the students' racial identity, privilege,

and unrealized biases. Reed-Bouley and Kyle (2015) stated when service-learning is paired with

other teaching strategies "students are more likely to break free of the constraints of racism and

white privilege in order to participate in transforming the world toward justice" (p. 32).   The

four lessons built upon each other developmentally and were the start of a larger body of work

that the author plans to expand to include racially diverse groups from campus into the

community conversation. In addition, the expanded program will include co-facilitation of the

project with the community partner, discuss how the knowledge from the community

engagement project relates to what is happening on campus, and define action steps to be taken

beyond the classroom. An important implication that can be drawn from this project is the need

for a better assessment protocol and/or tool to measure student and community outcomes. The

project posed significant limitations in that all students involved identified as white female dance

minors and also had a previous relationship with the author due to having been in classes with

the facilitator in the past.   Another limitation is the author's bias may have influenced the

interpretations while observing and leading the community engagement project despite the

efforts to remain objective. Future research should include racially diverse groups and a method

to assess the community partner experience and needs. Additionally, the community

engagement service-learning pedagogy should be sustained over a longer period of time and

feedback and leadership should be sought from the community which the curriculum hopes to

serve long-term. This community engagement project offered an exploration into how to begin

to build racial awareness, be more responsible in taking action, provide equitable social change,

and encourage the students to be more civically engaged within their campus community and

beyond.

There are no absolutes, and this body of work hopes to offer suggestions for a conscious

framework to be a more responsible and self-aware educator while offering inclusive and

equitable spaces in a more open and compassionate community. This community engagement

project intended to offer methodology that moves away from perpetuating the dominant culture's

model and which does not negate the ongoing personal work of ally-ship, undoing racism, and

the decolonization of the self. It is essential to continue individual exploration, analysis, and

reflection in order to provide more mindful movement-based solutions that dismantle and

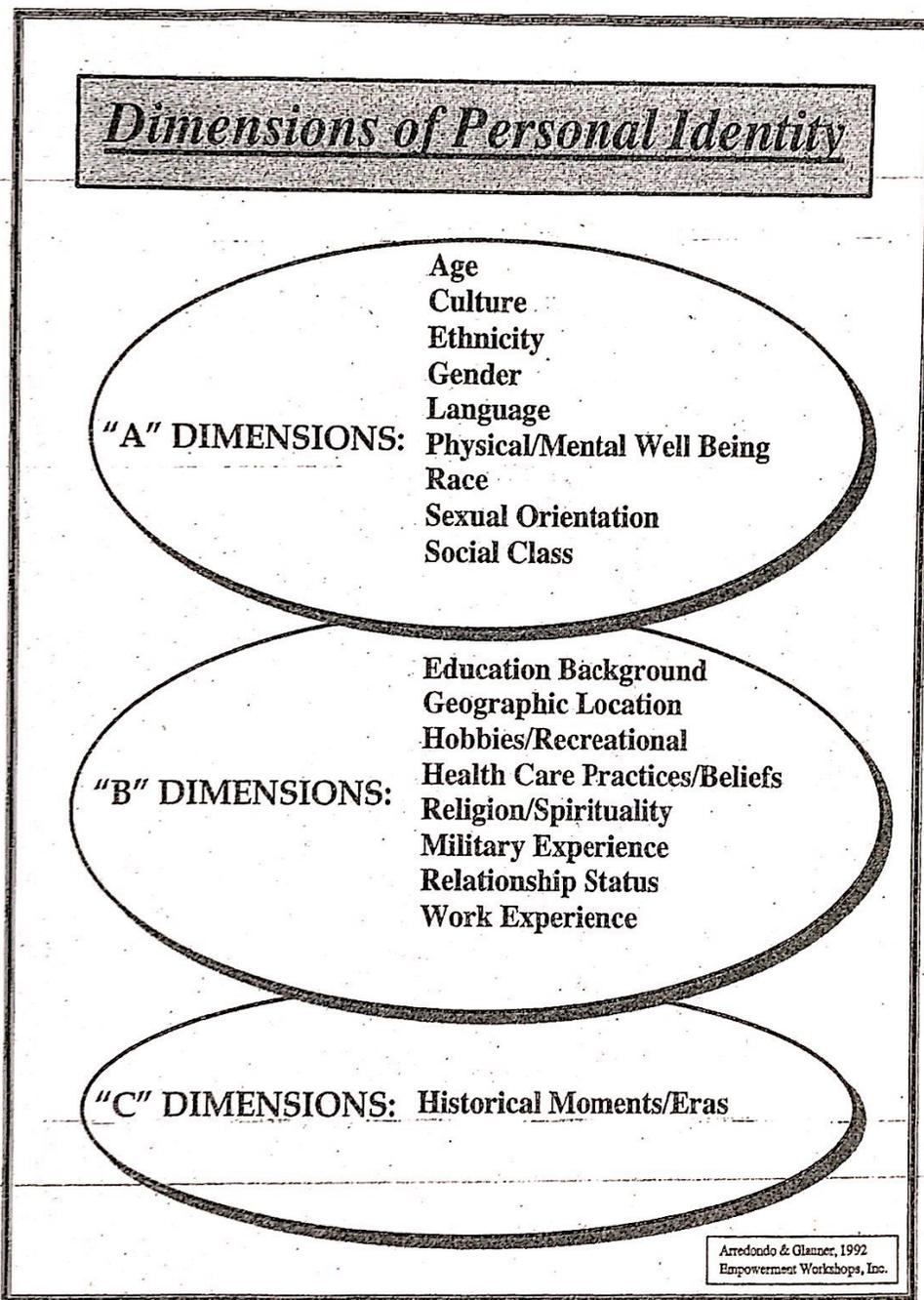address systemic racism and provide equitable and effective action.

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Appendix 1

Dimensions of Personal Identity

"A" DIMENSIONS:
Age
Culture
Ethnicity
Gender
Language
Physical/Mental Well Being
Race
Sexual Orientation
Social Class

"B" DIMENSIONS:
Education Background
Geographic Location
Hobbies/Recreational
Health Care Practices/Beliefs
Religion/Spirituality
Military Experience
Relationship Status
Work Experience

"C" DIMENSIONS: Historical Moments/Eras

Arredondo & Glanner, 1992
Empowerment Workshops, Inc.

Appendix 2

"Where I'm From: Inviting Students' Lives into the Classroom"
from *Reading, Writing and Rising Up* by Linda Christensen

WHERE I'M FROM

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch.
(Black, glistening
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush,
the Dutch elm
whose long gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.

I am from fudge and eyeglasses,
from Imogene and Alafair.
I'm from the know-it-alls
and the pass-it-ons,
from perk up and pipe down.
I'm from He restoreth my soul
with a cottonball lamb
and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,
fried corn and strong coffee.
From the finger my grandfather lost
to the auger
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.
Under my bed was a dress box
spilling old pictures,
a sift of lost faces
to drift beneath my dreams.
I am from those moments—
snapped before I budded—
leaf-fall from the family tree.

—George Ella Lyon

Appendix 3

Song list chosen by the Community Partner

Song	Artist
"Strange Fruit"	Nina Simone
"Four Woman"	Nina Simone
"Wake up everybody"	Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes
"A Change is Gonna Come"	Sam Cooke
"Rise Up"	Andra Day
"Sir Duke"	Stevie Wonder
"Optimistic"	Sounds of Blackness
"Alright"	Kendrick Lamar