

Embodied Learning of Dance by GenZ and the Alphas as a Shift in Traditional Dance Education

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Abstract

The learning of a craft such as classical ballet, which requires mindful, cognitive, and physical coordination at the onset, runs contrary to the existing capabilities of GenZ (ages 10-24) and the Alphas (ages 0-9), who are now the current students in the studio. Impacted by technology, their inherent urge to constantly experiment and communicate at a frenetic pace pose challenges in lesson retention, especially in a conventional setting as a dance studio, where the mode of teaching is strictly transmissional. This paper investigated the efficacy of adapting a traditional instructional method in today's dance classroom. To develop an analytical understanding of movements, worksheets were tailor made to reinforce the lessons of weekly ballet classes. Anchored on studies that support the skills of coloring, tracing, and writing as means to create neural pathways to the brain, worksheets were devised to visually simplify foundational movement concepts, as well as to enhance focus and concentration. Findings indicated that learning objectives were reached in a shorter amount of time, which allowed the dance teacher to seamlessly progress into more advanced lessons, quicker. The shift from disembodied learning to embodied learning changed the relationship between the dance teacher and the student. No longer did the learning of dance remain simply transmissional, or a form of mimicry, from a linear teacher to student stimulus response model. The learning of dance became not only a physical response to the student's propensities; but also an intellectual and sensorial answer to his development as a dancer and human being.

Keywords: Learning Experiences, Student Learning, Learner Diversity

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The Problem and its Background

Generations Z (ages 10-24) and Alpha (ages 0-9) were born into a world where algorithms keep them from focusing intently on learning traditional skills and art forms which require intense concentration at a very young age. Their urge to click, scroll, and swipe at a frenetic pace, with a view towards easy gratification, potentially reduces participation in physical activity (2019), specifically the learning of a highly disciplined craft such as classical ballet. How does a teacher of dance therefore, adapt the traditional curriculum to accommodate students raised by technology (Giguere, 2011)? Does a compromise on traditional dance education exist?

Background of the Study

Compared to twenty (20) years ago, there are less dance students today who persevere in the craft (2011), the decline largely due to the disinterest of the youth to learn an art form that requires mindful, cognitive and physical coordination at the onset, which is to be sustained for many years (Schulten, 2018).

The way children learn today has changed dramatically due to technology (Patel, 2017; Arya, 2019). Over the last few years, researchers around the world have raised concerns about the impact of smartphones and media multi-tasking on concentration. The ability to focus is not just a value in itself, but functions as the gateway to higher forms of learning, especially memory, which in turn leads to deeper comprehension. There must be a solution to address Generations Z and Alpha's current eight (8) second attention span (Patel, 2017); a simple quick-fix that prevails on his current propensities, to keep him in the studio, learning and developing his love for dance, and inadvertently teaching him to process information that he will need to survive onstage and in the world (*, 2011).

Aside from introducing the movement vocabulary in smaller chunks, there are other "old-school" solutions available to today's dance teacher. Several studies support the skill of writing as a means to create neural pathways to the brain, as well as to develop eye-hand coordination and self-discipline (Macias, 2013; Nowak, 2017). Tracing words enables young children to make accurate movements required for drawing and writing and other fine motor movements, and greater advancements in retention and comprehension (Mattson & Kratochwill, 1970; Martina, 2017). And no less than Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, extolled the intellectual benefits of coloring, emphasizing that it engaged areas of the brain that enhanced focus and concentration (Mantzios and Giannou, 2018).

Perhaps combining both writing, tracing, and coloring in worksheets, tailor-made to supplement the work at the studio, can likewise pique and enhance Gen Z and Alphas' learning of a highly regimented art form such as classical ballet. Inclusion of such in beginning ballet classes would not only innovate the teaching of the craft, it would ultimately ensure that the world will never be without its corps d' ballet.

Review of Literature and Studies

This review is organized to first give readers a seminal understanding of the traditional teaching style in a classical ballet construct and its disconnect to the current Generation Z and Generation Alpha students, given their inability to focus and propensities toward visual media. This review then moves on to Generations Z and Alphas' learning styles and how the

activities of tracing and coloring can address their leanings toward a highly visual syntax and likewise enhance their cognitive abilities toward lesson retention and comprehension. The concept of inculcating both activities of tracing and coloring in worksheets aimed to strengthen knowledge of beginning movement vocabulary is introduced as an exploratory strategy, cognizant of the implications of the generational characteristics of today's student on the classical ballet teaching construct.

Classical Ballet Teaching Style vis-à-vis Today's Student

Classical ballet technique is commonly taught through the use of authoritarian practices and largely follows a transmissional model of teaching, whereby the student learns by imitating movement vocabulary modelled by the teacher (Morris, 2003; Alterowitz, 2014). Methods of training have hardly changed since the middle of the last century; the standard being that lessons are entirely teacher led. The construct of the ballet dancer as a docile subject juxtaposed to an all-knowing instructor is impeded by the generational characteristics of today's young dance students (Hamilton, 1998; Rossum 2004; Carmichael, 2018).

The classical ballet teaching construct operates within the Banking Concept in Education, a concept originally explored by Brazilian philosopher, Paulo Freire in his 1968 book, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed." The "banking" concept of education is a method of teaching and learning where students simply store the information relayed to them by the teacher (Freire, Ramos, Shor, and Macedo, 2018). Paulo Freire developed this model in his attempt to describe and critique the traditional education system. The name refers to the metaphor of students as containers into which educators must put knowledge (Freire, Freire, Barr, and Freire, 2017).

Related to the aforementioned Banking Concept, the classical ballet teacher uses an authoritarian teaching style, enforcing classical ballet precepts with rigorous control (Enghauser, 2003; Carmichael, 2018). The learning of such highly specialized craft invokes a hierarchical way of learning, modeling superordinate and subordinate positions in the dance studio (Aceto, 2012).

Generation Z and Alphas' Inability to Focus

Accustomed to constant stimuli from smartphone application and streaming platforms, Generations Z (ages 10-24) and Alpha (ages 0-9) are now unable to concentrate in class. The ubiquity of technology in their lives (2018) has shrunk their attention span to eight (8) seconds (Patel, 2017). Dance teachers, and all teachers for that matter, must communicate in a language that engages and communicates content to today's student in understandable ways. Clearly, Generation Z and Generation Alpha need to be communicated using new syntax, with perhaps multi-modal approaches (Giguere, 2011).

Generation Z and Alphas' Learning Style

In an era of information overload, Generations Z and Alphas' messages have increasingly become image-based, communicating with emojis, memes, and animated Graphics Interchange Formats (GIF) (Arya, 2019), influenced greatly by the visual rather than the verbal (2019). Being born into a world of iPhones (The word of the year in 2010 when Generation Alpha were first born was "app." (2011)), YouTube (There are now 100 hours of YouTube videos uploaded every minute (Welch, 2013)), and Instagram (where life is

photographed and shared instantly and globally), Generation Z and Generation Alpha have become “Screenagers,” who multi–screen and multi–task (2019). They are kinesthetic, visual, and interactive learners (2018; Arya, 2019). Lessons do not “stick” unless they see them (Knoll, Otani, Skeel, and Horn, 2016; 2018).

Visual Activities

Given the foregoing, utilizing the visual element in the dance studio therefore, could have a greater impact of catching their attention and sustaining it for the period of the lesson (Lachman).

Tracing Letters

Visual activities that require the simultaneous use of hands and eyes, such as tracing letters, first introduced in pre–school, is a valuable eye–hand coordination exercise, as it calls for uniting visual and motor skills (William, 2015). The eyes direct attention to a stimulus and help the brain understand where the body is located in space. This is the beginning of self–perception. The hands simultaneously carry out a determined task based on the visual information the eyes receive. This is the beginning of spatial–perception.

Tracing words enables children to make accurate movements required for drawing and writing and other fine motor movements as well as developing retention and comprehension skills (Mattson and Kratochwill, 1970). Tracing, which later on leads to writing, develops complex cognitive abilities that integrates both thinking, sensation, and motor control (Nowak, 2017), skills greatly required not only on stage but in day–to–day life.

Dr. Jane Vincent, a researcher at London School of Economics and Political Science, conducted a survey to assess the merits of digital note taking over pen and paper. Students across ten European and Asian countries confirmed that digital technology was fundamentally important to them for studying and for researching data, and presenting their finished work. The same students, however, consistently reported that their ability to retain knowledge was far higher when using pen and paper. Creating handwritten notes provided more internal ability to access information at a later stage (Promethean, 2019).

Coloring

Further building on developing eye–hand coordination, the activity of coloring, the act, motion, and precise grip involved, aid in the development of the muscles of the fingers, hands, and wrist, which later build into fine motor skills (Przybyla, et al., 2019). Furthermore, the proprioceptive system comes into play when a child attempts to vary the amount of pressure exerted to shade specified areas (Mantzios and Giannou, 2018). Physiologically, the act of coloring uses both left and right hemispheres of the brain, enhancing specific areas of the cortical regions related to focus, problem–solving, and concentration (Bramão, Faisca, Forkstam, Reis, and Petersson, 2010; 2018).

Worksheets

To engage students more fully, today’s educators have resorted to creating worksheets to buttress understanding of foundational concepts quicker (Lee, 2014). Again, using Generation Z and Generation Alpha’s visual inclinations, worksheets with simple coloring

and tracing activities, strengthen their learning out-of-class (Amran and Man, 2018). Worksheets are geared towards personalized learning, targeting them precisely to the group by assessing their progress and tailor making them towards the comprehension of the course material (Lee, 2014; Ruecker, Shepherd, Estrem, and Brunk-Chavez, 2017).

The Need to Re-define the Pedagogy of Beginning Ballet Teaching

For Generation Z and Generation Alpha, having a seamless, online experience is more important than learning movements that require focus and concentration at the onset. Navigating the critical issues of the current generational demographic, calls for changes that engender better teaching and learning in the dance studio (Stinson, 2010). There is a need to explore practical teaching strategies in the classical ballet teaching construct that use Generations Z and Generation Alphas' strengths and weaknesses toward his mastery of beginning dance skills and self-efficacy (Choi and Kim, 2014).

Challenged by the call to innovate the classical ballet teaching construct, worksheets specifically designed and contextualized for use in the dance studio, provide brief, but succinct, descriptions of basic, classic positions, foundational movements, as well as explanations to proper etiquette essentials for dance practice. The factual illustrations to color, are aimed to help young students understand what they are learning, allowing them to additionally analyze the movement concept, which in turn, increase their comprehension.

Re-defining the content of the classical ballet teaching construct by the introduction of worksheets will transform the dance classroom into one that involves far more than dance technique and control, and the recognition that teachers need a wide range of teaching strategies to motivate and engage the current body of students. Fully engaged students allow the teacher to harness the students' multiple intelligences (nonverbal spatial and musical, linguistic and intrapersonal intelligences) required to the learning of a highly specialized art form (Giguere, 2011; Choi and Kim, 2014; Arya, 2019).

Synthesis

As a function of generational markers, and the ubiquity of technology in their lives (2018), children in classrooms today, have an attention span of eight (8) seconds (Patel, 2017), and singularly approach all tasks from a visual perspective (Lachman). Considering the aforementioned, the pedagogy of beginning ballet teaching is re-defined by introducing worksheets aimed towards strengthening retention and comprehension of lessons. This study explores innovating the classical ballet construct from a strictly transmissional model of teaching and learning to shifting to a different paradigm: that of embodied knowing as opposed to a disembodied knowing of foundational movement concepts.

Theoretical Framework

This study endeavored to examine the subject of generational diversity, and its impact on the classical ballet teaching construct, through the lens of a pre-existing and well-established theory.

In view of the foregoing, this study was anchored on the Strauss-Howe Generational Theory, also known as the Fourth Turning Theory or simply the Fourth Turning, which was created by authors, William Strauss and Neil Howe, which describes a theorized recurring generation

cycle in American history (Strauss and Howe, 1992). According to the theory, historical events are associated with recurring generational personas (archetypes). Each generation unleashes a new era, called a turning, which lasts around twenty to twenty two (20–22) years, in which a new social, political, and economic climate exists, which in turn result to distinctly dominant, behaviors and attitudes which define that particular era. A generation produces an aggregate persona of people born every 20 years such as Baby Boomers (born between 1946 to 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1976), Millennials (born between 1977 and 1994), Generation Z (born between 1994 and 2004), and Generation Alpha (born from 2010 to 2025) (Strauss and Howe, 1998).

The framework was contingent on the premise that a symbiotic relationship exists between historical events and generational personas. Strauss–Howe’s Generational Theory was used as a measure by the researcher to provide her with the schematic reminder that today’s behaviors in any teaching–learning construct are radically influenced by crises and/or “triggering” world events (Strauss and Howe, 1998), and that such behaviors should be used as a diving board to engender better teaching and learning.

Utilizing Strauss–Howe’s Generational Theory, and for the purposes of this study, diagrammed below are Generations Z and Alphas’ characteristics in diagram form:

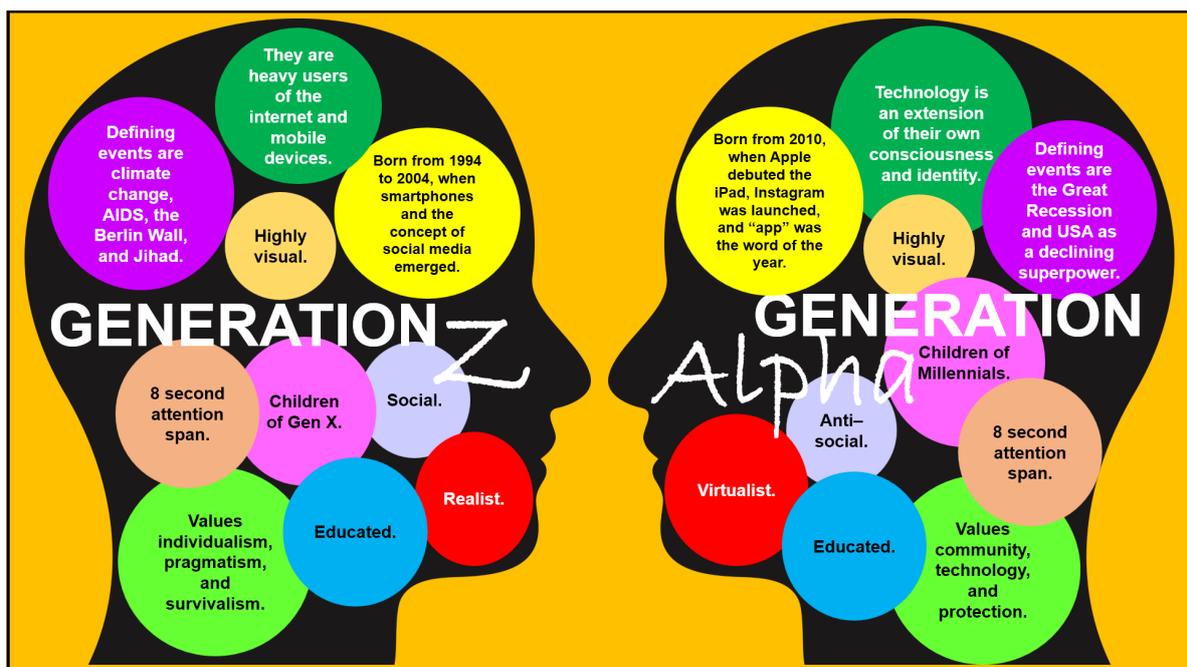


Figure 1: Generation Z and Generation Alpha Profiling Based on Strauss–Howe’s Generational Theory

Conceptual Framework

This study postulated that by addressing today’s beginning ballet students’ visual learning preference and eight (8) second attention span, with well–designed worksheets, students can be more fully motivated and engaged, retaining and comprehending lessons quickly. This study additionally hypothesized that well–designed worksheets can draw on students’ continued interest. It was furthermore postulated that when instructional materials are well–matched to learning outcomes, that are both aligned to Generation Z and Generation Alphas’ characteristics and preferences, an entirely new way of teaching and learning emerges. This

study posited a shift from disembodied knowing to embodied knowing, which innovates the “old” transmissional model of the classical ballet teaching construct (Hamilton, 1998; Rossum 2004; Carmichael, 2018).

The conceptual framework model follows.

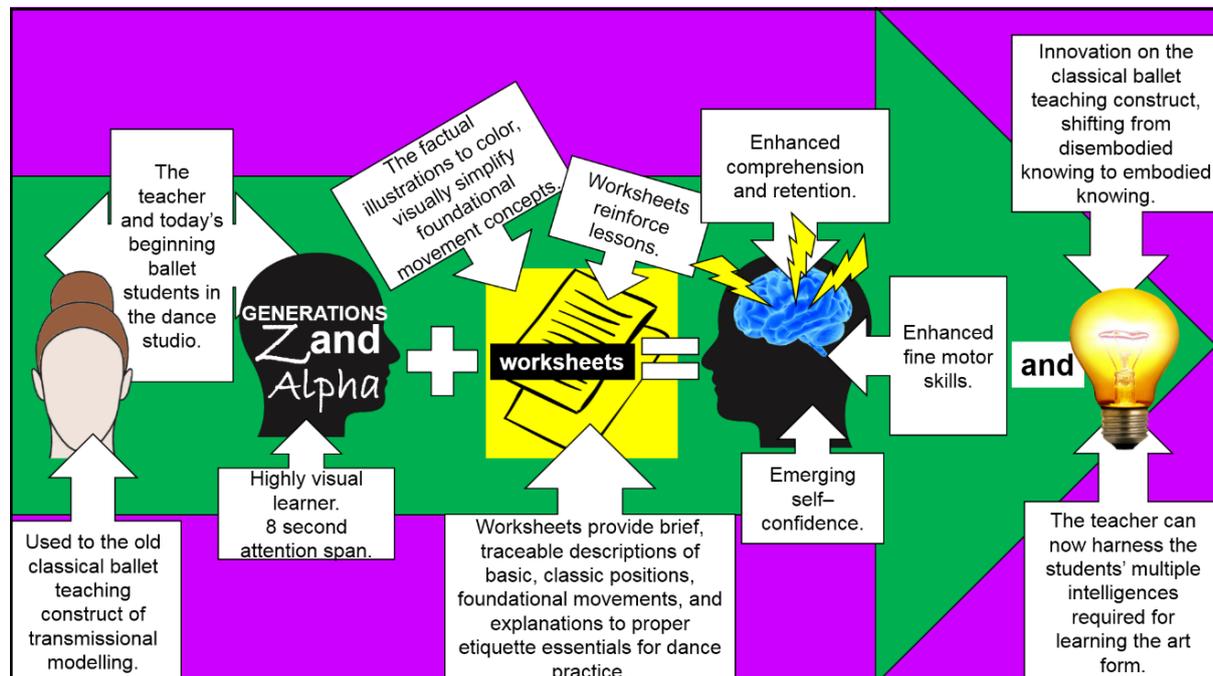


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the Study. Diagram of Generations Z and Alphas’ Characteristic Visual Preference for Learning and 8 Second Attention Span (Strength and Weakness), Subjected to Worksheets Aligned to His Strength and Weakness, to Enhance Comprehension, Retention, Fine Motor Skills, and Self–Confidence. Classical Ballet Teaching Construct, Shifting from Disembodied Knowing to Embodied Knowing.

Statement of the Problem

Given Generation Z and Alphas’ visual learning preference and current eight (8) second attention span, this study intended to explore the association between worksheet usage in the dance studio, to enhance Generation Z and Alphas’ comprehension skills as well as supplement learning in beginning ballet classes. Specifically, the following questions were addressed:

1. Does worksheet usage improve instruction in the classical ballet teaching construct?
2. Do written instructional materials, such as worksheets, positively impact students’ retention and comprehension in the dance studio?
3. Do the worksheets supplement enhancement of fine motor skills?
4. What are the implications of using worksheets in the classical ballet teaching construct in the area of active learning and continued interest in dance?

Significance of the Study

Much of the prevailing research regarding the behavior of Generation Z and Generation Alpha, takes a systemic perspective focusing as a whole, on their characteristics and preferences and how those impact today’s classroom (2019). This study however, was

ostensibly interested in how that same profile, can be aligned to the learning of a highly specialized art form of classical ballet.

Insomuch as the lifeline of any art form is having a new generation to develop, the dance industry and its teachers themselves, thus serve to gain from this research effort. Not having students, interested or excited enough to continue training will ultimately result to not having corps d' ballets in the future. Choosing expediency over hard work, Generation Z and Generation Alpha are believed to abandon those art forms that require more time and effort (Schulten, 2018); they are choosing to learn badminton over tennis, street dance over classical dance, the former are easier to acquire in the skills domain, while the latter require more time, consistency, practice, and grit.

While increased technology has shifted many aspects of the learning environment in the dance studio, the use of worksheets as scaffolding to students' learning of foundational movement concepts, will inevitably impact the classical ballet teaching construct from one that is strictly transmissional, to one that espouses embodied learning. The old pedagogy is challenged in the area of efficacy and sustainability of the art form. The profile of the today's beginning ballet student requires the construct to deviate from the traditional and explore alternative means to keep the youth within the confines of the dance studio, learning and honing his craft towards professionalism. The new dance pedagogy will ultimately embrace the academic concept of providing instruction based on individuals' preferred learning styles (Rogowsky, Calhoun, and Tallal, 2015).

The findings on worksheet usage contextualized for beginning ballet classes, should be considered for educational policymaking that bolster the lesson retention and comprehension of today's beginning ballet students in a consequential and sustainable way. Worksheet usage as instructional materials, can further create educational modules in tertiary level institutions, for aspiring dance teachers.

Moving away from the dance industry and its teachers as the unequivocal beneficiaries to this study, the findings of this study could spur more concerted studies towards exploring the pedagogy of the classical ballet teaching construct as well as the methods and/or strategies in keeping Generation Z and Generation Alpha engaged and motivated in the dance studio.

Definition of Terms

GENERATION Z, or Gen Z for short, is the demographic cohort succeeding the Millennials. Born between 1994 and 2004, Generation Z has used digital technology since childhood and is comfortable with the Internet and social media, but is not necessarily digitally literate (Patel, 2017; 2018; Arya, 2019).

GENERATION ALPHA was born from 2010 through 2025, they are the first generation entirely born within the 21st century. Technology for Generation Alpha is not something separate from themselves, but rather, an extension of their own consciousness and identity (Patel, 2017; 2018; 2019).

LEARNING STYLE refers to individual preference for mode of instruction or study that is most effective (Rogowsky, Calhoun, & Tallal, 2015).

VISUAL LEARNING STYLE, often referred to as the spatial learning style, is a way of learning in which information is associated with images. This learning style requires that learners first see what they are expected to know (Knoll, Otani, Skeel, & Horn, 2016).

CLASSICAL BALLET TEACHING CONSTRUCT refers to the traditional way of teaching dance which is strictly transmissional modelling or mirrored guidance from the instructor (Hamilton, 1998; Rossum 2004; Carmichael, 2018).

LESSON RETENTION refers to the recall of learned information, stored in long-term memory in such a way that it can be readily retrieved in response to standard prompts (Divoll and Browning, 2010).

COMPREHENSION refers to the understanding of movement concepts and the ability to demonstrate such with accuracy and confidence (Mainwaring and Krasnow, 2010).

Scope and Delimitations

It was unfortunate that a lack of prior, research studies on this topic, could make this endeavor exploratory rather than explanatory in research design (2019); a particular limitation ascribed to the inevitable need for further research.

This study was limited to the worksheet usage of teachers in four (4) dance schools, École de Ballet Manille, Alabang Country Club Ballet, ESS Ballet Jeunesse, and the Elizabeth Seton School South Branch. The data collection and findings may or may not have necessarily lent themselves applicable to other dance institutions. This specific study however, may be pertinent to all dance schools that have highly specialized syllabi comparable to the aforementioned schools.

This study was also restricted to the time frame given of one (1) year, from March 2017 to March 2018, which was manifestly not lengthy enough to measure the longitudinal effects of worksheet usage, or to measure the phenomenon's change or stability within the sample. It would have been ideal to follow the progress of the same group of students over an extended period of time, thereby pinpointing the actual rates of comprehension and retention within the targeted population.

Research Methodology

This chapter elaborates on the research design, the participants, the sampling technique, the research instrument, the data gathering procedure, the treatment of the data, and ethical considerations. Due to the nature of the research design, other methodology parts are not included.

Research Design

This is a qualitative research using case study model, testing whether worksheet usage can be contextualized in the classical ballet teaching construct, to simulate retention and comprehension of foundational movement concepts. A focused group interview methodology, is thereafter implemented to collate and analyze data on the perceptions of the participating teachers on the efficacy of worksheet usage toward retention and comprehension skills of Generation Z and Generation Alpha students in beginning ballet

classes. Sousa (2014) stated that qualitative research is a powerful process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks in-depth understanding of current or prevailing status of events, things, or social phenomena. It focuses on the "why" rather than the "what" of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in their everyday lives.

This phenomenological study was conducted in a span of one (1) year, disseminating sixty (60) worksheets that were matched to the learning outcomes of the beginning ballet syllabi used in four (4) dance schools. Through focused group interviews and discussions, six (6) semi-structured questions zeroing on worksheet usage of Generation Z and Generation Alpha in the classical ballet teaching construct, were asked of teachers of the four (4) dance schools. The resulting data was organized according to prevalent themes, and analyzed furthermore in the context of Strauss-Howe's Generational Theory.

There were two (2) main foci in this study. First, determining whether worksheet usage can be contextualized in a classical ballet teaching construct; and second, whether worksheet usage can be a scaffolding tool on Generation Z and Generation Alpha beginning ballet students' learning.

Participants of the Study

Four (4), beginning ballet teachers, with at least, five (5) years of teaching experience prior to this study, from École de Ballet Manille, Alabang Country Club Ballet, ESS Ballet Jeunesse, and the Elizabeth Seton School South Branch, served as the participants of this study.

Sampling Technique

Since majority of dance schools in the Metro do not have a predetermined educational syllabus, prescriptive curriculum, or standardized method of instruction, the researcher zeroed in on acquiring data from four (4) dance schools that have actual time-bound curricula to test the validity of worksheet usage contextualized to the classical ballet teaching construct. The study therefore utilized the non-random sampling technique.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used are sixty (60) worksheets, given to one hundred (100) beginning ballet students spread across four (4) dance schools in the Metro, in a period of one (1) year. These worksheets were specifically designed to support the learning outcomes of beginning ballet syllabi. The worksheets had coloring and tracing activities which provide brief, but succinct, descriptions of basic, classic positions, foundational movements, as well as explanations to proper etiquette essentials or practices for beginning dance practice.

Semi-structured interviews or a pre-determined set of open questions that prompted discussions, explored the participating teachers' perceptions and contextual accounts on worksheet usage, which were the main data used to answer this study's questions. These were conversations with a purpose, otherwise known as in-depth interviews. These in-depth interviews were held during two (2) mutually convenient free times, lasting two (2) hours each time, the first held before worksheet usage in March 2017 and the second interview was conducted after a year of worksheet usage, in March 2018.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

An interview guide was prepared to triangulate the questions. This interview guide was validated by a dance program chairman in Manila. Two (2) other instructors with supervisory positions from another dance program located at a university in Quezon City, provided cross verification of the aforementioned six (6) interview questions.

The interview guide follows:

Interview Session No.	Question No.	Questions
1	1.1	What is the usual profile of students in today's beginning ballet classes?
	1.2	What bearing does the profile of today's beginning ballet students have on beginning ballet classes?
	1.3	What is the estimated ratio of students remaining in the training program in one (1) year?
Interview Session No.	Question No.	Questions
2	2.1	Were the worksheets well-matched to the learning outcomes of the beginning ballet syllabus?
	2.2	Does worksheet usage change the classical ballet teaching construct?
	2.3	What is the estimated ratio of students remaining in the training program in one (1) year, after worksheet usage?

Table 1: Semi – Structured Interview Questions

Data Gathering Technique

The researcher sought permission from the directors of École de Ballet Manille, Alabang Country Club Ballet, ESS Ballet Jeunesse, and the Elizabeth Seton School South Branch, to involve their beginning ballet teachers in a worksheet usage study and thereafter hold interview sessions with the aforesaid teachers at the beginning and end of one (1) year of implementing the worksheet modules. The participating teachers were requested to engage in focused group interviews which consisted of a series of six (6) pre-determined questions which were responded to in the same order. (Please see Table 1: Semi-Structured Interview Questions.) The interviews were documented by video and audio recording, and transcribed thereafter.

A thematic analysis was conducted on the transcriptions, extracting factors which showed a relationship between worksheet usage and achievement, first searching for themes, then reviewing themes, and finally defining and naming themes.

It was hoped that the chosen method would result in compelling discussions on worksheet usage as a plausible resource for teachers of Generation Z and Generation Alpha beginning ballet students, as well as forging creative solutions to innovating the classical ballet teaching construct.

Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

This chapter presents the data gathered, its analysis and interpretation. This study yielded the following data:

Presentation and Analysis of Data

As per the participating teachers' documents on file, following are brief descriptions of the participants' profiles at the time of this study.

Participant No. 01 is female, forty-five (45) years of age, holds an undergraduate degree in Literature, worked as an apprentice for a local dance company, and owns her own dance studio. She is also affiliated with a renowned dance syllabus organization outside of the country. Participant No. 01 has been teaching beginning ballet classes for twenty three (23) years.

Participant No. 02 is female, thirty-five (35) years of age, holds an undergraduate degree in Business, and is a certified Pilates instructor. She apprenticed at a local dance company, owns her own dance studio, and teaches at two (2) other dance schools. Participant No. 02 has been teaching beginning ballet classes for twelve (12) years.

Participant No. 03, is female, thirty-one (31) years of age, holds an undergraduate degree in Business, worked as a professional dancer for a local dance company, and is currently head of the marketing division of a major fast food chain. Participant No. 03 teaches part-time for two other dance schools and has been teaching beginning ballet classes for nine (9) years.

Participant No. 04, is female, twenty-three (23) years of age, holds an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Education, currently a preschool teacher in a renowned school in South of the Metro, and is a dancer at a contemporary dance company. Participant No. 03 has been teaching beginning ballet classes for five (5) years.

Theme 1: Inability of Today's Beginning Ballet Students to Focus and Retain Lessons

Majority of this study's participating teachers consistently replied that today's beginning ballet students, composed of Generation Z and Generation Alpha cohorts, are challenging to handle due to their inability to focus (Patel, 2017; Arya, 2019). The difficulty of retaining information is startling (Ruecker, et al, 2017). Despite a more developed visual ability (Lachman), beginning ballet students today, so accustomed to switching between short bursts of information as displayed on social media, have acquired an inability to focus on or analyze basic pieces of information required to execute the simplest movement vocabulary (Patel, 2017; Schulten, 2018; Arya, 2019).

Theme 2: A Need to Change the Old Way of Teaching Classical Ballet Due to the Current Student Profile

The participants alluded to the evident need for a specialized approach to educating today's Generations Z and Alpha students who have very pronounced learning proclivities (Knoll, et al, 2016; Patel, 2017; Schulten, 2018; Arya, 2019). The classical ballet teaching construct needs revisions to include multi-sensory teaching techniques and interventions to help them

progress through the required beginning ballet movement vocabulary as well as keeping them engaged in the dance studio (Morris, 2003; Aceto, 2012; Holmes, 2014).

Theme 3: The Ballet School Dropout Crisis

There is a drop-out crisis in beginning ballet classes which, if not properly addressed, will impact a stage with no corps d' ballet in the future (2011). Today's Generations Z and Alpha are disinterested to learn a craft that requires mindful, cognitive and physical coordination at the onset (Schulten, 2018), and involves years of focus, determination, consistency, and practice (Patel, 2017; Arya, 2019). The proclivities of today's students imply new ways of teaching dance (Enghauser, 2003; Alterowitz, 2014; Choi and Kim, 2014).

Theme 4: Worksheet Usage Was Tailored to Content

Worksheets were thought to be well aimed at the Generations Z and Alpha target audience. They were purposeful in their building of skills and recalling mechanics of basic movements. They were "effective," which means they adequately accomplished or produced the intended or expected result and left a vivid or deep impression on the users (Lee, 2014; Martina, 2017; Amran and Man, 2018).

Theme 5: The Viability of Worksheets in the Dance Studio Setting

Teaching materials, in this case, worksheets, tailored to the content in which they are being used, supported student learning in the classical ballet teaching construct. Although worksheet usage is more the territory of pre-school classes, application of them in a similar teaching environment, fostered development of skills and sub-skills for both presentation and practice purposes (Lee, 2014; Martina, 2017; Amran and Man, 2018). The classical ballet teaching construct was not changed but enhanced, to successfully deliver learning outcomes of beginning ballet syllabi. Accommodation of such a teaching tool in the classical ballet teaching construct although unheard of, provides a new framework for beginning ballet classes which can expedite coverage of the content, and ensure that students record key items. Inclusion of simple coloring and tracing tasks not only abnegates student passivity; they trigger focus and retention of lessons (Bramão, Faisca, Forkstam, Reis, and Petersson, 2010; William, 2015; Przybyla, et al, 2019).

Theme 6: The Efficacy of Worksheet Usage to the Ratio of Retained Students

The estimated sixty one point seventy five percent (61.75%) drop out from beginning ballet classes, which seems to be atrocious by any standards (2011), are not thought to be so by the participants. They were in fact elated at the current retention rate when compared to other years. Although this study was admittedly not sufficiently robust to support more than the most general observations as to the impact of whether worksheet usage affect the retention and comprehension of students in the dance studio, all four (4) participants unanimously pointed to the implementation of the worksheets as a decisive factor in the retention of their current students.

Data Analysis and Conclusions

The responses garnered from this study verbalized innermost reflections and autobiographical narratives of the participating teachers, on their experiences with Generations Z and Alpha, in

their respective beginning ballet classes. The focused group discussions additionally revealed valuations on the classical ballet teaching construct vis-à-vis the profile of today's students. These findings on worksheet usage contextualized for beginning ballet classes, should be considered for educational policymaking that bolster the lesson retention and comprehension of today's beginning ballet students in a consequential and sustainable way.

Through the participants' responses, the researcher identified elements that were perceived as significant behavioral learning changes of today's Generation Z and Generation Alpha beginning ballet students and a consequent call to enhance the classical ballet teaching construct for inclusion of worksheets expressly created to support beginning ballet syllabi, and instrumental to increased lesson retention and comprehension of the target audience.

Interpretation of Data through the Lens of Strauss–Howe's Generational Theory

As mentioned previously, this study was anchored on Strauss–Howe's Generational Theory which elaborates on the notion that a generation produces an aggregate persona of people born every 20 years (Strauss and Howe, 1992; Strauss and Howe, 1998), the point of this study's interest being, Generations Z and Alpha in beginning ballet classes. The participating teachers supported the findings on Generations Z and Alphas' inability to focus and retain lessons as a function of the ubiquity of technology in their lives (Patel, 2017; Arya, 2019). The current profile of today's beginning ballet students however, suggests introduction of innovative strategies (Mainwaring and Krasnow, 2010; Stinson, 2010) to produce learning experiences matched to individuals' learning styles (Rogowsky, Calhoun, and Tallal, 2015; Knoll, Otani, Skeel, and Horn, 2016).

The Implication of Reform in the Classical Ballet Teaching Construct

The classical ballet teaching construct, that being linear and mechanical, emanating from teacher to students as mute receptors of information (Freire, Freire, and Freire, 2017; Freire, Ramos, Shor, and Macedo, 2018), requires reform in the face of today's students. Generations Z and Alphas' learning reflexes are a function of their great exposure to technology (Patel, 2017; Arya, 2019). The existing construct therefore needs to optimize its course content with more innovative channels of communication to reach them (Morris, 2003; Aceto, 2012; Holmes, 2014). The more natural solution would be to include interactive tools and digital practices (Arya, 2019); but these have no place in the process of acquiring and honing physical skills and should not detract attention from the importance of traditional pedagogy and a strong teacher–student bond. Considering the profile of today's beginning ballet students, what is necessary at this point, is to facilitate learning beyond studio walls (Branscombe, 2019). The inclusion of instructional materials as alternative channels of teaching today's Generations Z and Alphas, given their innate disadvantages to thrive in a normal classical ballet teaching construct, is initially proposed as a reform to the former. Given the participating teachers' frustrations in dealing with today's generational cohorts as well (Holmes, 2014), worksheets with tracing and coloring activities that extend the range of vicarious learning experience (Mattson and Kratochwill, 1970; William, 2015; Amran and Man, 2018; Mantzios and Giannou, 2018), seem to be a welcome addition to the teaching–learning paradigm in today's dance studio.

The Implication of a Shift from Disembodied Learning to Embodied Learning

Related to the foregoing, there is an implied shift to embodied learning, integrating the mind into the body's sensorimotor systems (Bresler, 2004; Branscombe, 2019), from disembodied learning, as a product of linear and mechanical teaching (Freire, Ramos, Shor, and Macedo, 2018). Instead of merely expecting the student to receive and store information like robotic receptacles; given the students' profiling, teachers use vivid, teaching tools to effect cognition integrating the body in the learning process (Trapp, 2008; Spector and Park, 2017).

Worksheet usage with coloring and tracing activities, which naturally unites both visual and motor skills (William, 2015; Mantzios and Giannou, 2018), promote the abovementioned embodied learning in the dance studio. The data, which illustrates positive correlation between worksheet usage and lesson retention and comprehension of beginning ballet students, conveys strong themes around facilitating a change in practice, and changing philosophies and practices. A pedagogical change in the form of worksheet usage toward embodied knowing, is a process that needs to be supported by a community of practice intent on improving classical ballet learning across multiple cognitive domains.

The Turnover Rate of Beginning Ballet Classes

Interestingly, another positive outcome of worksheet usage was the retention of a higher number of students in beginning ballet classes.

Based on gymnastics, cheerleading, dance, and martial arts industries, there is no such thing as a "normal" dropout rate for any age group. There is, however, a minimum turnover of approximately twenty percent (20%) that almost every facility experiences in its recreational programs (Giguere, 2011). Statistics show that overall retention is almost completely dependent upon the effort and energy that the owners and instructors put into the program (Holmes, 2020).

Based on this study's findings however, the sixty one point seventy five percent (61.75%) turnover rate, although falling far behind the aforementioned estimation of the twenty percent (20%) turnover rate mentioned in Guigere's study, in 2011, was still thought of, to be encouraging by the participants, in light of the optimistic effect of the inclusion of worksheets contextualized for use in the classical ballet teaching construct as opposed to past years without worksheet usage. There seems to be a positive correlation between worksheet usage and students' retention in the Philippine dance studio setting.

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