

**IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE:
UNCOVERING THE KNOWLEDGE, PHILOSOPHIES,
AND EXPERT PRACTICE
OF THE
CLASSICAL BALLET MASTER**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the professional practice of two highly accomplished expert teachers, ‘masters’ of classical ballet, with the aim of providing an understanding of their expertise.

A qualitative case study methodology was used to illuminate the masters’ knowledge acquisition and teaching practices. Data collection comprised interviews with the masters and a sample of their students, and teaching observations of the masters at work.

A metaphoric conceptual framework of a three-act ballet performance has been used to present the thesis. This dance-related metaphor was chosen: firstly, because it keeps the ballet context in focus; secondly, because it allows for the leading roles to be those of the masters, and their students, and; thirdly because it provides a fitting way to highlight key themes that emerged from the data analysis. Furthermore, just as an *entire* three-act ballet needs to be experienced in order to fully understand its story, so too, all three acts of the thesis ‘performance’ must be read in order to appreciate the complexity and inter-connected nature of the masters’ practice.

Part One (*The Programme*) provides the foundation work of the thesis (introduction, literature review, methodology, and methods). Part Two includes *The Performance*, with the *Prologue* presenting biographic narratives for both masters and each of the three acts revealing key dimensions of the masters’ practice. *Act One* explores their knowledge acquisition, professional philosophies and beliefs. *Act Two* explores their professional orientations. *Act Three* illuminates their expertise in action, within the class and rehearsal environment. Important themes include the recognition that, for the masters, learning and teaching develop over a lifetime and are inspired by an immense passion and dedication for ballet and its teaching. Also, a master brings to the art-form his/her own individuality, and creativity, and actively contributes to ballet’s historical continuum through his/her professional legacy of practice. While some of the findings support aspects already described in the literature about expertise, the use of a domain-specific case study establishes this support, and illuminates a new perspective with much needed evidence.

A *Grand Finale* concludes the study, with the development of a prototypical view of the professional practice of a classical ballet master. Such a prototype has the potential to inform researchers of exemplary practice in other art forms, and more importantly, to highlight the essential characteristics of exemplary ballet masters.

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PART ONE

‘THE PROGRAMME’

**In Pursuit of Excellence:
Uncovering the Knowledge, Philosophies,
and Expert Practice
of the
Classical Ballet Master**

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Carolyn J. Cairns

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Finding the Research Question

“The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution...To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old questions from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science” - Einstein and Leopold (1938, p. 92).

A traditional ballet education – one that endeavours to produce dancers of excellence - requires consistent, almost daily, tuition over a considerable number of years. The process is disciplined and rigorous, and demanding of both teachers and students. Martha Graham (1998), American dancer, choreographer, and teacher, who is recognized as one of the world’s foremost pioneers in modern dance, states her belief that learning and achievement in dance can only come about by intense study and practise in the effort to strengthen the muscular structure of the body until it is “shaped, disciplined, honoured, and in time, trusted”; until the movements “become clean, precise, eloquent, truthful” (p. 66). She adds that while: “dancing appears glamorous, easy, delightful...the path to the paradise of the achievement is not easier than any other. There is fatigue so great that the body cries, even in its sleep. There are times of complete frustrations” (Graham, 1998, p. 66).

This advancement towards achievement demands a great deal from both the teacher and student - by way of concerted effort over many years - to improve technique and develop the artistry required. Marie Fay (1997), herself a distinguished ballet master, comments on the devotion required and the dancer – teacher relationship:

It is no exaggeration to say that, apart from talent, intelligence, physical capability and beauty, our profession calls for the devotion of a nun, the willpower of a mountaineer, the bodily strength of a lion, the endurance of a long-distance runner, the memory of an elephant, the industry of a bee and the discipline of a soldier. The immense program through which to achieve all this must be masterminded by the dance teacher; a great responsibility (p. 9).

With such a demanding level of engagement and commitment come consequential issues. Boredom from the daily drill of repetitive exercises can often be a problem for students. And, during the student’s adolescent period - where highly intensive practice is needed for success – when the body shape is changing, significant intellectual and muscular efforts are required to adjust and maintain the necessary focus. These challenges, together with the influences of

hormones, peer-pressure, and injuries from incorrect or overtraining, are insurmountable for some students and the reasons why many give up.

Fortunately, some do continue. But why, when it all seems so hard? From my own experience of ballet training, the teachers are the critical component - the source of the motivation that drove me on. I was extremely fortunate to have been trained by some teachers who were acknowledged as experts in their field, and given the accolade of 'ballet masters'. This term acknowledges both their ability to train world class dancers, and produce note-worthy dance performance. Their services were (and are) highly sought after by those serious in their ballet ambitions.

But not all my teachers were so accomplished. Although these other teachers knew the work content, we students were aware that something was missing from their teaching. My dance friends and I would often avoid their classes. If asked why, we would have stated that their classes felt different; we did not feel any connection with these teachers. We did not work as hard for them and did not progress at nearly the same speed or perform at the same level as we would under the tutelage of a 'master teacher'.

Returning to the dance studio many years later, I have had the opportunity to observe countless ballet classes and rehearsals, viewed from differing perspectives: school teacher; ballet teacher; administrator; producer; and mother. I have pondered the differences between the practice of the 'masters' and that of other teachers.

Why this interest? First, having recognized the value of my own learning from masters, I naturally wanted this same experience for my daughter. Second, during the period where I was involved with dance administration and producing, I wanted the best possible training experience for all the students in the school, and a resulting high quality of artistic performance. Third, when I was a practicing ballet teacher, I wished to be able to draw on the masters' knowledge and expertise for my own teaching. Finally, and most importantly, my passion for ballet excellence has given me increasing concerns over who will be teaching the next generation of dancers once the current master teachers retire.

My anxiety about the quality of future teachers has stemmed from the fact I have seen very few emerging ballet teachers of excellence, and very little training to produce them. According to Gray (1989), "the dance masters of today, whether they teach in school, colleges, private studios, dance companies, theatres, or community facilities, determine the historical path of

dance in our culture and in our lives. The teaching role is critical to the growth, sustenance, and preservation of dance in our society” (p. 3). She notes that the teachers of dance, rather than the more visible performers and choreographers, shape the future of dance. Fay (1997) observes: “the procedures of studying and teaching dance were hardly ever discussed in the past though they are extremely important” (p. v).

This is a common lament, stretching from the time of the great ballet masters of Russia through to current day. Lopukhov (as cited in Albert, 2001), discussing the work of the eminent Russian dancer and teacher Nikolai Legat (1869-1937), who trained under and passed on the legacy of the great ballet master Marius Petipa (1818-1910), states:

If Legat had kept records of his lessons, if he could have told us why he demanded one thing from this student and another from that one, we would have a priceless aid today for teaching classical dance and raising ballet artists (Albert, 2001, p.48).

More recently, in her review of a New Zealand School of Dance Choreographic performance, Stevenson (2010) notes the lack of information on New Zealand’s professional dance teacher’s, saying:

Although much is made of the importance of the position of coach in the sporting world, there is still very little commentary in the wider community about the people who train our elite artists in New Zealand.

So, exploring the practice of current masters, still working, seemed to be a relevant and worthy topic of inquiry for my doctoral research. I wanted to describe their practice and discover key features, in the hope that my understandings would be beneficial to others. I found Schempp’s (2006) statement highly relevant to my purpose: “Understanding the qualities that place an individual at the pinnacle of human endeavour is a quest pursued by those dedicated to excellence in teaching and coaching” (p. 16).

I realized that introducing prescriptive and analytical questions, or imposing hypotheses from other theories at the outset of investigation, would be limiting my exploration. Corbin and Strauss (2008) recommend starting with an initial broad question, as a way to stay flexible and reflexive to the process of discovery. This was an approach that would allow for other, more specific questions, or for the relevant key elements of the masters’ practices, to emerge as a naturalistic outcome from the data itself (Ely, 1991). So the over-arching research question that guides my thesis is, quite simply:

What is the professional practice of the classical ballet master?

Answering the Question

It is relevant to describe the use of the word ‘practice’ in the context of my question and enquiry. For this dissertation, in my effort to come to understand the *entirety* of the ballet masters’ expertise I use ‘practice’ broadly. I employ it in a way that is not limited to describing their class room instructional methods and techniques (which scholars often refer to as teacher ‘pedagogy’) but to also encompass the classical ballet master’s understandings, knowledge, philosophies, actions and reflections on their learning, teaching, and life in dance. Shulman (2007) states:

there is an important distinction to be made between *existing practice*, that is, what practitioners already do, and *wisdom of practice*, which refers to the full range of practical arguments engaged by practitioners as they reason about and ultimately make judgements and decisions about situations they confront and actions they must take (italics his emphasis, p. 560).

Exploring the wisdom of teaching practice, explains Shulman, involves looking more deeply into the intelligence that guides it. To examine only the “concrete practical action-in-the-moment” would ignore the “central functions and interactions of both abstract theoretical constructs and normative value-laden commitments in the thought and actions of practitioners” (p.560).

It is well understood that expertise in teaching is “contingent on the acquisition and application of a complex amalgamation of knowledge and beliefs” (Housner & French, 1994, p. 241). As Shulman states, “practice neither is nor ever has been monolithic” (2007, p. 560). Understanding this complexity of practice is the central aim of this dissertation.

However, it is this complexity that makes examination of teacher practice problematic. Teaching, notes Leinhardt, Young, and Merriman (1995), is exhibited as a coherent whole. Separating it into a set of discrete parts is a difficult task.

Apart from the need for me to find a way to address the issue of complexity, other possible barriers to discovery - specific to dance - must also be considered. Bakka (1999) asserts that dance, being a form of traditional embodied knowledge, is a ‘silent’ type of knowledge. It is acquired through bodily techniques and practices, and passed from generation to generation. She considers it best explored through careful field work. Researchers also note that the knowledge base of experts is often tacit in nature (Ethell & McMEniman, 2000; Leinhardt, et al., 1995; Polanyi, 1967; Schön, 1987).

Another issue, and perhaps one reason for a lack of research into ballet, is that it has its own codified language and structure of practice, with a very specific French-based vocabulary. Without a background in the art-form it is very difficult to understand the practice and make interpretations of value (Clarkson, 1988). Yet another reason is that ballet, being an artistic medium based on body movements, requires dancer and teacher to develop a close kinaesthetic relationship. Teachers and learners need to have a clear view of the body. Accordingly, the studio ‘dress’ of the ballet student is tights, ballet shoes, and leotard. While often a teacher will allow a class or rehearsal to start with the dancers encased in many layers of garments for warmth, after a few exercises the dancers need to remove the bulk of it to reveal the body for critique and correction. While dancers are well used to this state and to being manipulated into many positions, the teacher must be cognizant of the exposed nature of the dancer’s body, and the potential vulnerability of the student. This is another reason why teachers are protective of their studio environment, and prefer the work of creating a dancer to remain closed to public view.

I expected that my familiarity and knowledge of its practice would overcome these barriers. I hoped it would not only allow me access to what is typically a very ‘closed door’ environment, but also provide the much needed ‘insider’s’ perspective the literature calls for in understanding exemplary practice.

Many studies have been conducted, across many domains, to clarify what is involved in ‘teaching expertise’ (Berliner, 1986, 1994, 2001, 2004; Ericsson, 1996, 2007; Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Korthagen, 2004; L. Shulman, 2007; Shulman, 1983, 1986, 1987, 2005a, 2005b; Shulman & Shulman, 2004; Tan, 1997). From these studies, a number of models and prescriptive lists have been generated. However, other researchers disagree with the use of models and lists of competencies. De Marco and McCullick (1997) suggest that teaching expertise can not be seen as a single specific factor, characteristic, or phenomenon. Similarly, Bullough and Baughman (1995) stress multidimensionality and the relevance of context specificity. And Adshead-Landsdale (1999), in her review of past dance studies, found that methodologies from other disciplines, employed as the theoretical underpinnings for dance instruction, are used “often uncritically, and used simply to replace another set” (p. xiv).

Sternberg and Horvath (1995) also reject models, as being restrictive. They believe it is not possible to create an all-encompassing ‘expert’ definition that fits every domain. Rather, they call for a “re-conceptualization of teaching expertise” by looking for similarities in practice in a

more holistic way: “Experts bear a family resemblance to one another and it is their resemblance to one another that structures the category ‘expert’” (p. 9). They propose that “teaching expertise be viewed as a similarity-based category with something like a prototype as its summary representation” (p. 9). Construction of expert teaching in terms of a ‘prototype’ could provide a basis from which judgements about category membership could be made. To that end, Sternberg and Horvath consider there is a need for each domain to develop its own prototypical view of expert practice: “a model with which to inform our performance standards – to distinguish those teachers who are expert at teaching students from those who are merely experienced at teaching students” (p. 9).

Seeking a way forward, I naturally also considered the views of dancer scholars. Bakka (1999) believes that dance research should focus on its traditions, aiming “to achieve a certain kind of authenticity... preserve[ing] continuity with the past and achieving continuity with the future” (p. 80). McCutchen (2006) notes that “dance’s best practice – rather than being the latest trends – are in fact the practices that are tried and true, those that work best, and those rooted in the dance discipline itself” (p. 20). And Warburton (2002) thinks that the key to dance study discovery is best achieved by looking deeply into both the learning and teaching enterprise.

As a result of much deliberation and reading, I have attempted, then, to provide a rich portrayal of what it means to be an expert teacher in the field of ballet. I have used a case-study methodology to allow in-depth exploration and to make best use of my own ‘insiders’ perspective. The ‘emic’¹ approach has enabled my findings, I believe, to be a true reflection of the masters’ practice, and provides an understanding of what goes on in the mind of the expert, and in the teaching-learning process of dance. Interviews and observations were conducted to provide a descriptive account of the masters’ complex practice, and share their many key traits and attributes. Lord (1989) recommends that dance studies should consider both the positions and perspectives of both experts and students. I have therefore included interviews with some of their more accomplished students. To assist with an understanding of the complexity of the ballet masters’ knowledge and practices, I have used a ballet metaphor to provide a means of ‘separation’. This is described in the next section.

¹ An emic point of view refers to the finding of perspectives – in a way that is non-interventive and empathic - from within the insider’s culture, and therefore is meaningful to that domain (Fortin, 1992; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

Organization of the Thesis

As predicted by the literature, the process of analyzing the data proved to be extremely complex. An appropriate metaphor seemed to provide the best framework in which to present my findings. The metaphor selected was that of a traditional full-length, three-act, classical ballet.

This seemed appropriate in many ways. First, it fitted well with the content and context of the work, and it is immediately familiar to those within the art form. The metaphor is ‘organic’. Dancers spend countless hours of their lives performing in theatres. Also, choreographing and producing major works, such as three-act ballets, has always been an important component of the practice of the masters in this study. Second, it kept the main focus on the masters and their students, making sure that they take the ‘leading roles’. Third, it provided a fitting way for the emerging themes to be organized into sections: Scenes and Acts. And fourth, while this classical ballet metaphor separated the findings into three parts (Acts One, Two and, Three), it also acted as a reminder that the parts are all part of a whole. Finally, a ballet audience needs to experience the *entire* work, including the Grand Finale, to understand the story - or, in this study, to fully appreciate and understand the complexity and interconnected nature of the masters’ professional expertise. The Acts, while vital to the story, do not stand alone.

I have divided the thesis into two parts. Part One, *‘The Programme’*, covers the foundation work. Typically purchased on arrival at the theatre, a programme provides the reader with a synopsis, an introduction to the ballet’s lead dancers, and all pertinent background knowledge on the performance and background work of the production. In this thesis, it contains four chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, and Method.

Part Two is *‘The Performance’*. It contains the thesis’ findings, discussions, interpretations, and reflections. It begins with an *‘Overture’*, the role of which is to introduce the ‘audience’ to the key elements of the ‘performance’s’ progression.

A traditional classical ballet typically contains three acts. However, it also often includes an opening *‘Prologue’*. This short scene, or a vignette, has the role of introducing the key characters or presenting an earlier moment in time, the purpose of which is to ‘set the scene’ for the subsequent story. In this thesis the ‘Prologue’ contains a biographical narrative for the two masters, introducing their life journeys.

Then three ‘acts’ begin. Each explores a different area of the masters’ practices, providing a descriptive account and revealing the identified key dimensions. *Act One* explores their knowledge acquisition, professional philosophies and beliefs. *Act Two* explores their professional orientations. *Act Three* illuminates their expertise in action, within the class and rehearsal environment.

The Grand Finale completes the ‘performance’, and includes the presentation of a prototypical view of a classical ballet master’s practice. The ‘Curtain Calls’ are the appendices, containing the bibliography, ethics forms, a DVD that illuminates particular observations noted in the text², and other relevant additions (as referred to in the thesis).

Significance and Contributions

Education policy makers and scholars on teaching expertise are naturally very interested in the quality of teacher instruction, and recommend studying its best practitioners. Ericsson and Charness (1994) contend that the study of expert performers and their master teachers offers a nearly untapped reservoir of knowledge about optimal training and specific training methods. They suggest that a fruitful endeavour would be “an analysis of the acquired characteristics and skills of expert performers as well as their developmental history and training methods” (p. 745). In the same vein, Berliner (1986) explains that one of the key reasons to study experts is to “find exemplary performance from which we can learn...they can, more than most teachers, provide us with the cases – the richly detailed descriptions of instructional events – that should form a part of teacher education programs” (p. 6). Glaser (1996) also underlines the need to understand how experts acquire their knowledge and skills, in order to improve the competencies of others in the field. The objective, he says, is for “more people to attain competence at higher levels than ever before” (p. 305). And finally, Bell (1997) states: “clearly, if we are to understand and to promote better teaching and coaching, we need to better understand the thoughts, actions, and perspectives of the professionals consistently excelling in their fields...by looking into the hearts, minds, and histories of these rare individuals” (p. 38).

Dance researchers have also called for studies with a clearer understanding of expert practice across all of dance’s domains (Adshead, 1988; Carter, 1998), and this is certainly true of ballet.

² The DVD was submitted with the thesis for examination. However, the issue of its inclusion with the library copy was discussed at the oral examination where it was decided that the DVD should be removed in order to protect the participants’ ethical consents.

Warburton (2008) sees descriptive accounts of best practice and emerging models of dance education as a valid way to address the question of dance teacher competency. He calls such descriptions “invaluable resources” (p. 8). Shulman (1987) agrees: “richly developed portrayals of expertise are rare...[and] can serve for the design of ongoing professional development programs” (p. 1). Kimmerle and Cote-Laurence (2003) recommend exploring the knowledge base of effective dance teachers, “to understand dance teaching at a deeper level” (p. 214). They state that developing an understanding of the characteristics of effective teachers “can lead to increased competency in dance teaching” (p. 214).

However, there is a further reason to investigate ballet teaching. Typically, ballet teachers work in isolation from each other. Teaching in private studios is an individual endeavour, with access to other practitioners an infrequent occurrence beyond an occasional workshop or conference. Even within a large ballet academy, many staff do not observe their peers at work, or share methods. Opportunities to observe masters at work are rare. Shulman (1987) describes this as being a major difficulty in teacher research, lamenting the loss of knowledge due to its resulting ‘amnesia’. It also means that teaching methods rely on past practice, with teachers often perpetuating the methods of their past teachers (Kimmerle & Cote-Laurence, 2003). Rovegno (1998) cautions: “...there is a ceiling effect for what teachers can learn on their own. Our profession as a whole needs to improve the development and dissemination of specific information about subject matter, how children learn that subject matter, and pedagogical content knowledge” (p. 160).

There is a particular problem in capturing dance practice - its ‘ephemeral’ nature (Adshead-Landsdale, 1999; Alter, 1996; Anderson, 1974; Hagood, 2000; McCutchen, 2006; Preston-Dunlop, 1995). Humphrey (in Anderson, 1974) explains: “dance is highly perishable. It has a moth-like existence and dies in the spot-light” (p. 180). Alter (1996) characterizes it as “an activity in space through time” (p. 58), leaving behind no permanent record. Those within the world of ballet are well aware of the desirability of having a concrete record of its past and present performance, to sustain and preserve it for future dancers and teachers. Transience and impermanence are always an issue (Adshead-Landsdale, 1999; Carter, 1998). While attempts are made to record and preserve dance performance (via notation devices, video, and other conventional means of archiving), and preservation projects exist, such as the National Initiative to Preserve American Dance (NIPAD), the Dance Heritage Coalition, and the American Dance Legacy Institute (McCutchen, 2006), few efforts have been made to capture

the art of dance teaching. This may be because capturing the work of a dance master is so difficult. Just as dancers leave their work on the stage, so too do dance masters leave their practice in the studio. As McCutchen (2006) notes, much of dance tradition lives in the practice of the art, and is lost when they stop teaching. And a long and esteemed career is no guarantee of the permanence of their practice: the best they can hope for it is that students become teachers, and incorporate at least some of their training into their own practice. The hope of this research is that something of the previously ephemeral nature of the ballet masters' craft may be recorded and used.

I hope, then, by providing rich descriptions and discussions on the knowledge, philosophies and expert practice of two of classical ballet's acknowledged master practitioners, and presenting a prototypical view of their professional practice, this study may provide new understandings in the field of classical ballet, and contribute to the literature on expertise and in dance. My 'insider' perspective will, I hope, have enabled me to provide a view that is typically not attainable, so that it may better inform those interested in the exemplary teaching of classical ballet, and offer information and direction for ballet teacher training programs. Finally, in illuminating the masters' practices I hope to have provided a link from the past to the future of a practice that is typically ephemeral in nature.

Summary

This thesis is an exploration into the practice of highly accomplished expert teachers, or 'masters' of classical ballet. My aim is to gain an understanding into their expertise, discovering insights and constructing meanings that are not readily available without an inside view. My intent is to illuminate key dimensions, and create a prototypical view of a classical ballet master's practice.

Since the work of ballet masters has seldom been articulated or recorded – it is 'tacit' by nature, and 'silent' in its embodied practice - I hope that my findings will inform the literature, contribute to the dance research, and guide future practice.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This study is an investigation of the expert practice of classical ballet masters, with the intent of discovering their acquisition of expertise, professional philosophies of practice, and knowledge and skills. The role of this section, therefore, is to review the field of expertise and discover the work that precedes this study.

In the challenge to define and understand expertise and expert practice, researchers have produced a multitude of theories and propositions - both in general, and more specifically within education. While the appropriate knowledge base for general education has been described by many scholars, there is clearly a need for further study in other educational domains. Within dance, there have been a number of diverse studies, covering many dimensions of its practice. However, there have been very few attempts to establish an expert knowledge base for teaching classical ballet. Possible explanations may be ballet's use of a codified language, its closed-door training environment to those not considered part of the genre, the ballet's teachers' concern for exposure of students' bodies, and the difficulty in gaining access to the ballet masters' studio work to observe their practice. Further study on the nature of the masters' knowledge and the source of that knowledge is clearly called for.

An Introduction to Expertise Research

The seminal work of cognitive scientist deGroot (1966) opened the research gates to the exploration of expertise. DeGroot, himself a chess master, completed a set of ground-breaking cognitive experiments to explore expert performance in chess, endeavouring to understand how chess masters excel (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Ericsson & Charness, 1994). By studying players at different levels, he determined that chess masters have striking differences in memory from 'ordinary' players. They make decisions in a more effective and corrective way than experts or novices.

From this beginning, the need for research in expertise has been recognized (Chi, Glaser, & Farr, 1988). Many attempts have been made to understand, define, and delineate expertise and

expert performance across and within specific domains (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Berliner, 1994, 2004; Chi, et al., 1988; Ericsson, 1996, 2007; Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Leinhardt & Greeno, 1986; Sabers, Cushing, & Berliner, 1991; Shulman, 2005a, 2005b; Sternberg, 1996). Early research efforts began by focusing on establishing commonalities of practice and identifying the key characteristics that portray the expert (Berliner, 2004). Furthermore, propositions and models on expertise have been presented for discussion, often drawing from the general psychological literature (Leinhardt & Greeno, 1986; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995).

Reviewing this rapidly increasing body of knowledge, noted psychologists Chi, Glaser and Farr (1988) found most work centres on the comparison of novice with expert performance. They draw the conclusion that expertise is not only domain-specific, but that an expert possesses an “organized body of conceptual and procedural knowledge that can be readily accessed and used with superior monitoring and self-regulation skills” (p. xxii). While acknowledging the importance of these studies as providing “crucial beginning insight into the learning and thinking of experts” (p. xxi), they feel that the results “force us to think about high levels of competence in terms of the interplay between knowledge structure and processing abilities”. They conclude that further work remains in the quest to understand how expertise is acquired, and taught.

Similarly, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993), found that virtually all research on expertise compares novices to experts, which in their view, does not solve the problem of understanding what separates expertise from mediocrity (p. ix). Their research goal, and their challenge to others, was to think about expertise as a process, “as something people do rather than as something they have” (p. xii). Like Chi et al, they suggest that understanding expertise requires looking at what it is and how it develops.

One hurdle in discovering teacher expertise is the tacit nature of the enterprise. The term ‘tacit knowledge’ was first coined by the philosopher, Michael Polanyi (1967), to describe the vast bank of knowledge that remains from view yet plays a large role in expertise. Tacit knowledge, according to Polanyi, explains our remarkable ability to recognize the faces of people we know. Although we can pick a familiar face out in a crowd, we are typically not aware of the antecedent reasoning – we simply ‘know’, and would have trouble articulating how we can immediately identify one face amongst hundreds.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) describe tacit knowledge as the significant and yet invisible knowledge that lies behind intelligent action, and as the important component that separates experts from non-experts. According to Schön (1987), tacit knowledge is revealed in spontaneous and skilful execution of performance. He uses the term ‘knowing-in-action’ to refer to the sorts of know-how we display in our intelligent action - publicly observable, physical performances like riding a bicycle, and private operations like instant analysis of a balance sheet. In both cases, the “knowing is *in* the action” (his emphasis, p. 25). While it may be difficult for people to make their tacit knowledge verbally explicit, Schön suggests it may be possible to observe an individual’s knowing-in-action and create a description of it. By doing so, the dynamic quality of knowing-in-action “converts to knowledge-in-action” (ibid., p. 27).

Berliner notes that the tacit knowledge of teachers is difficult to articulate, and this is a reason why expert teachers have a difficult time sharing this knowledge with novices. However, a major part of understanding the practice of experts is making this tacit knowledge explicable.

Acquiring Expertise

An important consideration in the understanding of expertise is the path by which it has been reached. According to Ericsson (1996, 2007), a central figure in expertise research, the path to elite performance lies with ‘deliberate practice’ rather than innate talent. Deliberate practice, typically a life-long effort, involves experts being highly active in their domains of expertise from childhood to late adulthood, then typically reducing their level and intensity of work with increasing age. He describes experts as “continuously striving to improve and reach their own best performance” (1994, p. 744) .

Before looking at the literature that discusses methods of attaining expert performance, I look first to the contentious issue of whether an expert is ‘born or bred’.

Expertise - Talent or Practice?

Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911), cousin of Charles Darwin, led the first investigations into the possibility of excellence being a combination of three factors: innate ability, experience, and “an adequate power of doing a great deal of very laborious work” (Galton & Darlington, 1972, p. 37). To solve the question of ‘nature vs nurture’, a term he was first to coin, Galton investigated how much human ability was hereditary by looking at whether the relatives of

eminent man were also eminent. He concluded that there existed a strong hereditary component.

Since then, researchers have continued to search for and define the antecedents of expert practice. Howard Gardner, an influential writer on abilities, draws on evidence from exceptional performance. In one of his recent books, *Creating Minds* (1993a), he examines the lives of seven great innovators and concludes that their achievements all reflect a long period of intensive preparation, with many associated environmental factors. Even in discussing drill-like activities such as ice-skating or typing, he concludes there is indeed a 'talent' component, and it may be a determining factor in the final level of the expert's accomplishment (1995). Noice and Noice (1997) concur. They conclude from their research on acting "that no amount of practice can move someone to the top level" (p. 465).

Ericsson (1996, 2007; Ericsson & Charness, 1994), however, counters the commonly held 'talent-based' belief that expert performance reflects only innate abilities and capacities. He and his collaborators set out to derive a general theory of expertise. They studied the lives of experts and found very little empirical evidence to support innate talent being a critical determinant. Ericsson therefore rejects the belief that possession of a set of natural abilities is the criterion for superior performance. He and his collaborators found that exceptional performance requires focused training, a training which they call 'deliberate practice': "an effortful activity motivated by the goal of improving performance" (Ericsson & Charness, 1994, p. 738). Such prolonged and well-coached training is required to acquire the complex skills and physiological adaptation necessary to become an expert. He believes that the time-frame needed to reach international-level performance, or expertise, in any domain, is at least a decade of effortful practice under optimal training conditions (Ericsson, 1996). He acknowledges, however, that the research debate over the role of innate individual differences in the development of expertise is yet to be resolved.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) state that "in order to be experts, people must choose to address the problems of their field at the upper limit of the complexity they can handle" (p. 20). They further assert that if people wish to develop the deep knowledge needed to attain expert performance, they must start early in their careers, even in childhood. Webster and Schempp (2008) add to the debate by asserting "there is nothing natural about expert teaching" (p. 29). Extraordinary teaching, they consider, comes about, not from some innate advantage, but by a commitment to "continual practice and engagement in calculated strategies designed to guide

them toward better teaching” (p. 23). They note that expert teachers practice the skill of ‘self-monitoring’, and work to maximize their potential by recognizing and monitoring their limits and advantages. Over many years this skill develops into an “intuitive self-awareness” (p. 24).

Sternberg (1996) is sceptical of Ericsson’s proposition that expert performance is largely a function of deliberate practice, claiming “the practice view cannot begin to account for the success of extraordinary achievers in the creative domains, and as far as I can tell, its exponents have not made a serious effort to do so” (p. 351).

Perhaps Berliner (2001) best summarizes the issues: “regardless of the talents, proclivities, and opportunities that motivate one to become a teacher as an adult, extensive deliberate practice is still needed to become highly accomplished in teaching, as it is needed to become accomplished in other complex activities” (p. 465).

Paths to Acquiring Expertise

There have been a number of theoretical models and studies describing the process of attaining expert status, many of which categorize steps, stages, or phases of acquisition. Bloom and colleagues (1985a) conducted a major study with a cohort of 120 internationally accomplished performers, to address the question. His colleague, Sosniak (1985b), identifies three phases of learning in acquiring expertise: The Early Years (‘play and romance’), the Middle Years (‘precision and discipline’), the Later years (‘generalization and integration’). She cautions that they are broad in nature, not “neat and exact” (p. 409), and explains that movement through the phases is not time-determined or driven by curriculum but comes from the “interaction of the learner, the teacher, and some subject matter – in the doing or the act of learning” (p. 434).

Bloom (1985a) found that during every phase, the participants had worked with teachers appropriate to that stage. Additionally he noted that during the third phase, individuals who went on to international acclaim had studied with masters who had reached that level themselves or had previously trained other accomplished students. He also found clear evidence of ‘deliberate practice’, with development requiring ten to fifteen years.

Ericsson and Charness (1994) accept Blooms’ three phases. However, they add a fourth phase: ‘eminent performance’, which they describe as “going beyond the available knowledge in the domain to produce a unique contribution to the domain” (p. 740). They consider that someone

practicing at this eminent level, within the artistic domain, would contribute “new techniques or interpretations that extend the boundaries for future art” (p. 740).

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) agree with both Bloom and Ericsson. They consider that development of expertise goes beyond normal learning by a process that they call ‘reinvestment’ (p. 91). They see experts as being willing to reinvest in their own learning (endless practice and participation), seek out more difficult problems (finding challenges to avoid routine-ness), and tackle more complex representation of recurrent problems (seeking out different ways to address similar issues).

Berliner (1994) draws on the work of Dreyfus, Dreyfus, and Athanasiou (1986). He adapts their developmental model for a teacher-education audience, proposing five progressive stages:

1. Novice: a stage for learning the objective facts and features of the teaching field and for gaining experience.
2. Advanced beginner: in which experience is important, resulting in episodic and case knowledge acquisition. Practical knowledge, of which case knowledge is a part, starts to build, typically without direct help from others. Practical knowledge, sometimes called ‘the wisdom of practice,’ is action-orientated, person and context bound (Berliner, 2004, p. 206), and often implicit or tacit in its nature (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993).
3. Competent performer: the making of conscious choices with set priorities and plan-building describe this stage. Competent performers set goals and are becoming confident in their own decisions and directions, and determine what is and what is not important in the classroom.
4. Proficient: estimated as being reached after approximately five years of teaching. By this stage a wealth of experience has collected. Intuition or ‘know-how’ becomes prominent. Pattern recognition (seeing similarities between events) allows for a more holistic way of viewing situations encountered.
5. Expert: at this stage experts teach in a way Berliner describes as ‘arational’; they have an intuitive grasp of the situation, responding appropriately in a non-analytical and non-deliberate sense. Their teaching is fluid and seemingly effortless, in that they know where to be or what to do at the right time, without conscious choice. Berliner explains that such an expert is “more like the race car driver or fighter pilot who talks of becoming one with his or her machine, or the science teacher who reports that the lesson just moved along so beautifully today that she never really had to teach” (Berliner, 2004, p. 207).

Although Berliner (2004) was tempted to join stages four and five together, he resisted because of the need to describe the performance of a very small subset of people “as exemplary, something that is well beyond what is achieved by the vast majority of other teachers” (p. 208). He draws the conclusion that the path to expertise is one where “lengthy time commitments are needed to learn domain-specific, contextualized knowledge and that this knowledge provides the basis for expertise in pedagogy” (p. 203).

A more abstract view of expertise acquisition is that of Glaser (1996). From a substantial review of studies in this area, he concludes that the outstanding feature in the progression to becoming an expert is the changing sense about how learning occurs, expertise develops, and performance improves. He describes this ‘change in agency’ as a process where “initially, the learner depends on others, and with time, begins to increasingly rely on self-mechanisms and on self-judgment about when to engage others as participants and coaches” (p. 310). The predominant aspect of this learning process, Glaser asserts, is self-regulation. He also points out the need to consider the situational dimensions of these learning experiences, as they also contribute to the development of the expert and his/her ability to transfer knowledge. Glaser proposes three interactive phases: ‘externally supported’, ‘transitional’, and ‘self-regulatory’. The first has the environment providing the novice learner with the required skills. There is significant environmental support and influence from others, including parental dedication and interests, and the support of coaches and teachers. Prominent in this phase are the important components of social learning and communities of practice, described by educational theorist Vygotsky (1978) as engagement with others so that learning is enhanced and capability is extended to a higher level. The second phase, the ‘transitional’, involves a decrease in the novice structured framework, and an increase in more professionally guided and dedicated practice, often through apprenticeship arrangements. Skills such as self-monitoring, self-regulation, and self-reinforcement become important, with the identification and discrimination of standards and criteria that are pertinent to the domain. In the final phase, the ‘self-regulatory’, the emerging expert now controls his/her own learning environment and provides the motivation and challenges to continue in his/her progress with deliberate practice. At this stage, the new expert uses external support selectively, calling on competitors, performance situations, and the advice of coaches as needed.

Researchers have discussed other ways in which knowledge acquisition can be viewed. Bloom (1985b) makes the point that changes in knowledge acquisition, while conveniently ‘sign-

posted' as stages or phases, actually occur in a process of continual learning, extending for as long as the person remains in practice. Similarly, Sawyer (2006), after proposing four progressive stages of creativity, notes they are too linear. He would prefer the process to be considered as cyclical. Alternatively, Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac (2004) describe the process of learning with two metaphors, both influenced by the constructivist views of Vygotsky. The first, based on Vygotsky's assertion that learning is a continually process, is that of a staircase, with each stair requiring the learning to be internalized before stepping to the next. The second is Vygotsky's idea of a scaffold whereby the learner is assisted by others until learning is achieved, and then the supporting structure is slowly removed allowing the learner to develop independence.

The Quest to Understand Expertise in Education

The 1980s were a time of vigorous research in teacher education, with much work being done in the effort to understand expert teaching practice. Research moved away from the 1970s quantitative paradigm, with its use of testing, as this had not led to any significant or conclusive results (Grossman, 1990). According to Grossman (1990), findings from this period lacked a theoretical framework with which to understand teachers' knowledge and beliefs, and their knowledge of subject matter, students and general pedagogy, all of which were crucial for good teaching. There was a paradigmatic shift from prescriptive to descriptive research with the goal of discovering 'best practice' of teaching from teachers themselves.

Descriptive qualitative studies use techniques such as in-depth interview, stimulated recall, participant observation, heuristic schema, and narrative inquiry. According to Fortin (1992), these techniques "take the position that the emic language of the teachers must be respected in order to remain faithful to the teachers' own felt sense of what they believe, know and experience" (p. 22).

The Influence of Berliner

Berliner stands as a central figure in the education literature on expertise. His goal has been to identify the nature of superior performance in teaching (1986, 1994, 2001, 2004). He states that while experience is necessary to become an expert, this by itself, does not denote expertise: "Experts attain their admirable status through experience of a special kind" (1994, p. 162).

In 1987, an American program of research was established by the newly formed National Board of Professional Teacher Standards (NBPTS). The first goal was establishing the criteria of accomplished teacher practice with which to assess and certify teachers (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2002).

Berliner was a major contributor to the NBPTS program. His previous list of two dozen propositions on expertise was synthesized from Glaser's work on expertise in a variety of fields (Glaser, as cited in Berliner, 2001). Berliner explains that his propositions were derived from "scores of studies on expertise in different fields of endeavour, from chess and taxi driving, to radiology and physics problem solving" (p. 464), and emphasizes that they are well supported by expert teaching research.

Berliner acknowledges the important work of Bond, Smith, Baker and Hattie (in Berliner, 2001, 2004) in developing a list of objective criteria for expert teachers. Bond et.al contributed a system of standards for the NBPTS by hypothesizing a total of 13 prototypical features of expertise. They include:

better use of knowledge; extensive pedagogical content knowledge, including deep representations of subject matter knowledge; better problem solving strategies; better adaptation and modification of goals for diverse learners and better skills for improvisation; better decision making; more challenging objectives; better classroom climate; better perception of classroom events and better ability to read the cues from students; greater sensitivity to context; better monitoring of learning and providing feedback to students; more frequent testing of hypotheses; greater respect for students, and; the display of more passion for teaching (as cited in Berliner, 2004, p. 209).

Berliner (2004) considers that the NBPTS's prototypical model has validated the nature of expert teaching practice. However, he also feels the need to look beyond just this one program, and posits that expert teachers:

...excel mainly in their own domain and in particular contexts; develop automaticity for the repetitive operations that are needed to accomplish their goals; are more opportunistic and flexible in their teaching than are novices; are more sensitive to the task demands and social situations surrounding them when solving pedagogical problems; represent problems in qualitatively different ways than do novices; have fast and more accurate pattern-recognition capabilities; perceive more meaningful patterns in the domain in which they are experienced, and; may begin to solve problems slower, but they bring richer and more personal sources of information to bear on the problems that they are trying to solve (p. 201).

Berliner is confident that these characteristics of teaching expertise are shared with those in fields such as medical diagnosis, physics problem solving, and chess, and that research now proves these propositions are extendable to all domains: "We can state with great authority that experts in teaching do, indeed, share characteristics of experts in more prestigious fields" (2001, p. 471)

He also offers propositions about expert teaching from the findings of other research studies. From Schempp's work (as cited in Berliner, 2001), he posits that experts have well developed autonomies: "experts have a good deal of independence of the opinions of others...they are confident in their domain of practice" (p. 477). From Allen, (as cited in Berliner, 2001) he posits that expert teachers pay more attention to atypical events in a class than the everyday typical events.

The Influence of Shulman

Shulman's seminal work (1986, 1987) was developed within this period's reform of teacher education: "The advocates of professional reform base their arguments on the belief that there exists a 'knowledge base for teaching' – a codified or codifiable aggregation of knowledge, skill, understanding, and technology, of ethics and disposition, of collective responsibility – as well as a means for representing and communicating it" (1987, p. 4). Searching for answers to illuminate this, Shulman concludes: "the key to distinguishing the knowledge base of teaching lies at the intersection of content and pedagogy, in the capacity of a teacher to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by students" (1987, p. 15). He proposes a taxonomy to explain the complex nature of expertise in teaching, involving the terms 'content knowledge', 'pedagogical knowledge', and 'pedagogical content knowledge'. He defines 'content knowledge' as the knowledge of the major facts and concepts with a subject field: "the amount and organization of knowledge per se in the mind of the teacher" (1986, p. 9). His definition of 'pedagogical knowledge' is the knowledge teachers possess that is beyond that of the subject matter or content, such as classroom management, instructional strategies, and organization:

...here the teacher draws upon an instructional repertoire of approaches or strategies of teaching...lecture, demonstration, recitation, or seatwork, but also a variety of forms of cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, Socratic dialogue, discovery learning, project methods, and learning outside the classroom setting (1987, pp. 16-17).

However, he believes that the essential component to understanding the knowledge base of teaching is found within the category of 'pedagogical content knowledge' (PCK), defining this as "that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding" (1987, p. 8). He adds that the ability of a teacher to effectively implement his/her pedagogical content knowledge is what distinguishes the expert from the novice, the content specialist from the general teacher. He also includes in

his scheme other categories of teacher knowledge: curriculum knowledge; knowledge of learners and their characteristics; knowledge of educational contexts; knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values, and; their philosophical and historical grounds (1987).³

Marks (1990) describes the importance of understanding pedagogical content knowledge:

In a practical sense, it represents a class of knowledge that is central to teachers' work and that would not typically be held by non-teaching subject matter experts or by teachers who know little of that subject. In this sense the concept is meaningful and useful, helping teacher educators focus on what teachers ought to know and how they might learn it (p. 9)

Further Development of Theoretical Frames and Studies of Teacher Knowledge and Expertise

Following Berliner propositions and Shulman's taxonomy, an examination of the literature shows many efforts were made to explore these concepts in both theory and practice. While the centre of the debate on expertise in education has focused on teacher development of pedagogical content knowledge, different research perspectives have produced slightly different definitions.

Grossman (1990) developed a theoretical framework from Shulman's work. Her model emphasizes: general pedagogical knowledge; subject matter knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; and knowledge of context. On this last point, she notes how teacher knowledge typically becomes context bound, or context specific. Therefore she concludes that for teachers' knowledge to be useful, they must understand the context of the teaching environment and the needs of the students within it, and be able to adjust their teaching to them. Employing a case study methodology, she applied her model to two groups of secondary school English teachers to define more carefully the sources they draw upon in constructing their pedagogical content knowledge. One group had completed a professional teacher education course, and the other had not. The study found that those with teacher education were more flexible and innovative in their teaching, and included techniques beyond their own schooling experiences. Teachers who completed a teacher education program with strong English content were better prepared to meet students' needs than those who had a master's degree in English.

³ Shulman's more recent views are discussed later in the Literature Review.

In her discussion, Grossman (1990) identified a number of sources from which teachers construct their knowledge of teaching a specific subject – their pedagogical content knowledge – as being: ‘apprenticeship of observation’; subject-matter background; teacher education; and classroom teaching experience. As these are significant for this thesis, they are described below.

Apprenticeship of Observation

Borrowing this term from Lortie (1975, as cited in Grossman, 1990), Grossman states that student learning by ‘apprenticeship of observation’ provides hours of content-rich experiences which establishes valuable memories of strategies for teaching. Many teachers’ ideas on how to teach can be traced back to how their own teachers approached the topic. Teachers tend to replicate the strategies they experienced as students. However, Grossman (1990) cautions about drawing exclusively on this: “Because students have more access to teachers’ actions than to their goals, these memories are also unlikely to provoke prospective teachers to connect the means of instruction with potential ends” (p. 10). Apprenticeship of observation provides the prospective teacher with a student perspective. Their student memories, including interests, abilities, and attitudes, in a particular subject area will shape their knowledge of student understanding in that area. From this they will have expectations of how they will anticipate their own students’ responding and learning. Grossman reports that apprenticeship of observation may influence prospective teachers’ curricular knowledge in that teachers are more likely to draw on what they learned as students themselves, a finding Cuban (as cited in Fortin, 1993) refers to as ‘conservation of teaching’ (p. 36). Familiarity and comfort with certain curricula from their days as students may lead to them teaching their students the same content, replicating strategies without reflection (Fortin, 1993).

Dance, including ballet, is typically taught in the apprenticeship style. Prior to formalized education, acquiring skills by apprenticeship learning was the norm (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Ericsson & Charness, 1994). Ericsson and Charness describe it as “the imitation of skilled performers and careful study and copying of their work” (p. 739).

They comment that while learning is most effective when guided by a skilled practitioner, self-directed practice from studying the work of master artists’ performance also falls into the category of “deliberate practice” (p. 739). Corbin and Strauss (2008) term this individual learning as “teachers/mentors in absentia” (p. 16). Webster and Schempp (2008)

note that experts often read extensively within their own field, this being an inexpensive and accessible way to broaden their knowledge base.

Subject Matter Knowledge

Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge is also informed by knowledge of the subject matter. The content knowledge of a particular domain is acquired through experience and preparatory study. From this knowledge, teachers make decisions and selections for their classes.

Teacher Education

Teacher education contributes to the development of pedagogical content knowledge as teachers engage in professional coursework on subject-specific methods and through methods courses typically provided in the profession.

Learning from Experience

Classroom teaching experience also contributes to the development of pedagogical content knowledge. It allows opportunities for testing acquired knowledge, strategies of delivery, and effective practice.

Kimmerle and Cote-Laurence (2003) introduce the terms 'foundation' and 'application knowledge' for dance teachers. They see these as the tools for making intelligent decisions when teaching dance. They describe 'foundation knowledge' as having three components: the dance material, the learning process, and the learner's capabilities. 'Application knowledge' is transforming foundation knowledge with "instructional methods appropriate for a particular group of learners and for a particular dance form" (p. 5). Using Shulman's taxonomy, they define subject matter knowledge as "knowledge of the body and a movement vocabulary which, when combined with the pedagogical knowledge, will create the necessary pedagogical content knowledge" (p. 137). They underline the need for teachers to know their students: "an effective teacher evaluates the difficulty of the material and the readiness of the student" (p. 139). Research has continued to focus on exploring the nature and development of teacher knowledge, identifying distinctions between novice and expert teachers, and making connections between classroom practice and knowledge. For example, Bloom's major study with 120 internationally accomplished performers, reported by Sosniak (1985a), revealed that master teachers have a tremendous knowledge of their domain, expect a strong work ethic from

their students, set clear expectations, give honest feedback, and are excellent performers themselves.

Schön (1987) examined teachers' reflection in action, and Leinhardt and Greeno (1986) looked at teaching as a complex cognitive skill, and explored the identity of the craft knowledge of teaching, which later Leinhardt (1990) defined as an expert's 'wisdom of practice'. In another study, Leinhardt and colleagues (Leinhardt, Young, & Merriman, 1995) examined how professional knowledge is learned and integrated, concluding that professional knowledge is personalized in a way which is unique to each teacher. Chen (Chen & Ennis, 1995), looking at the subject-pedagogical content knowledge transformation process of secondary physical education teachers, also concludes that teachers' pedagogical content knowledge is personally constructed. While teachers share a common subject content knowledge, they demonstrate a personalized pedagogical content knowledge.

Schempp and colleagues (Schempp, Manross, Tan, & Fincher, 1998) conducted a study with ten physical education teachers to discover the influence of subject matter expertise on their pedagogical content knowledge. The findings revealed that subject expertise plays an important role in teaching. They conclude that 'subject expert' teachers are also better able to plan lessons that are richer in activities, to develop contingency plans that accommodate classroom variations, to assess student learning difficulties, and to devise remedies to those difficulties. Fortin (1993) states the subject matter knowledge of competent dance teachers includes expertise in: performance, theatrical studies, and choreography. Her (1992) study with two atypical modern dance teachers identified two kinds of content knowledge: 'practical' (able to demonstrate the work) and 'conceptual' (able to explain the underlying principles). She also found that their experiences, and reflective practices, enabled them to successfully transform their knowledge into instruction.

These studies show the diversity with which the notion of 'pedagogical content knowledge' is used. Each field, (English, tennis, dance, etc) has its own subject matter knowledge, meaning each field's pedagogical content knowledge is different. Because of the highly contextualized nature of pedagogical content knowledge, there is a unique result for each domain. Fortin (1992) suggests that identifying the pedagogical content knowledge of individuals in dance may yield similar patterns of development.

Extending Expertise Understanding - Beyond the Cognitive Dimension

Recent research on expertise has moved away from looking primarily at the cognitive dimension of teachers' knowledge to a more comprehensive view of teacher practice. According to Grossman (2008), still more attention to this is needed: "we need to look beyond cognitive outcomes for prospective teachers, including changes in knowledge, belief, and reflection, toward outcomes that include classroom practices and student outcomes as well" (p. 21). This allows for multi-dimensional considerations including personal and environmental conditions, giving a more holistic and integrative model of development that spans individual abilities and strengths, familial support, group dynamics, training factors, organization, cultural and contextual factors (Baker & Horton, 2004; Critien & Ollis, 2006; Warburton, 2002; You, 1991).

Collinson (1996, 1999) extended the frame beyond the cognitive understanding of expertise by postulating a new model for describing exemplary teaching, calling it the 'triad of knowledge'. She emphasizes continuous development and the integration of three forms of knowledge: professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Collinson (1999) states that professional knowledge is the "best-known form...long the mainstay of teacher education, is recognized as necessary for competent teaching" (p. 4). She draws on Shulman's (1986) proposition that 'expert' or professional knowledge should include subject-matter knowledge, curricular knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge. She considers this the 'how to' version of knowledge, a dynamic enterprise in the continual need to stay in the forefront of new knowledge in the domain. The second component of the triad, interpersonal knowledge, covers relationships with students, and with both the educational and local community. Lastly, intrapersonal knowledge consists of the expert teacher's reflection, ethics and dispositions.

Using a term very similar to that of Collinson's 'how to', Smylie, Bay and Tozer (1999) describe 'know how'. This, they states, is "the craft knowledge that is integral to professional knowledge. The professional not only knows *that* something is relevant but *how* to proceed" (his emphasis, p. 45). Similarly, Bernstein's (1977, 2000) theoretical framework viewed pedagogical practices in two parts: the curriculum as the 'what', and the pedagogical approach as the 'how'. The first considers the acquisition of knowledge, the second, the transmission. He also considered the practice of teaching to have two forms: visible/explicit and invisible/implicit.

In the debate over important influences in the development of expert teachers, Berliner (2001) states that another much overlooked variable needs to be considered alongside those of talent and practice – the *power of context*. He considers the environment in which the learning occurred to be of equal status in the development of expertise.

Context affects teachers and teaching, and drawing on Rich (as cited in Berliner, 2001), Berliner states that the “competencies of expert teachers must be thought of as relative to a culture, possibly even to a decade in a culture, since what constitutes expert teaching will change in some cultures quite rapidly” (p. 467). He notes, however, that in non-related fields such as Olympic ice-skating or wrestling, the criteria for expertise stay constant between cultures and stable across decades.

Berliner (2004) further asserts that for many experts the “domain-specific knowledge that is acquired through lengthy experience is contextualized” (p. 202). In a study with experts, advanced beginners and novice teachers, the task of preparing a lesson in 30 minutes to present to a group of unknown high school students proved extremely stressful for the expert group. While the novices and advanced beginners felt they had ample time to prepare, the experts did not, suggesting at least three hours, or even three weeks was needed. This finding suggests that experts prefer to enter their classrooms prepared with both an understanding of content, and a plan for the teaching of that content. Not knowing the students was also a major issue for the experts. They believed that part of their pedagogical expertise depended on this. Through interviews with the experts, Berliner identified these points:

- The experts’ understanding of their own students’ cognitive abilities gave them insights into the level at which they teach.
- Experts have a personal relationship with their regular students, and therefore have no need to rely on disciplinary measures as a way of controlling the class, as was needed in the experiment.
- Experts have a history with their own students which was lacking in the experimental situation. This hampered their teaching.
- They were unable to use their typical routines in the experimental situation.

As none of the aspects of knowing about their students was present, all experts felt at a disadvantage. The inability to use routine, “found to be a basic part of an expert’s performance in many fields” (p. 202), was reported as a significant problem. Removing them from their

typical teaching environment made it hard for them to show their usual level of expertise. This study clearly shows that an expert's domain-specific knowledge is, indeed, contextualized.

Similarly, Schempp, Manross, Tan and Fincher (1998) report a study with physical education experts which also showed the context specificity of expertise. They studied experts both in and out of their subject area, reporting "the same teacher who may be proficient at teaching fitness activities may be woefully lacking when it comes to teaching racket sports" (p. 353).

However, experts have also been shown to be adaptive in their teaching. Ericsson (1994) shows that experts can respond rapidly and accurately to changing situations. More descriptively, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) theorize that there are two types of expertise: 'crystallized' and 'fluid'. Crystallized expertise, they define as procedures that have been learned thoroughly, and well cemented through experience, and are used constantly in familiar tasks. Fluid expertise is the abilities which come into play when an expert has to engage in new and challenging tasks. Similarly, Berliner (2004) states that adaptive, or 'fluid experts', "appear to learn throughout their careers, bringing the expertise they possess to bear on new problems and finding ways to tie the new situations they encounter to the knowledge bases they have" (p. 203).

In 2004, Lee Shulman and Judith Shulman put forward a new conceptual model of teacher practice that emerged from their work on the 'Fostering Communities of Teachers as Learners' initiative. Finding that Lee Shulman's (1986, 1987) previous work did not fully address the issues before them, they created a new theory to identify the components of teachers' capabilities for teaching that extended beyond the confines of Lee Shulman's earlier cognitive model of pedagogical content knowledge: "we recognized the need to frame a more comprehensive conception of teacher learning and development within communities and contexts" (2004, p. 259). In this new model they present five clusters of attributes around which accomplished teaching develops: cognitive, dispositional, motivational, performance, and reflective. They state:

An accomplished teacher is a member of a professional community, who is ready, willing, and able to teach and to learn from his or her teaching experiences. Thus, elements of the theory are: Ready (possessing vision), Willing (having motivation), Able (both knowing and being able 'to do'), Reflective (learning from experience), and Communal (acting as a member of a professional community), and able to teach and to learn from his or her teaching experiences (p. 259).

This theoretical frame was constructed for use within "theory-rich, open-ended, content intensive classroom" (p. 259) which is a description very close to the environment in which

ballet masters practice their art. More recently, in February 2005, Professor Lee Shulman, at this time the eight president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, gave a speech entitled “The Signature Pedagogies of the Professions of Law, Medicine, Engineering, and the Clergy: Potential Lessons for the Education of Teachers” (2005b). He describes his newly coined term ‘signature pedagogy’ as being the mode of teaching that has become inextricably identified with preparing people for a particular profession.” Put another way, he states that it is what we can see as being a particular profession’s “characteristic forms of teaching and learning. ...of instruction that leap to mind when we first think about the preparation of members of particular professions” (2005a, p. 52). He gives examples of the visible differences between the instructional teaching methods of the legal profession (authoritative case dialogue in lecture halls) and that of the medical field (clinical instruction during hospital rounds in which bedside teaching discussions are inclusive of students, residents, and senior physicians). Shulman puts forward the possibility of discovering ‘signature pedagogies’ for each profession in the hope of “transform[ing] knowledge attained to knowledge-in-use.” However, he puts forward a caution that finding a profession’s signature pedagogy does not replace the need for understanding the deep content knowledge belonging to each. The foundation of teaching, Shulman reminds the audience, is its deep content knowledge. This, he states, is an amalgam of two forms of knowledge: its “rich and profound understanding of the subject matter...as well as understanding the principles of learning, development, motivation and instruction.” He argues that when deep content knowledge and signature pedagogy are taken together, this will help construct a profession’s ‘pedagogical content knowledge’, a concept with which Shulman has worked for many years.

On the question of motivation, Posner (1988) notes that a central issue to becoming an expert may be found within the person’s ability to “create and maintain the motivation needed for long-continued training. Whether someone will work hard is itself a possible basis of individual differences” (p. xxxv).

There is a clear connection here to Bereiter and Scardamalia’s (1993) assertion that the driving force for the developing expert in sustaining effort must be motivation. The first motivator is the enjoyment inherent in the activity, “One of the reasons people are willing to put effort into the process of expertise is that it actually feels good” (p. 101). Csikszentmihalyi (in Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993) describes this as ‘flow’, the characteristics of which are “total absorption, a feeling of being in control, loss of self-consciousness,...escape from the concerns of daily life,

and loss of normal time monitoring” (p. 102). He adds that flow is generally reported as occurring “when a person is doing his or her favourite activity” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 33). Hefferon and Ollis (2006) define flow as: “a psychological state in which the mind and body ‘just click’” (p. 141).

The second motivator is the ‘second-order environment’, a sub-cultural environment in which expertise is supported. Either the expert is linked with organizations or networks that acknowledge and promote his/her continual effort in their domain, or is connected via a tradition “in which expertise evolves over generations as well as within the careers of individuals” (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 104).

The final motivator is ‘heroic attitude’. A ‘hero’ makes “arduous efforts that benefit society but that are disproportionate to what society provides in the way of rewards and support (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 107). ‘Heroes’ are committed to their work, setting and maintaining high standards and advancing their own expertise, and those of others, despite no immediate or long term gains for themselves.

Dottin (2009) notes the recent call for a clearer understanding of the role that teacher dispositions play within teacher practice. Dispositions are alternatively termed temperament, traits, inclinations, and habits. They help to explain not what a pedagogue can do (ability), but what they are likely to do (actions). Dottin holds that a teacher’s knowledge and skills are driven by that teacher’s internal motivation, an important disposition for a pedagogue. Further, he contents that “pedagogical dispositions are habits of pedagogical mindfulness and thoughtfulness (reflective capacity) that render professional actions and conduct more intelligent” (p. 85).

Schempp (2006) explored the ways in which experts use critical cues in their working environment to provide insight for intelligent and intuitive decisions. He claims that understanding how experts ‘see’ will provide key information for others wishing to develop expertise. He identifies four techniques that experts use in their practice to see what others do not. They:

1. Focus on the relevant: they recognize the significance of what they see and target their focus.
2. Draw inferences from observations: they anticipate the likelihood of future events and to take strategic action to improve future performance and outcomes.

3. Are alerted by the atypical: their extensive experience provides a comfortable familiarity of practice, and anything unusual will be immediately obvious to them. A novice, without that wealth of knowledge, may overlook the atypical.
4. Analyze critically: they critically analyze the events for quality and performance. Using a critical eye, they use their pedagogical content knowledge to expertly diagnosis events, and find solutions to implement improvement.

Smylie, Bay and Tozer (1999) add a further point:

Knowledge without values is aimless... Teachers should have the character to act consistently with the highest value of their profession. ...each profession is guided by a value orientation that concerns the needs of those served and the broader social goals which that service addresses (p. 46).

According to Smylie and colleagues, an appropriate professional orientation should have four key values:

1. Teachers should be student-centred in their practice, with the learner as the centre of their thinking. Without such an orientation, teaching is primarily a technical endeavour, one that is more concerned with teacher behaviours than with student experiences and outcomes.
2. Teachers should be willing to accept the uncertainty and ambiguity that dilemmas present. They must develop a disposition towards critique, inquiry, and analysis. They should come to see professional learning and personal development as a continuous process. Something like scientific open-mindedness is needed for teachers to want to continue to learn about teaching. Such a disposition rejects the notion of teachers as infallible experts.
3. Teachers should see their work as a collective enterprise involving other teachers, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders, valuing that collaboration. Teachers should be disposed toward joint work, the public examination of practice, and mutual accountability. Teachers should understand what it means to be a member of a profession.
4. Teachers should care about the social consequences of their work, and be committed to act on behalf of a more just society. They should care deeply enough to act consistently with the best social and ethical understandings.

A Prototypical Approach

In contrast to the research discussed to this point, Sternberg and Horvath (1995) argue against the development of categories of competencies, and call for a “reconceptualization of teaching expertise” (p. 9). They suggest that the goal of research should be the construction of a prototypical view of expertise for each domain, “bound together by the family resemblance that experts bear to one another” (p. 16). Such a view allows for more natural categories, or “central tendencies”, to be established, structured by similarities between expert teachers, and represented by a central prototype. Such a construction would allow for a prototype to contain two equally competent members who individually resemble a prototype but each other much less. This acknowledges that:

- There is diversity among expert teachers, and
 - There is no set of individually necessary and jointly sufficient features of an expert teacher.
- They add, “a teacher who displays a wealth of highly organized content knowledge and a teacher who is adept at generating insightful solutions to classroom problems may both be categorized as experts, even though their resemblance to one another is weak” (p. 14).

Sternberg and Horvath suggest that an expert prototype, derived from psychological research, should include three features: domain knowledge, efficiency, and insight. Research clearly indicates that experts have a larger knowledge base than novices (Ethell & McMeniman, 2000). Drawing on the collective works of expertise researchers such as de Groot, Shulman, Chi et.al, Glaser, and Berliner, and others, Sternberg and Horvath summarize this: “He or she has extensive, accessible knowledge that is organized for use in teaching. In addition to knowledge of subject matter and of teaching per se, the prototype expert has knowledge of the political and social context in which teaching occurs” (1995, p. 12). Tacit knowledge is part of this. They note a lack of research into tacit knowledge in teaching, and suggest that it may be an important contributor to expertise, defining it as the knowledge needed to succeed that is “not explicitly taught, and that often is not even verbalized” (p. 12).

Efficiency, they assert, is also necessary for expertise. Experts can solve problems more efficiently in their domains of expertise, “can do more in less time (or with less apparent effort).” This is related to their ability “to automatize well-learned skills as well as to their

ability to effectively plan, monitor, and revise their approach to problem” (p. 12), which allows experts to give their attention to other high-level tasks.

A growing body of literature on reflective practice, seeking to understand this important deposition of expert teachers, emphasizes their ability to automatize their practice (Anderson, 1990; Fortin, 1992; Killion & Todnem, 1991; Schön, 1987; Webster & Schempp, 2008). Anderson (1990) considers that experts’ increased experience leads to the automation of procedural knowledge which in turn frees up their working memory to be utilized in higher-order cognitive skills necessary for conceptual understanding of new knowledge. This is similar to Bereiter and Scardamalia’s (1993) notion of ‘reinvestment’, which is at the core of their model of a creative expert. They contend that experts are willing to take risks in their domain, and whether successful or not, will reinvest that learning back into their practice. With time experts develop a kind of knowledge that increases their likelihood of success, which Bereiter and Scardamalia call “knowledge of promisingness” (p. 125). It is clear that Sternberg and Horvath’s prototypical features of knowledge and efficiency are not mutually exclusive, as true experts work at the leading edge of their own ability level, finding the challenge in the complexity they create, whereas non-experts try to find ways to reduce problems to fit within their available options and methods.

Sternberg and Horvath’s final feature is ‘insight’. They explain this as the quality an expert has of seeing into a problem deeply, thus being more likely to arrive at an ingenious and appropriate solution. Insight involves the ability to distinguish information that is relevant to solving a problem from that which is irrelevant, to bring information together in a way that is useful to solve the problem, and to apply information from another context to solve a problem.

Sternberg and Horvath note the correlation between all three features of their view. “The organization of domain knowledge may be seen as a major contributor to the ability insightfully to reformulate problem representations” (1995, p. 14). They believe that use of prototypical views allow for a richer, more descriptive, and inclusive understanding of expertise within particular domains. They envision prototypes as a way to answer the question: what *features* are important in expert practice? Further, they anticipate this will stimulate research that will be useful for innovative approaches in teacher education.

Research in the Field of Dance

Work by well-known thinkers such as Howard Gardner (1982, 1993b), Elliot Eisner (as cited in Palmer & Cooper, 2001), and Susan Langer (Langer, 1953, 1957) has had a major impact on establishing dance as an art, worthy of scholarly endeavour. Langer (1953) states that dance is “the creation of forms expressive of human feeling” (p. 60), and “dance, no matter how diverse its phases and how multifarious, perhaps even undignified its uses, is unmistakably and essential art, and performs the functions of art in worship as in play” (p. 184).

As early as 1979, Koechler (in Lord, Chayer, & Grenier, 1994) asserted that the study and description of current teaching practices would be a “desirable line of research for developing a better knowledge base for art as well as dance teacher preparation” (p. 234). Beal (1993) and Minton (2000) found that although recent research on dance has included psychology, history, kinesiology, philosophy, aesthetics, therapy, sociology, business, anthropology, medicine and other academic areas, dance education has been the subject least examined.

In 1990, a special issue of the *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (JOPERD)* focused on dance and its future. Seminal dance scholars and educators contributed, with the common denominator being a call for further research into the subject – for more depth, and further breadth across genres. Advocates of dance continue to fight for legitimacy in education (Gray, 1990; Hanstein, 1990; LaPointe-Crump, 1990; McLaughlin & Kinderfather, 1990; Schmitz, 1990). Following this, Alter (1996) identified the need for the academic research milieu to recognize dance as a form of intelligent expression “to prove the value of writing about such an apparently ethereal subject” (p. 33). Since the late 1980s, dance scholarship has increased (Risner, 2007). Due to such efforts, dance, today, is a well-recognized art form (Clinton, 2007; Cone & Cone, 2007; Minton, 2000). It is included both in school curricula and in tertiary training institutions, across the world.

Within New Zealand, Kopytko (2006) executive director of DANZ (Dance Aotearoa New Zealand) notes that the future of dance “in education and the wider context, looks exciting - interest is growing rapidly in all dance styles and our participation in dance is increasing” (p. 8). The teaching of this art, and the process of its continuation from generation to generation, is a valid area of study.

Consequently, scholars have sought to discover “good practice” in teaching dance (Chen, 2001; Fortin, 1992, 1993; Fortin & Siedentop, 1995; Gray, 1984, 1989; Horton Fraleigh & Hanstein, 1999; Kimmerle & Cote-Laurence, 2003; Lord, 1989; Minton, 2000; You, 1991). Early efforts were more focused on the identification and assessment of single teacher behaviours and on comparison studies. Studies included those on teacher location and points of focus (Skrinar, 1988; Skrinar & Moses, 1988), use of base support in ballet and modern dance (Gray & Skrinar, 1984), types of cues, and their frequency of use, during class (Borrelli & Skrinar, 1982; Gray, 1984), use of imagery (Hanrahan & Salmela, 1990; Overby, 1990a, 1990b), production of a skill and concept list (Adshead, Briginshaw, Hodgens, & Huxley, 1982), verbal and non-verbal class behaviours of university dance teachers (Lord, 1981), influence of motor performance in the recall of ballet steps (Starkes, Deakin, Lindley, & Crisp, 1987).

Lord (1989) acknowledges the early efforts in dance literature as a ‘first step’ in understanding teacher competencies. She considers “further descriptive studies conducted in various kinds of teaching contexts and at different educational levels can contribute to the development of pertinent knowledge for that purpose” (1994, p. 234). Additionally, Lord recognizes the need for future research within the many dance genres and contexts, “academic, professional preparation, and recreational” (1989, p. 214). Similarly, Lazaroff (2001) anticipates that “with a heightened awareness of the processes that are inherent in dance and the relationship between that work and the rich field of educational research, dance educators will, I hope, grow in knowledge, creativity, and effectiveness” (p. 29). Minton (2000) notes that most of the research in the 1970s and 1980s, while asking interesting questions, tended to use standardized tests to measure results. Minton recommends that future studies should focus on one dance form or population at a time.

Bresler (1998), in her review, found research in the arts prior to the 1980s was not conducted primarily on classroom reality, and ignored the contribution that teacher knowledge can make both to policy and the arts community. Arts research drew on developmental psychology and was often combined with a statistical treatment. Later, she identified a shifting emphasis towards issues relating to actual teaching and learning, often using a more communicative, narrative style as a way to describe practice. She notes that the report “Priorities for Arts Education Research (1997)”, from the Goals 2000 Arts Education Partnership, calls for research to identify “best instructional practices” in the arts. Bresler contends that for research to be

useful it needs to be grounded in the ‘complex reality of educational settings’, and use ‘thick description’ as an essential base for transferability.

A number of studies – across dance genres - have since been carried out: examining choreographic processes (Ashley, 2004); personological studies on modern and classical dance students (Biasi, Bonaiuto, Giannini, & Chiappero, 1999); dance and social identity (Kopytko, 1991); jazz and modern dance students’ self-perceptions of dance competencies (Bibik, 1993); the relationship between motivation and performance (Lazaroff, 2001); the emotional response to dance performance (Hagendoorn, 2004); use of imagery (Hanrahan & Salmela, 1990; Hanrahan & Vergeer, 2000; Overby, 1990a, 1990b; Overby, Hall, & Haslam, 1997); pedagogical content knowledge of modern dance teachers (Fortin, 1992; Fortin & Siedentop, 1995); description of a primary school creative dance teacher (Chen, 2001); developing observational strategies (Clark, 2003); the importance of visual learning practices for teacher and student (Brodie & Lobel, 2008); development of talent in dancers (Critien & Ollis, 2006); learning objectives in secondary school daily dance class (Lord, et al., 1994); the multi-dimensional expertise of a Korean traditional dance teacher (You, 1991); identifying the qualities of expert modern dance teachers (Schlaich & DuPont, 1993); dimensions to dance teachers behaviours (Van Rossum, 2004); examining the subjective experience of flow in professional dancers (Hefferon & Ollis, 2006); and skill acquisition in ballet dancers (Urena, 2005).

The work of Schlaich and DuPont (1993) was highly relevant to my work, in that it generated a list of qualities shared by eleven outstanding dance teachers. This, however, focused on modern dance. Their list of qualities included: love of movement and teaching; basic knowledge of dance; supportive attitude; clear communication; musicality; focusing beyond technique.

Karen Bradley (2001), an associate professor of dance at the University of Maryland and the Content Chairperson for the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), was funded by the Office of Educational Research Initiatives to perform a comprehensive review of published dance studies. Her preliminary findings on research, from 1926 to 2001, found most work to be unpublished dissertations. The second largest category was journal articles on quasi-experimental research or anecdotal descriptions of particular approaches to curriculum design. She concluded that there is a need for future research to move in a new direction, with the goal of creating a shared body of knowledge, and cautions that without this dance “will continue to be the most under-represented, most marginalized, most misunderstood field in all of

education” (p. 35). Like Lord and Minton, she advocates focusing on one dance discipline at a time to provide deeper and richer descriptions of the context. She also calls for wider dissemination of research studies. Warburton (2002) agreed, identifying a clear need for further understanding of dance practice and the use of key concepts.

A difficulty in exploring dance expertise is that dance research is a complicated matter. Even if one follows Bradley’s advice to focus on one discipline at a time, such as this study’s ballet focus, expertise can be examined from various angles: teacher perspective, student perspective, studio class, choreography, rehearsals, and theatre. Add to this the many contexts in which teaching occurs (recreational, educational, pre-professional, and professional), and the myriad behaviours, competencies, and knowledge, and some understanding of the complexity of examining ‘dance teacher practice’ becomes apparent.

In addition to the tacit nature of teacher knowledge - the significant and yet invisible knowledge that lies behind the intelligent actions of experts (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993) and is revealed in their spontaneous and skilful execution of performance (Schön, 1987) - Shulman (1987) explains that another difficulty is the profession’s “extensive individual and collective amnesia. ...The best creations of its practitioners are lost to both contemporary and future peers” (p. 11). Ballet teaching, like classroom teaching, is a practice conducted without an audience of fellow-practitioners, and suffers from the same issues of knowledge loss. In addition, ballet faces another hurdle in that its performance component has no permanence. Adshead-Landsdale (1999) explains: “impermanence has always been associated with dance, so there is nothing unusual in the view that dances might be unstable” (p. xii). Alter (1996) also comments that: “A dance is considered ephemeral because as an activity in space through time, the performance leaves no record except in the mind of the on-looker” (p. 58). She notes the view of the esteemed modern dance teacher, H'Doubler, who points out that dance remains only in the visual memory of the audience and the muscular memory of the dancer.

Clarkson (1988) suggests that other reasons for the lack of research in ballet are that both teacher and student consider themselves to be artists, not athletes, and that researchers unfamiliar with the field find it hard to understand the training because of its specific, and codified, language and style of practice. This is a widely shared view.

The language of ballet is a specialist one which, in effect, closes this world to outsiders (Adshead, 1988; Jackson, 2005). Stinson (2006) suggests this as being the primary reason why

there are so few researchers active in the field. While many, as yet, unanswered critical questions need to be addressed, she specifically recognizes the need to allow the “important voices that are not yet part of the dance literature, voices that have valuable things to say” (p. 204) to be heard.

While dance scholarship has increased in recent years (Carter, 1998; Morris, 1996a), there remains very little known about dance teaching (Bradley, 2001; Bresler, 1998; Hanna, 2008; Lord, 1981, 1989) and in the specific domain of ballet, even less. Morris (1996a) hopes that new research efforts will begin to make dance “look richer and less mysterious” (p. 7). Dance is a relative newcomer to the academic world, only recently emerging as a bona fide subject. According to Carter (1998), establishing a “‘scholarly bedrock’ of dance has been problematic and varied in its pace of development” (p. 7). Scholars in the field have noted the lack of research and they encourage identification of the knowledge base of experts (Allen, 1988; Berliner, 1986; Bolwell, 1998; Cormack, et al., 1994; Hanna, 1987, 2008; Kimmerle & Cote-Laurence, 2003).

Hanna (2008) challenges dance researchers to establish their own theoretical and empirically based research, moving away from examining dance by using “disparate findings from various disciplines” (p. 502). Bolwell (1998) calls attention to the need to build a “body of literature that is seen as relevant and useful, which address the relationship between theory and practice” (p. 77). Bonbright (1999), executive director of the National Dance Education Association in America, agrees that dance education research remains elusive, and lists areas in which research is needed: understanding the creative process in learning and teaching; pedagogy; professional preparation; in-service training; and so forth. She argues that research into these and other areas is critical to the field and to education. Bonbright states “the future of dance education lies in its inherent ability to effectively bridge the creative and the theoretical, connect the body and mind, and empower the personal and the cultural” (p. 37).

This study narrows the complexity by focusing only on teacher expertise within the genre of classical ballet, and specifically dance masters’ private studio training of pre-professional and professional students.

Summary

This discussion has identified what key theorists and scholars have discovered about the acquisition and practice of expertise. While researchers have begun to look more closely at dance education, and have identified some aspects of its practice, much work remains to be done. In particular, this review has illuminated the paucity of teacher expertise research within the genre of classical ballet. Ballet teaching at the mastery level has received little examination, and consequently lacks a coherent theoretical base to inform its practitioners. No researcher has previously attempted to gain an understanding of expert teacher practice in classical ballet in New Zealand. This study is an attempt to remedy that deficiency.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The Logic and Theoretical Perspective of the Research

Introduction

While the study of masters, according to Theodores (1996), is a valid endeavour, the fundamental question I address is how this objective might be accomplished. Understanding that the goal of scholarly research is the creation of new knowledge by searching for inherent truth, critically analysing and making sound interpretations (Horton Fraleigh & Hanstein, 1999), this question of ‘how’ required an early decision from me about methodology.

I investigated different methods of inquiry, reading widely on many approaches and frameworks that might extract the meaning of the masters’ practices.

The literature has suggested that it is problematic to transfer methodologies from other disciplines to dance (Alter, 1996; Hanna, 1987). More recently, Adshead-Landsdale (1999) cautions against the almost “slavish adoption” (p. 5) of methodologies from other disciplines as the theoretical underpinnings for dance. In my search to find the best approach to the research question, I drew from Adshead-Landsdale’s recommendation of keeping an “open-minded view of the potential relevance of theories from a number of different sources” (p. xiv). I also found Carter’s (1998) following quote to be particularly pertinent to this discussion:

Dance is studied for different purposes and different questions are asked; it moves within an expanding area of knowledge, forging its own pathways and interweaving with those of other. Instead of being under the traditional pedagogic, historical or anthropological spotlights, the study of dance is now revealed in all kinds of theoretical sidelights, uplights, downlights and all manner of overall washes. ... The scholar/researcher/student may promenade, constructing all kinds of meaning within the parameters of their chosen perspective. The very self-reflexivity of dance studies today is a sign of its confidence, maturity and on-going vitality. (p. 13)

This chapter reports on how I made the methodological choices for my research.

Selecting the Research Focus

My interest in the studio and performance world of ballet led me to place my research project within that setting. According to Stake (2003), this is a valid reason for selecting a field; my familiarity with the ballet world has given me an empathy to the context as an ‘insider-researcher’, able to discover “what is important about that case within its own world” (p. 140). My goal has been to add to the body of knowledge on developing ballet teaching expertise. This, I hoped, would include both the knowledge and skills of ballet and the teaching processes which convey them.

During the initial stages, my thesis went through a process of adjustments, due in most part to a significant change in supervision. Initially, one of my two supervisors wished me to place my research within the New Zealand school education system, a substantial move away from my preferred direction. I worked on this for quite some time. However, I decided, along with my primary supervisor, that a research focus on the school dance curriculum was not really my intention. Certainly I hoped my research would inform this area, but it was not my primary interest.

Redirecting my view back to the private studio world of dance, I contemplated a study that would focus on ballet students’ perceptions of their training with a master ballet teacher. After following this direction for some time, I felt that my question of ‘*what is the professional pedagogy of classical ballet masters?*’ could only be addressed by a more direct examination of masters’ practices. Accordingly, I shifted the main focus of my study onto the masters themselves. I decided to make my inquiry one that would illuminate their practices, and yet still acknowledge the importance of the student perspective.

Making a Paradigmatic Shift

I then examined the two paradigmatic choices – quantitative and qualitative - within which the project could be accomplished. A paradigm, explains Elliott (2002), is “a cluster of related beliefs; it is a particular way of defining, selecting, conceptualizing and investigating problems” (p. 87). At this point I needed to select one, and justify my decision.

As I have a scientific background, I found myself, because of my familiarity and comfort with the scientific method, eager to use a quantitative approach. I wished at first to establish a hypothesis to be tested either for rejection or acceptance.

However, I shifted to qualitative study for the reasons put forward by Bresler (1998). She notes that the late 20th century saw an explosion in qualitative research, propelled by a world shift to a post-positivist paradigm. Qualitative inquiry within the field of arts, she asserts, allows for in-depth discovery from an insider's perspective, with the outcome that research can now aim to discover "institutional goals, expectations, and structures; teacher knowledge and beliefs; students' backgrounds and interests; and community resources and values, to list a few of the most prominent" (p. 9). Mutch (2005) adds that a qualitative researcher's aim is to "gather rich description of the phenomenon of interest...to uncover the lived reality or constructed meanings of the research participants" (p. 43). Recently, Grossman (2008) added:

We will always need a variety of studies that draw on different traditions and different disciplinary frameworks. We need access to richly detailed, in-depth cases of phenomena that help us to understand the nuances of teacher education, to ask new questions, and to see an all-too familiar terrain differently. But as a field, we may have swung too far toward the search for particularities. Our field needs to regain a critical balance between carefully designed, small, in-depth qualitative studies and larger scale research projects that intentionally take advantage of different methodologies. Larger scale studies may lose some of the nuanced descriptions of teacher education—in fact, it is almost inevitable that they will (p. 21).

I was persuaded, then, to make a paradigmatic shift and conduct my study under the qualitative umbrella. Qualitative inquiry has become well established amongst by scholars of dance in more recent years (Alter, 1996; Fraleigh, 1991; Horton Fraleigh & Hanstein, 1999; Lee, 2000; Lord, 1989; Risner, 2007; Sklar, 1991, 2000; Sklar, Kealiinohomoku, Coorlawala, & Shay, 2001; Urena, 2005). I felt strongly the qualitative method was the best approach for me, in that it would enable me to enter into the participants' environments to discover their inner experiences and philosophies, and allow for a rich account of the phenomenon of ballet teaching mastery to naturally emerge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Sherman & Webb, 1988).

Moving from quantitative to qualitative was not without its difficulties. It involved accepting what seemed to me, to be a rather insecure structural methodology compared to the rigour of quantitative methods. According to Choudhuri, Glauser, and Peregoy (2004) , the qualitative researcher must restructure and clarify the collected data in such a way that it offers "a narrative that captures the essence of participants' individual and collective stories" (p. 445). This, they caution, may seem deceptively simple to someone not familiar with the approach, but the complexity inherent in multiple, socially constructed realities makes the conceptualizing and

communicating of these realities quite elusive. Ely's (1991) listing of the responsibilities of the qualitative (or naturalistic) researcher brought the differences into sharp focus. The qualitative researcher, she states, needs to rely fully on "his/her own talents, insights, and trustworthiness", and then must be prepared to go public "with the reasoning that engendered the results, while accepting with equanimity that other people may make different meanings from the same data" (p. 86).

Qualitative inquiry would require me to use a different way of conceptualizing the research, including the need to trust the emergent nature of the research (Lee, 2000). Developing confidence in the method necessitated a great deal of study of respected qualitative texts such as Lofland and Lofland, (1995), Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2003a, 2003b), Bogdan and Biklen (2007), Taylor and Bogdan (1998), Ely (1991), Creswell (1994, 1998, 2003, 2007, 2009), Merriam (1998, 2002a, 2002b) , Mutch (2005), Patton (2002), Corbin and Strauss (2008), Stake (1995, 2003, 2005, 2006), Wolcott (2009), and much reading of material from people within the dance field.

To assist me in making this paradigm shift, one of my supervisors suggested that I organize my thesis writing round a relevant metaphor from within my research area. I therefore envisaged the thesis as unfolding before an audience the experience of an evening's performance of a traditional full-length ballet. Ely (1991) sees such an extended metaphor as a valid framework for naturalistic inquiry: "Metaphor-making signifies a high quality of learning" (p. 181). He believes the use of metaphor has educational significance in that "it would appear to indicate that students are actively growing into new knowledge and doing so with a certain passion" (p. 181).

Indeed, I found the development of this metaphor into the organizational and conceptual framework of the dissertation to be a significant factor in shifting my mindset firmly from the scientific method to the path of qualitative discovery. While it assisted me, I hoped it would also benefit the readers by providing a connection to the subject at a deeper level, especially for those unacquainted with the ballet world.

Choosing a Theoretical Perspective

A theoretical perspective is important in any research endeavour (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Overby, 2005). One theory which resonated with me was social constructivism. An excerpt from Griffin, Early, & the National Society for the Study of Education (1999) is relevant here:

There has been a marked, though not universally adopted, shift from a technocratic view of teaching to one that is rooted in conceptions of learning based on long-standing views that learning is the consequence of social constructions between and among students and teachers (p. vii).

That knowledge is constructed from our experiences and from social interaction, rather than discovered, is a view urged by Guba and Lincoln (1985) and held by most contemporary qualitative researchers (Schwandt, 2003; Stake, 1995, 2003). The principle, clearly described by Schwandt (in Buck, 2003), is that “human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it. We invent concepts, models and schemes to make sense of experience and we continually test and modify these constructions in light of new experience” (p. 47) . The concept, however, is not new. In 1897, John Dewey in ‘My Pedagogical Creed’ (as cited in Dewey & Archambault, 1964) stated:

I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race. This process begins unconsciously almost at birth, and is continually shaping the individual’s powers, saturating his consciousness, forming his habits, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions. Through this unconscious education the individual gradually comes to share in the intellectual and moral resources which humanity has succeeded in getting together. He becomes an inheritor of the funded capital of civilization (p. 427).

Stake (1995), who describes most researchers today as being rationalist-constructivists, sees the aim of research as enlightening, or constructing, “a clearer reality” (p. 101). Creswell’s (2003) description of the constructivist inquirer’s role is also revealing. Taking Stake’s aim further, he sees the social constructivist researcher making “multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern” (p. 18).

Developing a theory or pattern is similar to prototype formation. Korthagen (2004) views construction of a framework, or a model of best practice, as appropriate, especially when considering the contextual component of any situation. My use of this approach allowed for the ballet masters’ knowledge to be understood as events constructed over time as they learned, practiced, and reflected on their unique journeys in dance. Acknowledging the individual nature of each master’s journey, by use of prototypical construction, is not intended to define a ‘norm’

of practice, or to present definitive answers, both of which Korthagen (2004) claims as being pedagogically undesirable in the quest to describe essential qualities of teaching.

Stake (1995, 2003, 2006) sees the constructivist view as justifying the use of ‘thick description’, a term popularized by Clifford Geertz (1973). The term refers to research that searches for emic interpretations and narrative description – both of which are important for my methodology and discussion. ‘Thick description’ requires the researcher to write a contextually descriptive account that gives meaning to an outsider. Conversely, writing without consideration for context provides a ‘thin description’, and conveys little or no meaning to the reader.

The qualitative method also provides a way of understanding the construction of meaning within the research process itself. During the field work, the participants developed a relationship with me that was ‘co-constructed’, and this construction shaped the knowledge given and recorded. Denzin and Lincoln (2003a) describe this co-creation of understandings between the knower and respondent as “a subjectivist epistemology” (p. 35).

Overby (2005) advocates the use of constructivism in the dance field, seeing it as a valuable method by which to view and interpret dance. Hong (2003) also asserts that dance is socially constructed, and therefore seeing it in context is important:

Learning dances, learning to dance, creating dances and viewing and responding to dances happens within social and cultural contexts and it follows therefore that any attempt to develop understanding of dance requires that we come to appreciate the context from, and in which, dance is made, presented and valued (p. 143).

In summary, the constructivist paradigm is based on the belief that we each construct our own meanings, our own realities. Within dance, each student and teacher finds meanings from his/her individual learning, and makes connections to pre-existing knowledge and experiences, in this way constructing his/her own reality of dance.

Masters are an important part of the lived tradition of ballet. This tradition has been socially constructed and shared through the process of social interaction across many generations. The knowledge the masters hold was passed to them, and will, in turn, be passed down to their students through their teaching. A dance master can be considered a guardian of the art while also contributing a unique interpretation to its continuance.

Using a Case Study Design

Qualitative research offers many methodological choices and research designs. According to Patton (1990), case studies are particularly relevant:

[they]...become particularly useful where one needs to understand some special people, particular problem, or unique situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information – rich in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question (p. 54).

Similarly, Creswell (2009) and Wiewiorka (1992) posit that significant contributions to knowledge can be made through small sample case studies. This form of inquiry allows for in-depth exploration into “one or more individuals” (Creswell, p. 13). Stake (2006) sees the major benefit of case study to be that it allows for “the study of real cases operating in real situations... to capture the experience of that activity” (p. 3).

Accordingly, I decided to use a case study design, with the hope it would provide the rich data needed to allow me to illuminate the uniqueness of ballet masters’ pedagogies. Conducting a case study allows for the collecting of data from the emic perspective, and in this way preserves the reality of what is being seen (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Grossman (1990) argues that case studies allow for expansion beyond description. A case study approach “...represents an attempt to gather in-depth data on the content, character, and organization of an individual’s knowledge for the purposes of contributing to a broader conceptualization of teacher knowledge and its use in teaching” (p. 150).

Stake (2005) identified the major conceptual responsibilities of the qualitative case researcher as: selecting and conceptualizing the case to be studied; looking for the important theme(s) or issue(s) to emphasize, and developing this by searching for patterns within the data; using triangulation for key observations; seeking out alternative interpretations; and finally, making case-based assertions or generalizations. As a new researcher using case study, I found his list particularly useful for understanding my task, and it was incorporated in my method.

In summary, the use of case studies is a valid and well recognized approach to research aiming to explore cases of special interest (Stake, 1995), and bounded by place, time, and activity (Creswell, 2009). Case studies allow for discovery of new meanings and extension to prior understandings, creating “images of the possible” (Shulman, 1983, p. 495), and offering a way of “making the tacit explicit”(Richert, as cited in Leglar & Collay, 2002, p. 862).

Grounded theorist Juliet Corbin (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) challenges the belief that new knowledge can only be developed through theory construction, stating (along with Stake) that the use of thick and rich description is a valid and powerful form of research. She sees it as a way to increase our understanding of the people we are studying and to develop a language of shared understandings, with the aim of building a “professional body of knowledge and enhance practice” (p. ix). From the field of dance education, Bradley (2001) shares this view, encouraging researchers to find ways to “write about the richness and specificity of what we do with depth, objectivity, and understanding”, and in this way “we will be building a shared body of knowledge on which we can elaborate” (p. 11). These views support my research intent.

Important Considerations for the Study

In the following section I discuss three key issues. The first is how I place myself within the study: my role as researcher. The second is how I came to select the participants. The third is the ethical issues that I encountered before entering the field.

Role of the Researcher - Bias and Assumptions

In case study research, the role that the researcher takes is critical. On this issue of *positionality*, Stake (1995) puts forward some of the choices that the researcher must address, in deciding: “(a) how much to participate personally in the activity of the case, (b) how much to pose as expert, how much comprehension to reveal, and; (c) whether to be neutral observer or evaluative, critical analyst” (p. 103).

My personal background is important here. Among the many perspectives from which I draw in my endeavour to make the strange familiar are those of dancer, choreographer, dance teacher and administrator, school teacher and principal, scholar, critic, and audience member⁴. Green (2005) and Stake (1995) recommend that case study researchers make their personal experiences and subjectivity visible, as case study relies heavily on “our sense of worth of things” (Stake, p. 134). Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest that in qualitative research, objectivity is a “myth” (p. 32). They explain that while researchers are attempting to discover what it is they wish to know, their interpretations are filtered through their own personal history and experiences: “...each person experiences and gives meaning to events in light of his or her

⁴ See *Curtain Calls – Personal Narrative*, for a short biography.

own biography or experiences, according to gender, time and place, cultural, political, religious, and professional backgrounds” (p. 10).

So I make no claim to be neutral, or to stand outside the work. Indeed, Ely (1991) claims that studying the familiar seems to be ‘increasingly important’, noting, however, that the researcher needs to proceed “without the blinders that familiarity often attaches to us” (p. 17). I believe my interests and lived experiences are themselves, influential components of the thesis. I describe some of them below.

The Educationalist

I believe that the significant time I have spent in education has allowed me a unique perspective with which to explore and discover the ballet masters’ pedagogies. Corbin and Strauss (2008) note that qualitative researchers are now “unafraid to draw on their own experiences when analyzing materials, having rejected more traditional ideas of “objectivity” and the dangers of using personal experience” (p. 13).

The Dance Student

My own student experiences in ballet, I believe, allow me to interpret more readily the interactions between master and students, and to observe the student responses from the viewpoint of having being in that position. This is not unprecedented in dance research. Stinson (1995), a respected researcher and writer on dance, noted that her lived experience of dancing influenced her thinking and writing, and she acknowledged the benefit of this in her work. I have a shared history of dance experience with many of the student participants, making it impossible for me to ‘pretend’ to be an un-informed, naive observer/researcher. This shared social capital comes from years of studio training and theatre experiences. It has allowed me, I believe, to better appreciate and understand the reasoning and content of the observed classes, participant discussions, and theatre environment. I can interpret the situations and events knowing that this will assist me in constructing meanings and insights not readily available to an outside observer.

The Dance Teacher/Administrator/Critic

Living the experience of dance teaching, and critiquing its performance, has given me a more profound appreciation and awareness of the masters’ knowledge, abilities, and efforts in the art.

I have had the opportunity to observe many dance teachers of varying ability, thus extending my understanding of quality teaching. Agar (1996) suggests there are real benefits from such familiarity, such as providing rich information.

My role in the research could be described as that of an informed insider-observer. However, as I am also a past student of the ballet masters in this study, and have been influenced significantly by their work, another representation of my role in this investigation would be that of a 'participant-observer'. Morris (1996) confirms the place of the participant-observer in dance scholarship, noting that many researchers in this field have been dancers themselves.

Regardless of designation, intrinsic interest such as mine, argues Stake (2003), allows for a stronger focus on the "case's uniqueness, particular context, issues, and story" (p. 155). In this study I actively engaged in discussions and interpret findings from my multiple perspectives, while acknowledging that this may introduce bias or subjectivity into my findings. However, Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest that, rather than objectivity, the qualitative researcher must have 'sensitivity': "to have insight, tuned in to, being able to pick up on relevant issues, events, and happenings in the data" (p. 32). Although someone with no dance training or experience may find things that I have missed, or take a different focus, I believe my ability to engage with my participants both as a researcher, teacher, educator, and dancer, allowed for discussions and observations at a deeper level than those available to someone not familiar with the field.

Selecting Participants

To achieve my goals, I needed to include the viewpoints of both masters and students. This necessitated a selection criterion for each. Stake (2003) provides a caution to researchers in this, noting that illuminating and gaining an understanding of the phenomena "depends on choosing the case well" (p. 151). Gardner (1995) notes that, as a research strategy to illuminate performance, "it is most important to work with individuals who represent the top performers in their domains and to try to understand them as they function in their environments" (p. 803).

The process of selection is described below.

Ballet Masters

Palmer, Stough, Burdenski, & Gonzales (2005) have found that the term ‘expert teacher’ has been used with considerable variation and with very little consistency. They recommend careful consideration of the unique contextual demands of the instructional setting being explored, pointing out that each context comes with its own unique teaching knowledge, skills and outcomes. Beaumont (2003) and Idzikowski (2003) both note the importance to a dancer’s career of choosing a ballet master:

It is impossible to devote too much care to the selection of a master, for your career depends to a very great extent upon the qualifications of your instructor. There are hundreds of so-called teachers, few of whom have distinguished themselves in the art they profess to teach (2003, p. 17).

Beaumont and Idzikowski (2003) suggest an examination into the teacher’s:

- *school* - the sources of the master’s own knowledge;
- *reputation* – considered from the dual positions of a teacher and a dancer;
- *personal qualities* – they believe a master should be “conscientious, patient, and a good disciplinarian” (p. 18);
- *teaching ability* in both theoretical explanation and practical demonstration;
- *student success* – an expectation of high achievements from pupils; and,
- *length* of teaching career.

Palmer et al. proposed a “two-gate identification procedure” when selecting expert teachers for a study. The first gate, *screening*, requires participants to have three to five years experience in their domain, with teacher knowledge commensurate with the field (indicated by relevant qualifications). The second gate, *performance indicators*, requires recognition from the field as to the exemplary nature of the participants. They state this should include “multiple constituencies, for example, fellow teachers, researchers, administrators, teacher educators...and should be confirmed with documented evidence of teacher impact on student performance” (p. 23). If these guidelines are followed, this “increases the likelihood that descriptions of expert teachers will be more consistent, verifiable, and generalizable” (p. 24), all of which are acknowledged to be problematic in qualitative methodology.

My criteria were that each master should have:

- taught ten + years, working with both pre-professional and professional students in the private studio environment,

- choreographed many dance works including new pieces, and classics, both short and full-length,
- been past, or be a present member of an international ballet syllabus examination academy/organization such as RAD (Royal Academy of Dance), BBO (British Ballet Academy) or equivalent, and have entered students in the academy's examinations with high results achieved,
- entered students in either national or international competitive events, with students receiving excellence and/or other awards,
- been invited to present national or international level workshops/master classes,
- trained students that have gone on to gain contracts with major ballet companies, nationally or internationally,
- been recognized within the ballet milieu, and beyond it, as accomplished teachers and choreographers, and are commonly referred to as a 'ballet master',
- gained significant public recognition for their contribution to dance by receiving honours or awards that are beyond that of the ballet context.

Ballet Students

My selection criteria for ballet masters gave me the expectation that each master would have many distinguished students from whom to choose. I required each student to have:

- trained for a significant period under the tutelage of one or both of the masters, including class, rehearsal, and performance work,
- received honours or similar distinctions during this time,
- been a member of a pre-professional or professional company under the direction of the master,
- have gained a national or international contract with a professional company.

Understanding that the above criteria are only achievable by years of training and experience, I further required my student participants to be at least eighteen years of age.

Ethical Considerations

Stake (2005) reminds case study researchers that they are guests in the “private spaces of the world” (p. 459), and so require good manners and a strict code of ethics. This research project met the necessary protocols of ethical requirements. Key ethical issues that apply to this research are: informed consent, voluntary participation, right to withdraw, permission, coercion, deception, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, and dissemination (Mutch, 2005). These are discussed below.

All participants have the right to be *fully informed* about the nature and consequence of the research project, giving their time voluntarily, and without coercion (Christians, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Providing and gaining informed consent was a necessary requirement for both the masters and student participants. Participants were informed of the research direction and intent, and their required involvement through interviews and/or observations. Invitation and consent forms (included in Curtain Calls - Ethics) were generated for each category of participant, and submitted to the University of Canterbury Ethics Committee, with approval granted. These forms were then provided to all participants, before involvement, with an opportunity given for them to fully review the information, and ask any questions (Snook, 2003). The forms also gave them the right to withdraw from the project at any time, and to withdraw any information provided (Mutch, 2005). All participants completed the forms prior to beginning the interviews or video recordings. Consent documents and all collected materials (audio and video tapes) were kept secure, under Ethics guidelines, during the course of the study (Snook, 2003).

A core ethical principle of research is to report the findings honestly and accurately, without fabrications, omissions (Christians, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994), or deceit (Snook, 2003). Ethical trust involves maintaining a relationship with your participants in which they can be confident you have recorded their words correctly, and taking care to do no harm to them either while in the field or in the reporting of the findings (Snook, 2003). One way of establishing trust is to provide them with their interview transcripts so they may check for accuracy and remove any comments that they do not wish to share (Cullen, 2005), and this I did. With this procedure, readers can have confidence in this study as a true and accurate representation (Merriam, 2002a).

Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the participants is both a stylistic and ethical consideration for case studies. Consideration needs to be given to how much to anonymize (Stake, 2005). Early in the research I was not certain how to present the findings. As part of the informed consent process, the masters, therefore, were given written opportunity to opt whether they would allow their names to be used, or use a pseudonym. We discussed the fact that because of their high-profile roles in classical ballet, and the small number of professional practitioners in New Zealand, pseudonym use might prevent their being identified (Christians, 2005; Mutch, 2005). All gave me permission to use their names, if I wished. However, after much reflection, I decided to use pseudonyms ('Zan' and 'Zin') for each master as I wanted the inquiry to be primarily focused on pedagogical practice, rather than being a historical biographical thesis on ballet masters. I also did not want the fame of the masters to influence the reception of the research. My decision to use pseudonyms was therefore a methodological consideration made within the research case context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). It was done to meet the aim of the research project and not as an attempt to anonymize the participants under any requirement of confidentiality as both masters have given written permission to be identified.

However, while I felt secure in the decision to use pseudonyms, I felt uneasy with not declaring the true identities of the included masters. On one hand, I strongly believe that the masters absolutely deserved to have their unique and well-acknowledged abilities recorded. I was concerned that not naming them might be disrespectful. On the other hand, very aware, as I was, of their individual artistic personalities, I did not want this project to be interpreted, *in any way*, as a comparative study of ballet masters. I felt that such an interpretation might seem insulting to them as unique practitioners.

Additionally, while writing, I found the use of pseudonyms to be more and more superfluous. I kept finding that the key points and quotes that I selected for inclusion within the introductory narratives and discussion were so characteristic of the particular master that anyone who knew them or had trained with them would have no trouble in identifying either one. I came to the conclusion that any attempt to maintain anonymity for the masters was impossible.

Therefore, while I used pseudonyms to allow the project to stay true to my research quest, I declared their true identities as a way to respect and acknowledge their contribution - to this

study, and to their life long work in the art form⁵. Indeed, I hoped they would view their inclusion as recognition of their expertise and connoisseurship; and my, and countless others', belief in them as outstanding artists of their time.

Summary

In this quest, there were many available paths. I have discussed the methodological considerations pertinent to this research project, and justified my decisions, particularly why I preferred a qualitative design rather than a quantitative one. I believe my decision to use qualitative inquiry enabled me to focus on the “lived reality of the research subjects” (Mutch, 2005, p. 60), viewing the masters’ practices in a way that is sympathetic to its “multivalent nature” (Horton Fraleigh & Hanstein, 1999, p. viii).

I have also discussed social constructivism and the use of case study approach, and explained the various roles I bring to the research. Finally, I have outlined the data gathering methods and how I selected my participants to ensure their safety and comfort, as well as mine as the researcher.

⁵ See *Curtain Calls – The Masters’ Mutual Pedagogical Lineage*, for the masters’ identities.

CHAPTER FOUR

Method

The Techniques of the Study

For a researcher's findings to be considered both trustworthy and credible by the reader - as true reflections of the participants' experiences – the method must provide full transparency (Bresler, 1998; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I have attempted to achieve that by providing a thorough explanation of the procedures I used to collect, analyse, and report the findings. I have also described the setting for this project, and how I gained access to it.

Finding the Participants

Ballet Masters

I needed cooperative ballet masters who not only met my selection criteria, but also were prepared to allow me access into what is a typically closed environment. Additionally, I looked for information-rich cases, a method referred to as 'purposeful sampling' by qualitative theorist Merriam (1998), who sees it as a valid means of selection where the researcher wants to "discover, understand and gain insight...from which the most can be learned" (p. 61). Agar (1996) refers to this as "...seeking out particular people who are specialists in an area you want to know more about" (p. 168).

I approached two masters who had been significant in my own dance background, meeting with them separately and describing the project to them in some detail. Both ballet masters graciously offered me access, and all the time I needed. However, their commitments required much planning on my part, and in some instances, travel to gain access to their current places of work.

Due to my ballet training experience with each master, they understood that I shared their love of the art and had a solid understanding of their practice. I believe these factors enabled them to accept my presence in their studios as an 'insider', not as an intruder. And, since I had trained with both for many years, I felt this would benefit the study in that I would be more able to

relate to, and interpret the findings. Ely (1991) notes that having, or establishing, a rapport with your participants can be beneficial in gaining richer interview data.

Ballet Students

To find student participants, I asked each master to suggest names of suitable past or present students who they thought would be appropriate. I also asked people within the field for names. I also made a list from my background knowledge of students who had trained with the masters. From this, I generated a list of possible participants.

I reduced the list by applying my selection criteria for student participants. As both masters had taught for many years, the remaining list contained a very wide age range. In an attempt to gain information that was current, fresh, and not romanticized with age, I decided to limit my selection to students who were either still dancing or practicing in the field. Additionally, I deliberately selected people who had trained with more than one master in the study or with other expert teachers. I felt students with such experience would bring a more informed perspective.

Then I removed people who were not able to be interviewed *in person* within the data collection period of the study. I wanted to introduce myself and my experiences before we started the interviews. I felt that sharing the knowledge that I had also trained with their master, and had a common background, would put the participants at ease, and allow me to explore their world more deeply.

The selection decisions resulted in a final short list of fifteen possible participants from which to choose. However, only two of the potential participants on the list lived locally. For the remainder I had to conduct the interviews when the participants returned to New Zealand from their overseas commitments, or wait for them to visit Christchurch (my home town) while on a ballet company's national tour, or travel to their location. In total, eight students were interviewed.

Completing these interviews, therefore, took several years and involved my making an overseas trip to meet with two participants I considered particularly important to the research.

My trips to interview my participants (masters and students) also gave me the opportunity to conduct informal observations on their ballet schools and companies, and discuss my research with many dance professionals, both artistic and administrative.

Gaining Access

The Setting

This research was conducted in ballet studios and performance theatres in New Zealand and Australia. These were very similar to those found throughout the western world. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) note that “any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity” (p. 24). The filters for this study are found within the project’s ballet setting: English speaking and first-world, with participants who are all New Zealanders. And, despite ballet often being typified as a female-dominated art, the participants included both genders.

Gaining Access as an ‘Insider’

My dance background made me a ‘member’ of this community. I was therefore readily allowed access by the participants themselves, or their participants’ ‘gate-keepers’ within professional companies. Additionally, if a student participant was one suggested by the master, an introduction from the master invariably granted me immediate access. I was able to enter this typically private and closed world, including the daily work of classes and rehearsals, freely. This allowed me to collect rich data from the ‘coal face’.

When I was observing the masters and not known to the dancers, the masters introduced me, explaining that I had once been part of it, and therefore understood the world in which they worked: the language of ballet, the nature of its practice, and its etiquette, format, procedures, and nuances. I felt the atmosphere change from one of uncertainty as to why I was intruding into their space, to one of ease. They knew I would not need to interrupt to ask for explanations that a non-dancer would require.

Data Collection

Stake (2003) recommends that when a case study aims to discover something that is not well understood, the researcher should look for both the common and the particular. To achieve this, he recommends drawing information from beyond just the case itself. He suggests looking further: the interviewee's background, the setting and context, and the use of informants "through whom the case can be known" (pp. 139-140).

Following Stake's guidance, this study used three methods to gather the necessary data on the masters' practices: semi-structured interviews; formal and informal observations of them at work, and; semi-structured interviews with the students.

Errington (1993) advocates the use of such 'close-up enquiries' to obtain detailed descriptions of teachers' work. In this way, he states, we can find out how teachers view their teaching environments and discover more about their personal and professional experiences. Taking a multi-faceted approach by using both observations and interviews is also a way of providing 'triangulation' to the study's findings (Ely, 1991; Hutchinson, 1988; Stake, 1995; Wolcott, 2009). Hutchinson asserts that observation provides only one method of discovery; it is readily open to misinterpretation if it is the only one. She recommends adding in-depth interviews as a way to "lend meaning to their observed experiences", thus giving opportunity for verification and clarity, and a deeper understanding of the participants' "lived experiences" (p. 125). Similarly, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) note: "if you want to understand the way people think about their world...you need to get close to them, to hear them talk and observe them in their day-to-day lives" (p. 35).

For this reason I included observations as, according to Corbin and Strauss (2008), they give another important perspective to a study, as "it is not unusual for persons to say they are doing one thing but in reality they are doing something else" (p. 29).

I hoped that this use of triangulation, through choosing to include more than one data collection method, would allow for confirmation of findings through a convergence of data, giving credibility to the results.

Using Semi-Structured Interviews - Considerations and Challenges

I used semi-structured interviewing in order to describe the masters' practices as richly as possible, and allow the participants to tell their stories in their own way (Merriam, 1998; Mutch, 2005). Thus, the interviews were conversational, as opposed to being directed and controlled, giving the opportunity for both the researcher and the participant to share in the construction of the interview. This, recommends Finlay (2002), generates a bidirectional relationship, which she calls "reflexivity." Similarly, Corbin and Strauss (2008) consider reflexivity essential to the research process, with the extent of its use depending on the researcher's own interpretation and its relevance to the work.

The semi-structured interview format allowed me to use a number of significant probe questions to encourage each participant to speak on the subject as fully as possible (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Mishler, 1986). Such probes act as memory guides for topics that the researcher has identified as important for exploration.

My 'insider' status was clearly an advantage in this process, allowing me to ask pertinent questions beyond the knowledge of a non-participant researcher. This informed the data, allowing it to speak in a more meaningful way (Glaser, 1992). It enabled me to make "often tacit assumptions about how to express and understand beliefs, experiences, feelings, and intentions" (Mishler, 1986, p. 7).

Ely (1991), however, reminded me that a researcher entering the field should do all he/she can to avoid preconceived expectations, and to take on the persona of a student in order to "truly see life through the eyes of the person we are studying" (p. 49). Early social constructivists Berger and Luckmann (1967) and phenomenologist Giorgi (1985) both encourage the qualitative researcher to put aside his/her own views and preconceptions while collecting data. Such 'bracketing' allows the researcher to see a situation with a new perspective and understand the world of the interviewees.

However, the situation was challenging. Many of the discussions evoked strong memories of specific events and moments from my past dance experiences. I found myself wanting to share my experiences, as so many of the participants' experiences resonated with my own.

Another challenge was keeping the participants on track when they wished to share a story they felt relevant. If time was available, I allowed this, and many interesting points emerged as a result.

Interviews with the Ballet Masters

In these I aimed first to explore the masters' background experiences - first as dance students, then as teachers - and then to explore their teaching practice, in particular their philosophies, beliefs and personal perceptions. I had no pre-set number of interviews, preferring to continue until I had covered my pre-determined areas. The result was eight to ten interviews per master, conducted over a period of a year, with each interview taking between one to two hours. Each interview was audio recorded for later transcription. I transcribed each interview, each time returning the transcript to the participants for checking. All this took a great amount of time, but it gave me the opportunity to review our shared dialogue, and to become very familiar with it.

Interviews with the Ballet Students

Because of the small size of the dance world in New Zealand, I personally knew, or knew of, most of the student interviewees. Thus, at the start of each interview, I was able to 'break the ice' by introducing some shared connection within the dance world.

The individual student interviews, like those with the masters, were semi-structured, co-constructed events. I asked the student to describe their own personal backgrounds in dance, and their training with the master(s), encouraging them to share their perceptions on their ballet master's knowledge and practice. I particularly sought to query, from their perspective, what set their particular master apart from their other teachers. What does he/she define or see as the differences? What do they think are the important, vital, necessary components in the masters' knowledge and abilities? I particularly asked them to define a dance master and whether, in their opinion, their master fitted within that criterion.

I allowed 30-60 minutes for each interview. I audio taped and later transcribed them. Copies of the transcription were provided to each student for any corrections or changes.

Some interviews continued well beyond an hour. All the students interviewed gave of their time and knowledge freely, often saying how much they enjoyed talking about their experiences. A

common remark was how they would love to make contact with their teacher again to have the opportunity to thank them.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) refer to ‘data saturation’ as the point where new data is no longer emerging, and the researcher can predict, from the data previously collected, the answers that the student participants would give. They recommend that at that point data collection should stop, as the data should now offer “considerable depth and breadth of understanding about a phenomenon’ (p. 149). Similarly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the time to leave the field is when the data repeats itself. Ely (1991) acknowledges the difficulty in knowing when to leave the field, and recommends doing so when the researcher feels able to speak for the participants “in a legitimate way” (p. 91). I found this point was reached with the seventh student interviewed. However, I decided to interview one more student to satisfy myself that ‘saturation’ had indeed been achieved.

In total, I interviewed eight students (four for each expert). Three of the eight had trained under both masters, which gave the opportunity to hear their viewpoints on both.

Ballet Master Observations

I conducted both informal and formal teaching observations in ballet studios and theatres, adding another dimension to the research. Ballet has its own unique ‘language’ (Adshead-Lansdale, 1999; Adshead, 1988; Hanna, 2001; Hong, 2003). When a master works with well-trained students who are familiar with ballet’s ‘code’, he/she can convey corrections or explanations of technique or artistry in a few words, or non-verbally with a small head movement, a side glance, or a simple hand lift. Many of these signals are very subtle and easily missed. Video-recording gave me the opportunity for repeated viewing, to identify these interactions, and other key components of the masters’ practice. My background in dance benefitted me in this.

In order to allow for realistic analysis within the scope of this research, I placed a twenty hour limit on making formal, videotaped, observations with each master. However, my time with each exceeded this, with access to one master available over a two year period.

In addition to class and/or rehearsal observations, I also attended all available performances under the artistic directorship of each master. I used field notes to record my observations.

Limiting Ballet Master Participant Numbers

Once data collection with my first two masters was complete, and after consultation with my supervisors and other qualitative researchers, I decided to limit the study at this point for two reasons. The quantity of data was more than anticipated and very rich. And secondly, including additional experts within the defined criteria would involve substantial travel costs, beyond the scope of the project.

My early data analysis revealed that both masters discussed the importance of influential people in their ballet and teacher training, some of whom were internationally acclaimed and renowned dancers, ballet masters, and choreographers. Therefore I extended the study to include the use of biographies and autobiographies of such people. I researched each person, and read available texts, then – if pertinent to discovery – incorporated references and/or excerpts within my discussions.

As dance is widely recognized as an art form (Cass, 1993; Clinton, 2007; Cone & Cone, 2007; Fay, 1997; Gilbert, 2005; Langer, 1953; Minton, 2000) that is traditionally passed down from teachers to students (Clarkson, 1988; Fay, 1997; Zeller, 2009), material on such influential people was clearly relevant to understanding the pedagogy of the masters. Relevant information from sources that had influenced the masters would, I thought, allow these past voices and views to enter the conversation, deepening the understandings of the masters' career development.

While not part of my initial research agenda, the fact that qualitative methodology allows for emerging design gave both flexibility and adaptability to the research direction. Indeed, it could be said that the masters themselves assisted me in shaping the research.

Additional Data Collection

In addition I spent over 100 hours informally observing a number of dance teachers at different stages of their career development. Although this data was not formally added to my data, I felt it helped me to gain added perspective on the particular challenges of teaching ballet.

Data Analysis - Design and Decisions

A key characteristic of naturalistic inquiry that it should evolve with the study's progression through data collection to analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Ely, 1991). Ely (1991) recommends approaching the data analysis with an initial broad question, such as "What is going on here?", allowing other questions to emerge naturally. To capture the nuances of being and becoming, a ballet master, I analysed the data with my initial question in mind 'What is the professional pedagogical practice of the ballet master?' While this enabled me to retain flexibility, it also created the need for me to accept a certain level of ambiguity. The early part of my research was an on-going intellectual battle, as I struggled not to impose limits or push data into pre-determined categories. However, from this came the opportunity to consider different ways of analysing the data.

Later in the project, after an initial analysis, I came up with more specific questions as a way to deepen my inquiry and convey the important elements of the masters' practices. These additional questions emerged during my time spent with the data, thus respecting the process of qualitative, naturalistic inquiry. The data itself, led me towards further discovery. Later, the questions evolved to become the titles for the three Acts, each Scene's focus question, and the sub-headings within the scenes.

Analysis - A Move from Paper and Pen to Computer Software

Analysis began concurrently with data collection. At first I used conventional paper and pen methods for coding. However, during the course of the work the latest edition of the qualitative computer software package QSR NVIVO 8, became available. NVIVO 8, and other similar programs are now recognized as useful tools for qualitative analysis (Bazeley, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Nordin & Cumming, 2006). Corbin and Strauss (2008) identify their benefits as being:

- allowing the researcher to reconsider data that might have been neglected under the old and laborious methods;
- the ease of being able to put data into multiple categories which can be reorganized as necessary;
- the potential for more categories to be formed, and;

- the capability for analysis to be completed one way, then another, “seeking alternative explanations” (p. 310).

Although the new edition of NVIVO 8 gave me some difficulties, it allowed me to remain flexible with my analysis and interpretation of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

During this period, I found the advice of Harry Wolcott (in Stake, 1995) to be particularly helpful in seeing through the mountain of data:

The critical task in qualitative research is not to accumulate all the data you can, but to ‘can’ (get rid of) most of the data you accumulate. This requires constant winnowing. The trick is to discover essences and then to reveal those essences with sufficient context, yet not become mired trying to include everything that might possibly be described. Audiotapes, videotapes, and now computer capabilities entreat us to do just the opposite: they have gargantuan appetites and stomachs. Because we can accommodate ever-increasing quantities of data – mountains of it – we have to be careful not to get buried by avalanches of our own making (p. 84).

Stake (1995, 2003) advises putting “your best intellect into the thick of what is going on” (2003, p. 149). He points out that the process of coming to conclusions is not necessarily being closely tied to the observations but drawing them from “understandings deep within us, understandings whose derivation may be some hidden mix of personal experience, scholarship, [and the] assertions of other researchers” (1995, p. 12). Similarly, Corbin and Strauss (2008) encourage continuing the process of analysis until “the ‘essence’ of what the participants are trying to convey is fully reflected” (p. 47). Principal founder of Phenomenology, Edmund Husserl (in Horton Fraleigh, 1999) was the first to propose the importance of describing experiences in order to identify the phenomena. He hoped in this way to return philosophy to a basic naming of essences: “the things themselves” (p. 4).

More specifically, for the task of coding and classifying data, Corbin and Strauss (2008) recommend separating the phenomena into its parts, looking within those parts to identify the properties and key dimensions of each, then use this knowledge to make “inferences about the object as a whole”(p. 46). Similarly, Marton (1988) sees the researcher as “not merely sorting data...we look for the most essential and distinctive structural aspects of the relation between the individual and the phenomenon”(pp. 146-147).

Accordingly, I first read and re-read all the material, and watched the videos many times. I then began coding the data into provisional categories. I compared incident against incident, looking for similarities and differences, and added to each category any conceptually similar incidents (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). For example, an essential category was critical influences in the masters’ backgrounds that had helped establish them as experts. I continued until conceptual

saturation occurred, defined by Corbin and Strauss (2008) as the time when the analysis process has acquired “sufficient data to develop each category/theme fully in terms of its properties and dimensions and to account for variation” (p. 195).

Searching for a Framework to Assist My Analysis

After multiple passes through the coding stage, with codes now totalling over 3000, I still did not feel that I had a suitable frame in which to structure and interpret the data. The data, perhaps because of the unique nature of dance knowledge, seemed incredibly resistant to being isolated into separate units, defined, and then contain in neatly packaged boxes. So much of it lay within the body and mind of both teachers and students, and had an inter-connectiveness that was difficult to winnow out (Horton Fraleigh & Hanstein, 1999, p. viii). Constructing a suitable framework that would allow me to ‘see’ clearly into the data, and describe and discuss it, proved extraordinarily difficult.

I returned to the literature once more for information that would help me make sense of what the data was saying. To further develop my theoretical framework, I read, or re-read, the work of Shulman (1986, 1987; 2004), Glaser (1992, 1996), Collinson (1996, 1999), Starkes, Deakin, Lindley, and Crisp(1987), Critien(2006), Chen (1995; 2001), Berliner (1986, 2001, 2004), deGroot (1966), Leinhart (1990; 1986; 1995) , Manross (1994; 1997), Grossman (1990), Rovegno (1998), and especially Strauss’s literary-interpretive analysis approach to Croce’s methodology, with his postulated three pillars of artistic excellence of dance appraisal (in Hanstein, 1999, p. 64). From this reading I attempted to construct a framework using a predetermined list of expertise characteristics, re-aligning this to my research.

I soon concluded that there was no point in forcing my analysis into anybody else’s framework. Pre-determined theories or hypotheses were preventing me from respecting the unique qualities of my data, and were making it difficult for its meanings to emerge. On this issue, I found myself in agreement with other researchers and theorists (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Sherman & Webb, 1988; Sparshott, 1995). Corbin and Strauss (2008) discuss whether the use of a theoretical framework is needed or necessary in qualitative research. They advise against imposing methodologies, definitions, or theories derived directly from other experiences “however enticing they seem”(Corbin & Strauss, p. 14). Instead, they advise that the researcher should try to deepen the understandings of things as they are, looking “within the experience

itself with the aim of understanding it more clearly and responding to it more intelligently” (Sherman & Webb, p. 13).

Alter (1996) also considers that researchers should avoid following in the footsteps of past dance writers who freely borrow conceptual or methodological models from other fields and attempt to apply them to dance. She sees this practice as problematic, arguing that the use of models from other fields, which are based on their own paradigms, places automatic limitations on the models’ application and “inadvertently preclude considerations of parts of dance which do not fit the borrowed theory” (p. 171). Copeland and Cohen (1983) lament the lack of dance theory in comparison to the other arts, and see the problem as stemming from the dance world itself. Dancers, choreographers, dance critics and historians alike, they think, have all neglected theory development, dismissing it “as either an irrelevance or an impertinence” (p. viii). They see theory “as the mind reflecting on sensory experience, uncovering the general principles that govern (and make possible) that experience” (p. ix).

Devising and Developing Conceptual Frameworks

I eventually developed two conceptual frameworks with which to analyse and present my data. The first, (non-specific to expertise), was the use of an apt metaphor to present my findings - the structure of a three-act ballet performance, explained previously in the Introduction.

The second framework was a prototypical view of the masters’ practice. Researchers (Alter, 1996; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Sherman & Webb, 1988; Sparshott, 1995; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995) have asserted that each domain has its own unique characteristics or key dimensions of expert practice, and recommend exploring this instead of ‘borrowing’ from other domains. At the end of each of the three Acts are the important key dimensions that emerged from the findings, which are presented in a précis in the Grand Finale. These dimensions form, I believe, a beginning prototypical understanding of expert practice in ballet teaching.

Devising these two frameworks gave me an immediate feeling of synergy. I felt, at last, that I had the appropriate form in which to present my findings. Corbin and Strauss (2008) claim that this synergy often occurs in qualitative work, when a researcher comes up with ideas that “feels right”.

Completing the Data Analysis

The collected data formed a kind of three-dimensional interwoven web containing the two ballet masters' knowledge, beliefs, experiences, attitudes, and aptitudes, all interconnected. I had to find a way of identifying the most significant 'strands' within the 'web'. A difficult task, as the 'web' resisted being separated into simple, clear sections. I discovered that in my initial NVIVO coding I had often placed the same data into multiple codes, as oftentimes the comment or observation seemed to be equally applicable to many areas of the masters' practices.

Using my new metaphoric frame of a three-act ballet, I re-visited all my previous NVIVO codings. I separated the significant findings into three identifiable areas, one area for each of the three 'acts'. Within each act are 'scenes', each containing important findings from the analysis. While this 'separation' provided the means to explore and discuss the findings, I must emphasize these are artificially created divisions undertaken solely for the purpose of the project. Often I struggled to decide where a multiply-coded finding would best fit. Leinhardt (1995) has noted a similar complexity in classroom teaching practice, and the difficulty in deciphering it: "...the practice of teaching is enacted and experienced as a coherent whole, not as separate sets of discrete management skills, subject matter knowledge, and pedagogical techniques" (p. 405).

Reporting the Findings

Stake (2003) recommends that researchers develop their own approach to reporting case studies, reflecting on:

how much to make the report a story; how much to compare with other cases; how much to formalize generalizations or leave that to readers; how much to include description in the report of the researcher interacting; whether or not and how much to anonymize (pp. 155-156).

I decided to begin with an account of how each of the masters developed his/her expertise, and then move to their current practice. I began with an introduction to each master in the form of a biographical profile (Mutch, 2005; Stake, 1995). I found that writing these profiles gave me a deeper understanding of each of the master's practice as a progressive event and a richer context for data analysis. This is supported by Polkinghorne's (1988) assertion that narratives are useful in comprehending the complexity of events and experiences, and provide a way for the researcher to form meanings. Further, dance researchers Fortin and Siedentop (1995) and

You (1991) recommend narrative, as it links the past with the present and gives the opportunity to understand the learning and experiences directly from the masters themselves.

On making decision on content, Stake (2003) notes that while “full coverage of the data is impossible” (p. 84), the researcher needs to identify the key episodes and from this, encapsulate the “complex meanings into finite reports ...to describe the cases in sufficient descriptive narrative so that the readers can vicariously experience these happenings and draw conclusions” (p. 141). He also suggests using “using ample but non-technical description and narrative. ...[which] may read something like a story” (Stake, 1995, p. 134). Corbin and Strauss (2008) note that the use of ‘lived experience’ or ‘narrative stories’ are replacing theory development research, and that use of description in this way conveys a better understanding to the reader of “what was (or is) going on” (p. 55).

For each scene within the three acts, I therefore used extensive description from my analysis to provide an accurate and rich account of the masters’ pedagogies (Bresler, 1998; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Geertz, 1973; Stake, 1995, 2003, 2006). I selected important examples and quotes to highlight the description and provide context, including excerpts of the masters’ observed practice by way of a DVD (Mutch, 2005; Wolcott, as cited in Stake, 1995, p. 84). When including participant quotes, I have used interpolations (with the use of square brackets) to assist with understanding and to clarify ambiguity. Also, words that the participants gave particular emphasis to during the interviews have been italicized. By doing this, I hoped to optimize for the reader the opportunity to “... gain an experiential understanding of the case” (Stake, 1995, p. 40).

On selecting examples and quotes, I noted the views of Corbin and Strauss (2008) on the relevance of negative cases. They recommend looking out for examples of these, as examples that do not fit may add richness to the case: “life is not exact and there are always exceptions to points of view” (p. 84). Also helpful was Stake’s (1995) view that while a significant finding can be seen in a single instance, typically the important meanings come from repetitive examples.

While I have included a traditional literature review chapter, I have also chosen to incorporate more relevant literature – as it became pertinent – within the Acts. Allowing the findings to direct the literature review, with the subsequent inclusion of relevant references, lets “voices already in the literature speak in response to newer voices” (Stinson, 1993, p. 206). This

treatment is supported by others working in the field of dance case study research, ie: Vieira (2007).

Boundaries of the Study

I placed boundaries on the study for reasons of manageability. For example, I did not attempt to describe the masters' specific teaching of technical skills - such as how to instruct a student to execute a perfect tendue, accomplish a double pirouette, or perform a complicated partnered lift. Nor did I endeavour to portray how the master developed necessary skills such as turn-out, placement, timing, extension, and so forth. I suggest that these elements can be taken as a 'given', as the ballet masters in this study have shown the ability to take students to the professional level.

As this thesis was not an examination into the masters' lives outside their teaching practice, I did not investigate their management skills, business acumen, and the like. This was not the context of study and falls outside its scope.

An issue that arises in qualitative inquiries is that of generalizability. As qualitative studies are contextual, typically no pretense of generalizability is made (Leglar & Collay, 2002). My study included only a limited number of cases, and had the goal of illuminating the pedagogy of two specific ballet masters, so it would be presumptuous of me to generalize from it. However, those interested in case studies, according to Stake (1995), are interested in making the *case* understandable, and "...their interest in generalizing from this to others is small" (p. 85). Although ballet in western culture shares an internationally codified method of practice (McCutchen, 2006; Vartoogian & Vartoogian, 1997), with standard expectations amongst its practitioners, this study is both contextually bound and situationally specific (Mutch, 2005). I accept Stake's (2005) view that the value and purpose of a case study is best seen as "not to represent the world, but to represent the case" (p. 460). He explains that significant learning can come from small, even singular cases, and while the *researcher* may choose not to generalize the findings, the *reader* has the freedom to do so by comparing the work to others with which they are familiar. *This* case is a contribution to knowledge in "making a slightly new group from which to generalize, a new opportunity to modify old generalizations." (Stake, 1995, p. 85). I hoped my findings would provide insight and understanding into the "essential character" (Stake, 1995, p. 29) of the two ballet masters I studied.

Summary

In this chapter I have justified the methods used to discover the professional pedagogy of the classical ballet masters. My design allowed the data to have a voice, finding its own areas of relevance and importance, falling within categories that emerged naturally from the data. In this way I avoided confining my data within the limits of previous studies of expertise, or propositions or models from other domains. The need to stay flexible, to look for new pathways and to stay open to changes in direction, reminds me of the process of choreography – how it emerges and follows one path, then is often changed, redirected, and rewritten on the human body, following another or even a completely different path.

PART TWO

‘THE PERFORMANCE’

**In Pursuit of Excellence:
Uncovering the Knowledge, Philosophies,
and Expert Practice
of the
Classical Ballet Master**

A ballet, in three acts

OVERTURE

An Introduction to the Performance

The Overture -

Before the curtain is raised the theatre lights dim, and from the darkness the first notes of the overture waft up from the orchestra pit. An instrumental prelude, the overture serves to introduce the audience to the key musical elements to come, creating with it an anticipatory environment. The music settles and quietens, giving the audience a chance to focus and enter the mood of the performance before the curtain lifts to reveal the story.

Previously, in Part One, I presented the project's focus, rationale, direction, theoretical perspective, and methods. Part Two is the result of an intensive period of data analysis. Presented as a ballet performance, it begins with an Overture, followed by the Prologue; Acts One, Two, and Three; the Grand Finale; and the Curtain Calls.

Each Act, within a typical classic European 'three act' ballet, is based on established style and tradition, and has the responsibility of telling its own piece of the story. Generalizing broadly, Act One may be set in a village or opulent setting, such as castle, with peasants dancing and dignitaries making dramatic entrances with grand processions. It introduces the story line and the ballet's significant characters. Act Two is set, perhaps, deep within a forest or lake side, and often centres on a dramatic conflict between good and evil. It typically contains an ethereal 'white ballet', using dry ice to create the desired 'mood' of an eerie and enchanted encounter, with the corps de ballet portrayed as supernatural sylphs, wilis⁶, shades, swans, or the like. In Act Three, the conflict now settled, the main characters return to the castle or village - now resplendent in festival mode - for a triumphant celebration, with much rejoicing by peasants and royalty alike. A grand finale, with everyone dancing, concludes the performance. Each Act, while an important part of a continuum, can also be expected to have its own individuality. In

⁶ The Wilis, led by their Queen (Myrtha), appear in Act Two of the classical ballet *Giselle*. They are the spirits of betrothed young women who were jilted and died before their wedding day. Between the hours of twilight and dawn they appear from their graves as ghost-like apparitions, seeking revenge on men by luring them to their moon-lit glade and dancing them to death.

this thesis, Act One introduces the significant characters - Zan and Zin, and their knowledge acquisition; Act Two focuses on what may be considered the ‘ethereal’ nature of their practice - their professional orientation; and Act Three develops understandings of their practice in the studio.

In my metaphor, each Act - following the curtain being ‘raised’ - is divided into two scenes, each of which discusses a particular focus of discovery, framed by opening questions that emerged from the analysis. In each scene, discovery and discussion is presented, informed by the literature, and with a précis of the masters’ practices as that scene’s focus. At the end of each Act is a ‘coda’. In a ballet this is signalled by a new musical movement - typically with much dramatic flair. The purpose of a ballet coda is to bring a suite of dances, a scene, or an act to a close, during which the principal dancers make a re-appearance. Essentially the ‘coda’ serves the same function in my thesis - bringing the ideas within the Act together and revisiting the major elements of discovery. And as the curtain ‘falls’ on each Act, the dancers hold their final pose, leaving the audience with a visual image. This is represented in this thesis by a synthesis of the overarching key features discovered to be central to the masters’ practices.

There are, of course, problems with this framework for presentation. In practice all areas of the masters’ work are interconnected. While the metaphor is a tidy way to ‘package’ my findings, my difficulty in this regard is not dissimilar to that identified by Sherman and Webb (1988). They describe the complexity of the problem thus: “A painting or a symphony is not a collection of objects or instances, but a whole in which the elements have significance or meaning only in relation to each other and to the whole itself” (p. 15). However, besides providing the project with an appropriate framework, the metaphor of the three-act ballet performance fulfils a number of important functions. Although these have been previously discussed in Chapter One: Introduction (Organization of the Thesis), it bears repeating that the metaphor works as a reminder that the *entire ballet* needs to be experienced in order to fully understand the story - the Acts, while vital to the story, do not stand alone. And the central focus of this thesis is that of coming to understand the professional practice of ballet.

To complete the ‘Overture’, below is a short introduction to each of the sections within Part Two.

Prologue

The Dance Journeys of the Ballet Masters

A ballet prologue typically portrays a significant prior event. It often introduces the main characters, and is essential to understanding the story which follows. In a similar way, I recognize the need to provide the reader of this thesis with a background understanding of the two participants' journeys towards becoming ballet masters. This is achieved by presenting a biographical narrative for each, introducing them and their life work within the field.

Act One

Exploring the Masters' Paths to Excellence

With an understanding of the masters' biographical profiles gained through the narratives, Act One reveals discoveries related to the masters' learning experiences in ballet, and their personal reasons for devoting their lives to the teaching of ballet. From the data analysis the following questions were constructed as a way to help provide a focus for each scene:

Scene One: What were the learning pathways to expertise for Zan and Zin?

Scene Two: Why do Zan and Zin teach ballet?

Act Two

Exploring the Masters' Professional Orientations

This Act aims to illuminate the professional orientation of ballet masters by exploring their professional dispositions and gaining an understanding into what they believe to be the most important element in their teaching practice. From the data analysis the following questions were constructed as a way to help provide a focus for each scene:

Scene One: What emerges as the ballet masters' key professional dispositions?

Scene Two: What do the masters believe to be the most important elements of their teaching practice – the factors that they value and regard most highly?

Act Three

Exploring the Masters' Expertise-in-Action

This Act aims to reveal the masters' expertise-in-action by looking intently into their expertise within their studio practice. The following questions were asked:

Scene One – Ballet Class -What are the Masters' key elements of practice?

Scene Two – Producing Performance - What are the Masters' key elements of practice?

Grand Finale

Summary, Considerations, and Reflections

A Grand Finale brings the performance to a close, with the leading dancers surrounded by the accompanying corps de ballet. In this Finale, a précis of the key discoveries from the two ballet masters', from across all three Acts, is presented. This is a first attempt at developing a prototypical view of a ballet master's professional practice, providing a new and revealing understanding into the unique nature of a ballet master's expertise in classical ballet.

PROLOGUE

The Dance Journeys of the Ballet Masters

The Prologue -

As the curtain is first raised, the prologue of a three act ballet serves as a beginning point to the story and sets the scene for the forthcoming Acts. It gives the first glimpse of the main characters, typically portraying a significant prior event, considered crucial for understanding the story which follows.

As the Curtain Rises...

As a ballet prologue does, I recognized the need to provide the reader with a background understanding of the two participants' journeys towards becoming ballet masters. The following section provides an introductory narrative for each of the two masters, describing their lives in ballet.

Biographical profiles are acknowledged in the literature as a valid way to introduce the reader to the case (Mutch, 2005; Polkinghorne, 1988; Stake, 1995). The following portrayals of the masters' journeys develop a contextual understanding of the learning and experiences within them (Fortin & Siedentop, 1995; You, 1991).

Each narrative gives an insight into the master's student training, and career. It highlights the struggles, pivotal moments, and successes, and acknowledges their contribution both to the field of ballet, and to society. By doing so, *it sets the scene* for the three Acts that will follow.

The interviews with the ballet masters provided the data for these narratives. Additional sources, such as biographical accounts, publicity articles, and reviews, were also incorporated to further inform the narratives.

Narrative One - The Dance Journey of Zan

The Student Years

Born in 1930, Zan spent his childhood years on a farm in New Zealand, and had no early childhood thoughts of becoming a dancer. However, while visiting a doctor to discuss difficulties that arose from muscular rheumatism, the doctor suggested he take up on some form of rigorous exercise to benefit his growing legs. While for most New Zealand boys that would mean enrolling in the nearest rugby club, this was not an option for Zan:

There was no good throwing me onto the football field - I was a weed and I would have been kicked higher than the ball, so it was suggested that something dance wise....

He found his rigorous exercise another way, by learning to dance. At age seven he began taking tap lessons. Soon after, his tap teacher left for England but prior to this she gently suggested he try another genre for which he might be more suited. This led to his first lessons in ballet. He stayed with his teacher for a number of years, enjoying not only the training but other positive outcomes that came with the territory:

Being the only boy I loved it. I just had all the girls around me, had them to myself. I thought it was a wonderful experience.

Zan had other significant interests. He loved poetry, music, and was a boy soprano at his Catholic school – winning a competition for his singing. However, he felt his true passion was music. Zan’s mother had been a music teacher, and started teaching him the piano, followed by tuition from the nuns at his school. Music was an important part of their daily, family life. He recalled family gatherings where everyone played an instrument or sang, and evenings on the farm veranda humming and singing along while his grandmother played the squeeze-box.

At age 15, Zan stopped ballet:

It never entered my mind for one moment, even as I started to grow up that it [ballet] would become a career - I was only interested in music.

In fact, Zan left school with the idea of becoming a music teacher. He recalled teaching students before school began, with his first student arriving at 6 am. Then, he would practise for six hours at the piano. And after school, he resumed teaching from 3pm to late. It was a busy period:

I did a lot of accompanying, and group work – trios and such, and generally improved my knowledge of music.

Zan studied under the Trinity College of Music, and gained the Licentiate Diploma (LTCL). The Trinity College of Music (2009) website describes this significant achievement by stating: “The standard of performance is equivalent to the performance component on completion of a full-time undergraduate course at a conservatoire or other higher education establishment” (Webpage: Music Diplomas). Music was a serious endeavour for Zan, so much so that he seriously considered the career possibility of becoming a concert pianist.

Circumstances changed when, as one of only two boys dancing at the time in New Zealand, he was asked perform in one more season:

Terrible I was, but I went back and thought I was really wonderful!

This experience led to a renewed interest in ballet, especially after receiving a letter from his ballet teacher, who was in England at this time. She wrote to Zan, suggesting to him that:

I should, in some way, try to combine my music and ballet together. She was in England and was sure that I would be able to make a career out of it. That was the point where I started to think about a career in dance.

Zan turned his attention to this endeavour, and in 1950 he successfully applied for a New Zealand Government Bursary (Jahn-Werner, 2008). This bursary was a financial award which provided the necessary funds for the recipient to travel overseas for dance training and experience, with the expectation that the person would return to share this new knowledge with New Zealand. So, at the age of 20, Zan moved to London, hoping to find opportunities within professional ballet companies so he could start his learning. He recalls his feelings of responsibility to New Zealand:

I felt obligated to use this bursary so that I could eventually come back to New Zealand and return some of the investment that had been made - that was a *real feeling* that I had, and there was no alternative to it and I never considered *any* alternative to it at that stage.

A Professional Dancer

In England, while still a student with the Sadler’s Wells School, almost immediately he found himself performing student work with the company (now the Royal Ballet) at Covent Garden. Often placed in menial roles, as befitting his ‘student’ status, he saw this is an opportunity to watch and learn from some of this era’s most famous dancers:

I was, at times, standing on stage for three weeks holding on to a spear in the third act of *Sylvia*, or had a trumpet around my neck, but you watched people like Fonteyn etc, and all these *dancers*.

Zan took various classes at different studios, learning from many well known teachers of the day. One of his teachers, Spanish dance expert, Elsa Brunelleschi, called with the news the Jose Greco Spanish Company was looking for an extra. At the audition Zan discovered the ‘extra’ was not for the non-dancing part he expected but for an *extra dancer*. He found himself surrounded by the most fabulous Spanish dancers, in an experience he recalls as one of the most terrifying moments of his life. Zan was accepted, and made his debut in the company’s London Season.

Following his training, Zan began the search to join a professional company. He successfully auditioned with the Ballet Rambert, joining a three month winter tour of the provincial theatres of England and Scotland. Zan recalls this period being a particularly low one for the company, but with a ballet repertoire that was “*wonderful*”. The touring proved to be extremely hard work. Zan recollects the experiences of dancing on stages of all shapes and differing standards of quality, often lacking in amenities, with costumes held together by the name tags of others who had worn them before. This provided him with a complete change from the well-resourced environment of Covent Garden:

A real eye opener to me, introduced me to the touring side of ballet and everything that goes with it. It’s not very glamorous. I learnt about touring small theatres...it was a real hard grind.

During a break before the next tour was scheduled to begin, he received an offer to join the prestigious London Festival Ballet. This was a large, well-established, company, with an extensive classical repertoire and some of the best dancers and teachers of the time. Although Zan knew that not making this move would be a mistake, he felt a strong sense of loyalty to his obligation with Marie Rambert, and because of it, almost declined:

...she [Rambert] was going through a difficult time. But I was persuaded to join the Festival Ballet. I have a card from Rambert - which I treasured greatly throughout these years - saying she quite understood the situation and that she was sorry to lose me but wished me the very best of luck. The card actually became glossed over by white hard vanish which we used for sticking our wigs and things on, and it sort of sealed it. And over the years when goings have really been tough, I have looked at that card and thought of what Marie Rambert went through all those years ago and it’s been like a talisman for me, it really was, it was wonderful.

In the Festival Ballet were professionals that had been in the expatriated gifted Russian impresario, Serge Diaghilev’s, companies – the Ballet Russes (Kalisch, 1920). These dancers had worked alongside many of this era’s most distinguished artisans, composers, ballet teachers and choreographers – leading artists around whom Diaghilev surrounded himself and his company. These people included: Massine, Balanchine, Cecchetti, Fokine, Picasso, Cocteau, Braque, Matisse, Grigoriev, and the composers: Igor Stravinsky, Strauss, Satie, de Falla,

Sauguet, and Prokofiev. Diaghilev's companies also had world acclaimed dancers such as Nijinsky, Karsavina, Lopokova, and many others. And during this prolific period of new works, ballets such as *Prince Igor*, *Scheherazade*, *Le Tricorne*, *La Boutique Fantasque*, had been created on, and with, these dancers. Zan was now in the midst of learning from these extraordinary people – some first hand:

We had some wonderful people who were there to guide us through, these were dancers that had created great roles with the Diaghilev Company and they were *wonderful* people.

Zan gained more than ballet experience with the Festival Ballet: in fact, he met his future wife. A founding member of the company, she was the first person Zan was assigned to dance behind in the ballet *Petrouchka*.

While with this company, Zan continued to develop his respected, and later, much revered techniques of characterisation. For example, in the production of *Alice in Wonderland* he found himself cast in the role of the snail. For his performance, he received the following amusing comment in a dance critic's review:

Zan made such a life-like snail, he seemed to leave a trail of slime in his wake.

Later, he was to be described as “a dancer with deeply informed musicality and outstanding dramatic expression” (Arts Foundation of New Zealand, 2003).

Zan spent a number of years dancing with the Festival Ballet, travelling to Europe and United States during the difficult post-war era when the world was in a period of recovery and revitalizing. The company was warmly welcomed, and Zan recalls enjoying this time immensely:

It was marvellous...what a *wonderful time* it was for creativity and the ballet world was exploding...I mean, literally, people were drinking out of the ballerina's slipper - although I can't think of anything worse myself.

Zan danced many roles in major classics and new ballets, reaching the level of Soloist, and Principal Dancer. He recalls this period:

Dancing with some of the great dancers of the time, working with some of the greatest artists of the period who really created works...it was both a learning period, a very satisfying period. I was very sorry when that part of it was over.

Zan made the decision to return to New Zealand to fulfil his obligation under the government bursary. On his application he had stated it was his intention to return within five years, to begin to teach:

And that was something that I put on myself - to come back and to pass on anything that I had managed to gain in the years I had been away. There never was any doubt in that, because I felt obligated. There weren't that many grants. And you really felt the government was giving money that belonged to the people, without sounding dramatic. For the large sum, I might say, of \$360 pounds/year for two years!

With alternative European options available to him, and with the knowledge that other bursary recipients didn't feel the same sense of responsibility as he did, this was a difficult, and pivotal, life choice for Zan. He reflects on the conflicts around his decision:

We are very, very pleased we did. I am pleased because I am here [New Zealand], but I also wonder just how far I could have gone over there [Europe].

After his travel with the comforts befitting a world-class ballet company, the trip home to New Zealand with his wife, as two ordinary citizens, was a presage of what was to come:

For the first time we were on a ship when we weren't ...at the centre of attention as we were with the ballet company, we were suddenly here on our own. So a whole new life was starting on the waves of the sea as we tried to adopt this new life that we were going to have to lead.

Starting a Life of Ballet Teaching

Zan returned home to New Zealand in 1957, with great plans in mind, and the expectation of being warmly welcomed by the dance community because of his reputation as a dancer of some repute:

We were given a very big welcome, and in my speech of thanks I said how much I was looking forward to working with them over the coming years and they realized I was back to stay! ... I very quickly realized that actually, not very many people were interested in the reputation other than a 24 stop over! A 24 hour stop over - we would have been welcomed with open arms! Any longer, was questionable.

Zan set about creating a new life for himself and his family. He tried to establish his own school, taking the necessary Royal Academy of Dance (R.A.D.) examinations to gain his teaching qualification and membership. Times were hard:

We were brought down to earth with an enormous thump. So we really had to struggle, we struggled so hard.

After having difficulties in establishing a private school from the 'ground up', help came by the formation of a partnership with two experienced ballet teachers. From this welcome base, he started teaching and producing ballets. This experience provided him the opportunity to learn about the ballet psyche in New Zealand and its social network, and from it he gained the skills needed to find success within his own country:

We had to relearn everything - how to approach students, how to approach amateurs, all that it entails, it's awfully complex unless you are going to stand on everybody's toes, literally.

Opportunities led to his becoming the producer for the Auckland Ballet Theatre (and dancing in lead roles), followed by the single season of the 1959 United Ballet Company – a joint venture between the New Zealand Ballet and the Auckland Ballet Theatre (Jahn-Werner, 2008). Performances were held at the three major cities in the country. Zan danced in this, with other noted dancers of the time: Rowena Jackson, Philip Chatfield, Sara Neil, Walter Trevor, Paul Gnatt, and June Kerr:

We gathered the talent that was coming back to the country and made a start. We all danced, and had all that experience ready to give before gradually moving into directing and teaching.

Artistic success, if not financial, was found:

...[the] first performance in Christchurch almost killed us before we started...the usual story - the performance was a *huge* success but the numbers didn't show up, but that has happened over and over again, but the company has kept going and going.

From the success of the season was established the New Zealand Ballet Trust, with Zan becoming part of the Artistic Directorate, continuing his association with Paul Gnatt while remaining with the Auckland Ballet Theatre (Jahn-Werner, 2008).

Over the next twenty-eight years Zan held directorships in three significant New Zealand ballet organizations: Artistic Director of the Royal New Zealand Ballet (1962-1968, formally known as the New Zealand Ballet), Director of the New Zealand School of Dance (1967-1968, formerly known as the National School of Ballet), Director of his own Auckland based company, the New Zealand Dance Centre (1969-1977), and Director of the Southern Ballet Theatre from 1978-1990 (Arts Foundation of New Zealand, 2003; Jahn-Werner, 2008; New Zealand School of Dance, 2008; Thomas, 1985).

Horsley (2002), writing on the 50th Jubilee of the Royal New Zealand Ballet, included a telling quote on the high level of work being produced under Zan's directorship:

When Royal Ballet dancer Dorothea Ashbridge arrived in the mid sixties with her husband, the famous New Zealand dancer Bryan Ashbridge, she feared the worst. Surprisingly, "they were marvellous, I couldn't believe it. Here was this simply fabulous ballet with wonderful dancers".

During his career he worked with countless dancers – some were New Zealand's most acknowledged professionals - choreographed new works and re-staged classics, and produced numerous ballet seasons. A former Artistic Director of the Royal New Zealand Ballet spoke of

Zan's accomplishments: "...a living legend in New Zealand dance and responsible for some of the most successful productions in the history of the Royal New Zealand Ballet" (Skoog, 1999).

Following these years, in a period which most would consider to be deservedly saved for retirement, Zan took the opportunity to freelance teach and choreograph. He found that being freelance put him in a very different position:

My demands placed upon me as a choreographer over the years have been mainly to do with what type of ballet is required on this particular occasion, and on most of these it has been the type of ballet that is necessary to put bums on seats. Only on two or three occasions have I been able to create ballets without those specifications. In other words, I have gone into a ballet and thought "I am going to do what I feel I want here" and I suddenly found I had a new way of going about things so that my choreographic invention was almost a new experience for me in many ways. And so..., I have been learning again.

Contributions beyond the Studio

Zan has been involved on various boards, councils, and initiatives pertaining to dance, such as: Royal New Zealand Ballet; Southern Ballet Trust; Choreographic Commission of the Queen Elizabeth Arts Council; Community Arts Councils; Christchurch Dance Education Bursary Trust. He also held positions as Vice Patron of the Auckland Dance Company, and Patron of the International Ballet Academy.

Official Acknowledgements

Zan received many honours for his significant life-long contribution to dance in New Zealand. He was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Fellowship for recognition of services to dance (1977), and a Queen's Service Medal (QSM) for Services to Ballet in the New Zealand community (1986). In 2000, Zan was appointed an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) for services to ballet and dance. An Order of Chivalry, instituted by Royal Warrant, the Order is "for those persons who in any field of endeavour, have rendered meritorious service to the Crown and nation or who have become distinguished by their eminence, talents, contributions or other merits" (New Zealand Government, 2009).

Zan was selected as an Inaugural Artist of the prestigious Icon Award, bestowed upon him by the Arts Foundation of New Zealand, an award of which he is most proud. Established in 1993, The Icon Awards – *Whakamana Hiranga* (Maori: Honouring Pre-eminence) – biennially

honours the greatest living artists who have devoted their lives to their art. While they are typically internationally renowned as leaders in their field, this award recognizes their significant New Zealand achievements and influence as “ local pioneers in their chosen art forms.” (Arts Foundation of New Zealand - Icon Awards, 2008)⁷.

⁷ The goal of the Arts Foundation is to establish an elite living circle of up to twenty Icon Artists. When entering this circle, the artist receives a medallion and pin. Following the artist’s death, the medallion will pass to a successor, and in this way “the *mana* (Maori: authority, prestige, quality, recognition) of each Award increases over time as the medallions are passed down through generations of our finest artists”(Arts Foundation of New Zealand - Icon Awards, 2008).

Narrative Two - The Dance Journey of Zin

The Student Years

In a unique beginning to dance training, when Zin was a very young child and out for a walk with her mother, a dance teacher stopped her mother, saying, “I would love to have that little girl learn ballet. Would you consider bringing her when she is old enough?”

So Zin began ballet lessons at the age of five. During her student years she recalls training with some very good students, some of whom later went on to have careers in overseas ballet companies. Performance opportunities were not a regular or common occurrence for dancers during this period; in fact Zin recalls dancing in just two recitals. Stage experience could be gained, however, from entry into dance competitions. During her student years, Zin travelled almost yearly to compete in such events. This was a testament to her ability, as her ballet school teacher allowed only a carefully selected few to compete. Zin found a great deal of success at these events, often winning with her dances.

Despite these experiences and achievements, Zin recalls that her heart really was not in the performance side of dance. Even from a young age, she already knew she wanted to become a ballet teacher:

I didn't really ever like performing, I didn't mind, but I used to be nervous, but I was passionate about teaching.

This preference stayed with Zin throughout her teaching career. She recalls being asked by another ballet teacher if she would take an adult cameo role in *The Nutcracker* ballet:

...but I said I would really rather not, [I] didn't really like the performance side, but loved the teaching.

Zin continued to learn ballet into her teenage years, taking examinations in the Royal Academy of Dance program (R.A.D.) as she progressed in her ability. She recalls having two teachers, one she describes as a ‘lovely dear lady’, and the other she recollects as having an assertive style of teaching.

Family Influences and Choices

Zin came from a talented, artistic family, describing her mother as being an exceptional singer, and her father an artist. Zin's mother had always wanted to learn to dance, but didn't have the opportunity, so she encouraged it for her daughter. However, Zin discovered she had a talent for playing the piano, with a natural 'ear' for music. She described how the piano affects her at a deep emotional level, by recalling a childhood moment of when a classmate played *Fantasy Impromptu* on the piano, and:

...the tears used to run down my face.

She returned home and imitated playing her own piano, practicing the tunes from memory. Her parents came to realize she was determined to play, and that she had a musical talent, and so finally her grandmother gave her a piano on which to practise.

At age 15, her parents took her to a well respected piano teacher for lessons. The teacher told Zin she had a rare gift for music, and Zin excelled under the tuition. But tensions arose as she found it increasingly difficult to fit in all she wanted to achieve with her activities. Her father wanted her to continue with piano, saying to her, "you will always have your music, while you won't have your dancing." But her mother was adamant that she should not leave ballet after progressing so far. Zin recalled:

There was a fight for ballet and a fight for music.

Besides ballet and the piano, she was also taking speech lessons and ballroom dancing classes, and even at this young age she was training her own ballet students. It was decision time for Zin:

I couldn't practise my music; I had to let learning the piano go. You can't do justice to everything, but I'm still very passionate about music. I'm *crazy* on music, and I just absolutely *love* good music. But I would never have changed places; you get so much joy out of teaching. As you get older I must say the piano would be easier on the body!

Zin then went on to complete the necessary training in preparation for the challenging Advanced Ballet examination of the Royal Academy of Dance. She successfully passed the exam, an important step, as this qualified her to become a R.A.D. ballet teacher.

Early Teaching Experience

Even as a very small child, Zin remembers the experience of teaching as feeling completely natural. She recalls the memory of using her dolls as her first ‘students’ - lining them up and ‘teaching’ them steps.

Her first teaching experience, *with students*, occurred while still a primary school student herself:

I was in Standard 4 [age 10/11] and I taught all the girls in Standard 6 [age 12/13], much to their disgust. I took a willow stick off the willow tree, and had them doing a big white ballet for the Red Cross concert at the church Sunday school.

At age 15 Zin was teaching ballet part-time, while still taking lessons herself. She used to bike to the studio, with a tape recorder on the front and her books on the back. She recalled, even at this young age, being confident enough to make suggestions on music and choreography to her ballet teacher:

I used to go to ballet and tell [her teacher] that I had a beautiful piece of music and that I think she should do ‘this and this’, and ‘that would be a really good step there’.

Ballet was pervasive in her life, even to the extent she was teaching students in her bedroom with the addition of a ballet barre, helpfully put in by her boyfriend. Later, as a newlywed, she recalls using the upstairs lounge in her house as her teaching space:

It was perfect as we had no carpet, we couldn’t afford it!

Using every hour in the day, and teaching from home (in addition to studios) became a common occurrence. Describing one such instance, she recalls a teacher asking for her help with a particular student who was struggling to perfect her turning technique just prior to an examination. The only teaching time Zin had left available was early mornings, so the lessons began at 6am – at Zin’s home – followed by Zin’s taking the student to school. She found this early morning time to be a very productive for students, and on many occasions throughout her career held similar early morning sessions.

Studio Teaching

After high school Zin had taken a position as a private secretary, teaching ballet outside her work day. However, a past ballet friend contacted her, asking if she would be interested in joining a partnership with her in opening a ballet school. From this first ballet school experience, Zin went on to teach in a number of her own studios. Choices for professional dance studios were limited. Zin recalls some of the difficulties with locations:

One was down an old alley and sometimes on a Saturday morning there would have been a big party the night before and the place was awash with alcohol and tins...I had to turn around and wash all the floors before we started at 8am. Another had windows right along the top...I was always terrified the children were going to lean out the window and fall below.

Her early teaching days also brought challenges in regards to music. In her early days of teaching Zin used an old radiogram but music was typically only used as the yearly examinations came close. Additionally, when teaching from home, Zin had no access to music. This she found frustrating as she believed that developing musicality in her dancers was fundamental to the art form. Music was a source of inspiration, motivation, and artistic expression to Zin, and she wished to nurture that in her students. Consequently, whenever possible, she would have a pianist working with her in class, despite the expense. Zin enjoyed nurturing a close professional relationship with her pianists, and over time this would typically develop to the point where her pianist could anticipate Zin's musical requirements – selecting appropriate music with the correct rhythm and tempo - before Zin had the chance to give the directions. Because Zin often taught open classes (non-R.A.D. syllabus work), having a pianist with these adaptive skills and wide repertoire was important to her. As time progressed technology made it possible to have music readily available, but her preference was always to have an accompanist for class work.

While Zin preferred to follow the Russian-based system that she had developed for teaching, she felt pressure from parents to provide syllabus work with yearly examinations:

...People want exams, parents want a document...I was R.A.D. trained so the school was R.A.D. based and all the children were put through the R.A.D. exams, but I taught using my own exercises – with every class coming out of my head, until right up to the R.A.D. exams when I would have to swop back to the syllabus.

Establishing a Name for Excellence

Zin worked relentlessly to establish her name and school. As her students began to be noticed, by gaining top exam results, winning awards, and gaining places in international companies, Zin also began to be known as a teacher of repute.

Besides ballet competitions, nation-wide ballet training camps, and viewing other teachers' work at recitals, the only way to compare standards between schools was by the yearly examination results. Zin's goal was to work herself and her students to the highest possible level of excellence:

We always got the best marks... we were with the highest in New Zealand. [One year] I had fifty-nine majors [senior students] all on my own, and that was the most in one place in New Zealand.

Becoming known as a teacher capable of producing New Zealand's future dancers brought with it a heavier work load and large class sizes, yet her impressive results continued.

During her career Zin has worked with, and hired, tutors recognized to be in the forefront of ballet teaching. Many had returned home to New Zealand with years of overseas experience in major companies or had held positions in established private ballet schools. Zin has guided tutors on their paths to becoming ballet teachers. She has mentored them as they gained their teaching qualifications, and steered their artistic endeavours as they prepared and presented new ballet productions. She has encouraged their on-going training and choreographic skills, and provided opportunities for them to expand into other genres: character, national, contemporary, jazz, and hip-hop.

Founding a New Regional Ballet Academy, Company, and Theatre

By the early 1970s Zin had firmly established a flourishing school with an outstanding and conscientious staff. The school had gained a well-deserved reputation for excellence. This, and the quality of Zin's dancers, was noted by a visiting overseas R.A.D. examiner, Herida May. This recognition, along with encouragement from supportive friends, was the driving force for Zin to form a pre-professional training company for talented students. This was an exciting development for New Zealand ballet. A new trust was formed to establish the first South Island

based ballet school and company. It was called the Southern Ballet Theatre Trust. Zin was founder and artistic director of the new company, 1975-1977, and returned to hold this position again in 1990. The role of the company was to “complement the national company, not to compete with it.” It had “its own particular identity, took ballet back to remote centres throughout the South Island, and created a plateau from which the company could grow with confidence and security” (Thomas, 1985, p. 14). New Zealand’s first full-time regional performing and teaching ballet company became a well-established training ground for dancers, offering technique classes, repertoire work, and many performance opportunities each year (Hay, 1990). From this launching pad, many students graduated into professional dance.

The first production to be staged was the full-length classical ballet ‘*Giselle*’. Performed before capacity houses, it established Zin’s vision for the company. Of the performance, a critic wrote “a ballet of world standard” (Thomas, 1985, p. 4). Soon to follow this was the establishment of the Southern Ballet Foundation as a supportive and fundraising entity. In 1975, after much work by the Trust and Foundation, a move to the historic Arts Centre of Christchurch gave the school and company access to quality studio facilities. Over time, a wide repertoire of ballet works was developed, with up to 14 works produced in a year. Guest artists were invited to take principal roles in major productions, including one of the New Zealand’s foremost male ballet dancers, Sir Jon Trimmer, KNZM, MBE (principal dancer of the Royal New Zealand Ballet), and one of Zin’s former students, Fiona Tonkin (much acclaimed former principal dancer of the Australian Ballet Company, now principal coach and ballet mistress). Partnering Tonkin was Ou Lu, an exceptional dancer from China, who was dancing at that time with the RNZB. Tours to regional centres were undertaken, with much travel and a variety of performance venues. Later, a purpose-built home-based performance venue was constructed, giving the school and companies their own small theatre space in which to perform. The first of its kind in New Zealand, it was opened on December 8, 1980.

In 1980, Zin founded her first junior ballet company. This was followed by an intermediate company. Together the two companies catered for a wide age range of talented students, from eight years old through to teens. These companies focused on both technique and performance, and had the goal of preparing dancers for careers in ballet. Zin enjoyed producing performance seasons for her companies, and for her yearly gala productions, which included the entire school. She created many new works, specializing in classical and neo-classical styles, and re-

staged the classics such as *The Nutcracker*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Coppelia*, *Peter and the Wolf*, and more.

The Trust continues today, still led by Zin in its continual quest to provide quality dance education to Christchurch's children. It now incorporates other dance styles: contemporary, jazz, and hip hop, and has added two jazz companies.

Balancing Family and Teaching

During her career, Zin found herself juggling her role of being a loving wife and mother with her successful teaching practice:

I used to get all the house work done, polish my kitchen floor every day, and rush down to the studio to get the work done there. I was doing all my own books [accounts]. ...

Zin's dedication to her teaching was so all-embracing that she returned to teach as soon as possible after the birth of each of her children:

The day I had my first child I was back from the hospital in the morning and back to the studio that afternoon. My mother was very cross with me. I had written out all my classes [exercises] while still in the bed.

Her success with ballet created long work hours and responsibilities that demanded more of her time, often taking family time, after-school hours and weekends. On occasions during her career Zin tried to put her passion for ballet aside by taking time out. Hoping to convince her to stop, her husband offered to buy her a grand piano in exchange for her leaving teaching. She took up the offer:

Do you know, he bought me a grand piano...and I did give up ballet - for three weeks!

While sometimes she was able to take a break, inevitably she returned to teaching. Currently, although she no longer teaches full-time, she continues to spearhead the direction of her ballet school and companies, in the role of Artistic Director. In this capacity she teaches the occasional class, works with the companies – training and choreographing select pieces for productions, and continues to provide encouragement, guidance, and advice for her tutors.

Contributions beyond the Studio

Zin was a key figure in the establishment of the Christchurch Ballet Society in 1961. As the founding director she guided its initial charter and steered its direction. The Society produced a biannual major ballet production which gave an equal opportunity to all ballet students – from any studio in Christchurch - the opportunity to audition and take part in a theatre performance season. The Society also established a yearly summer school program, inviting international tutors to instruct in various dance disciplines. This week-long program gave students access to high quality instruction in repertoire, classical technique, character, pointe work, and modern dance, and culminated in an evening of dance performance to show the learning gained over the week. During the week the tutors would select the two most promising students, who were then presented with an achievement award that gave them the opportunity to attend the New Zealand School of Dance (formerly the National School of Dance) for an intensive two week period. The Society also established an annual weekend of competitions. In recent years this has become a significant biannual event, attracting dancers from throughout New Zealand. It is judged by an expert panel of national and international dance professionals. Currently, Zin is the Patron of the Society.

Official Acknowledgements

In the Queen's Birthday Honours of 1991, Zin was awarded a Queens Service Medal (QSM) for Community Services to Ballet. Zin is a lifetime member of the Royal Academy of Dance.

As the Curtain Falls....

This prologue, which presented an introductory narrative for each ballet master, was included to introduce Zan and Zin to the reader, illuminate their dance journeys, and provide an insider's view, and background understanding, of their life's work in the field.

ACT ONE

Exploring the Masters' Paths to Excellence

Quickly, without a break in the music, and while the curtain is down for only a brief moment after the prologue, the set is changed and dancers – full of anticipation and nervous tension - stand by. Perfectly timed, and in total black-out, the curtain is raised. The lights slowly illuminate the stage setting and the story begins.

As the Curtain Rises...

Important to understanding the practice of a ballet master is the *process* by which they gain their knowledge expertise – both in content and pedagogy. Understanding *why* they chose to devote their lives to teaching ballet is also of particular interest. To illuminate the masters' views, two framing questions, which emerged from the data analysis, are used to create two separate scenes in this Act. The first, *Scene One*, questions how the masters acquired their knowledge. *Scene Two* questions why the masters devoted their lives to teaching ballet. This Act is informed by the data analysis and the biographical narratives of Zan and Zin (previously presented in the Prologue).

In this Act, each scene contains a short introduction, followed by a descriptive discussion entitled 'Emerging Key Themes', and an interpretative discussion entitled 'Interpreting and Making Connections with the Literature'. The first discussion aims to present the most significant key aspects from the analyses of all data, *with pertinent interview excerpts from the masters and students as evidence, with germane comments from their observed studio practice*. The second provides a précis of the masters' practices and a deeper discussion into what these emerging key themes represent, drawn from the interviews and the literature.

Act One concludes with a coda, containing my final reflections on the masters' acquisition of knowledge. And as the curtain falls, the key dimensions of a ballet master are presented.

SCENE ONE

How did Zan and Zin gain the knowledge to become ballet masters?

A teacher can only teach if they have had the experience of the art form with all its diversities. You must completely understand what you are talking about, and then evolve that process within yourself so the dancer can make use of it. - Zan

In ballet, much of the training continues to be taught to the student in a step-by-step mimicry style, or role-modelling, with teachers typically using the same or similar methods by which they learnt themselves (Clarkson, 1988; Erkert, 2003; Fisher, 2006; Gray, 1989, 1990; Kimmerle & Cote-Laurence, 2003; McCutchen, 2006; Scheff, 2005; Wulff, 1998). The expectation is that, over time, and with countless repetitions, a movement becomes cemented into the student's muscular memory from which it is reproducible in perfect form. Having a 'master' as a role-model, to follow, look up to, and emulate, seems to be a necessary component in producing quality dancers, and consequentially, dance teachers. The literature describes this learning relationship as a *master-apprentice* relationship model (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Erkert, 2003). Similarly, Grossman (1990) calls this style of learning 'apprenticeship by observation'. Dance training is based on master-apprentice relationships because of the nature of the knowledge to be transmitted, and it is a practice still accepted, and even favoured, for arts instruction, according to Garner (1993). Indeed, it is recognized by the dance literature as the traditional mode of training (Erkert, 2003; McCutchen, 2006).

However, the apprenticeship approach was restricted for Zan and Zin because of the context in which they first started learning, and continued, on their paths to becoming ballet masters. At that time, New Zealand had very little in the way of an established ballet culture. Therefore, teachers needed to gain training overseas, in ballet's European cultural epicentres. A second barrier to the application of the apprenticeship model was New Zealand's geographic isolation. To study under the European masters required a long sea passage, at a cost beyond the means of typical post-war New Zealand citizens. Thirdly, exposure to international events and culture by

way of television and videos was not a possibility; New Zealand's initial, and very limited, television broadcasting did not start until 1960 (New Zealand History Online, n.d.)⁸.

The study of Zan and Zin's knowledge acquisition reveals how they overcame these barriers and became pioneers in the teaching of ballet in New Zealand. The following section provides a closer focus on their key learning experiences, which complements the earlier narratives presented in the Prologue.

Emerging Key Themes

Zan and Zin's journeys to become ballet masters followed very different paths. Therefore, *for this scene*, discovering how Zan and Zin gained the knowledge necessary to become exemplary teachers requires considering each master's experiences *individually*. First, Zan's learning will be explored, followed by Zin's. Key points are emphasized by the use of *italics*.

Zan's Learning Experiences

The *need to gain a thorough understanding of the art form* was considered by Zan to be vital in his preparation for teaching. In his view, being a worthy teacher required much more than an understanding of studio syllabus teaching. While training, he set out to learn about all the important elements of ballet, including artistry, technique, choreography, professionalism, and more:

It was always in the back of my mind that I get as much experience as I could. The only way you can learn this is to have the experience and work with those who have achieved it. I never thought of [starting] teaching until after I got all the experiences necessary.

His commitment was significantly assisted by his government bursary. This gave him the opportunity to hurdle the barriers to learning in one giant leap, providing him with the financial means for *international travel* and an entrée to one of England's best ballet academies. This exposed him to the best of professional training and performance experiences of the time.

⁸ Interestingly, as an indication of ballet's significance as an admired and respectable art form, New Zealand's first television broadcast included a live interview with a visiting international ballerina (New Zealand History Online, n.d.).

While overseas Zan took every opportunity to *learn directly* from many of the world's most influential and esteemed dancers, ballet masters, and choreographers. He recalled his student and company classes:

I was able to learn from some of the great teachers of the time. The teachers had an aura about them that was very new to me as a greenhorn Kiwi.

He acknowledges the *exposure to these professionals*, both teachers and the dancers within the companies he joined, as being *crucial to his development*:

I think most important was that we had some wonderful people who were there to guide us. Later [in my career] I suddenly realized the value of having worked with these people – they had been there right from the very beginning when the first ideas [for a new ballet] had come along, with composers such as Stravinsky, and the artisans that Diaghilev surrounded himself and his company with.

In particular, he recalled his time with the esteemed Russian dancer and choreographer, Leonide Massine⁹:

Observing someone like Leonide Massine, or any of those choreographers, they all gave me a wonderful opportunity to observe the creative processes of these people, how they overcame difficulties, how they went about casting, and I learnt very quickly, of course, that no casting sheet is going to suit everybody, in fact the only people completely happy with the casting sheets were normally the principals!

Zan recounted many such occasions where experts informed his knowledge. For example, he recalled his first teacher, Stanislas Idzikowski,¹⁰ as one of the most influential to his career. Idzikowski taught him many of the key aspects of artistry and technique:

A little man, my New Zealand teacher had been to him and recommended him... I felt I had something to learn from him. He must have been sixty and he could do six or seven pirouettes and finish up in a double tour [French: *tour en l'air* = turn in the air] in suit and shoes!

Idzikowski was very hard on the technical; the technical base was absolutely imperative... I realized the depth of his knowledge about technique, and the depth of his experience as an artist. I mean, quite beyond the technique, I began to understand about the artistic side of it, and that was very, very important to me, *absolutely vital*.

⁹ Massine, born 1895, was a principal dancer with Diaghilev's company following Nijinsky's departure, and later appointed chief choreographer in succession to Fokine. In 1915, when preparing his first ballet for Diaghilev, he claimed he would create one hundred more, including such epochs as *The Three-Cornered Hat*, *La Boutique Fantasque*, and many more (Massine, edited by Hartnoll, & Rubens, 1968). In 1951, retired from performing, he produced *Gaieté Parisienne* and *Capriccio Espagnoles* for the International Ballet company (Inglesby & Hunter, 2008).

¹⁰ Idzikowski had been an acclaimed principal dancer with Pavlova's company, the Imperial Russian Ballet, and with Diaghilev's Ballet Russes. He had also helped develop the Cecchetti Method (an international teaching syllabus) with the Italian dance teacher, Maestro Enrico Cecchetti (information from Zan's Interviews). Idzikowski, "A great virtuoso dancer, a great star", was ballet master during the early years of the International Ballet, producing *Carnaval* and *Les Sylphides* (Inglesby & Hunter, 2008, p. 5).

Another significant teacher for Zan was Harold Turner. Turner, recognized as a key figure in early British ballet, had been a principal dancer with the Vic-Wells (later the Sadler's Wells, now known as the Royal Ballet), and was teaching at the school during the period that Zan attended as a student. His honesty with Zan created a pivotal moment in his career:

He taught me a tremendous amount, again very professionally of course, but also he was very honest. He was the one that told me that my general looks were not really suited to classical ballet as such, and therefore I would not develop in the Sadler's Wells Company. While it was very hard at the time, it was very honest and good for me because it made me decide that I needed to move on. And so I auditioned for Ballet Rambert, and I was accepted by Rambert.

Turner continued to provide Zan with inspiration, reproducing two ballets with the Festival Ballet while the company was under the directorship of Anton Dolin. Zan, during his time as a member of this company, recalled:

From him [Turner] I learnt that you can tell a company 'I know everyone is feeling so tired this morning' and ten minutes later [he would] have them dance their heads off! He just had that natural gift for *enthusing* you into what you were doing, not putting too much pressure on you at the beginning, letting you warm-up, feeling your way through a ballet, through the movement or whatever, and then going back and saying 'this is where its wrong...'

The influence of Turner was such that Zan integrated Turner's rehearsal methods into his own teaching:

I have always felt this [to be the right method] to this day. I will do the whole first movement through, straight through, non stop, even though there are *thousands* of things wrong with it at the moment, to give the dancers (a) a chance to warm-up, (b) I want to get them to know where they are going. Then we will do a little tidy up, and go on to the next movement. Some people will do it the other way where they want everything to be absolutely right from the 'word go', do two bars and those two bars must be exactly right. I don't work that way, only because in my experience the time runs out. You have *got* to let the dancers, like athletes, pace themselves. Dancers have to know long before they get to a performance where they are going and how they have to pace themselves to last the distance and analyse the physical energies they have to put into anything at any given time. That was very much what I got from Harold.

During his time overseas Zan acquired an extensive *knowledge of ballet repertoire*. This would later provide him with much to draw from when starting to produce and choreograph his own productions. He re-staged many of the traditional classical and character ballets, and drew on this vast wealth of experience and knowledge to choreograph and produce many original works.

Zan's emphasis in ballet's *artistry, in being 'theatrical'*, was a recurring theme in his interviews. He had many instances to relate on this key aspect of ballet. For example, he discussed the theatrical style of the Russian-trained prima ballerina dancer and teacher, Danilova. Taking her class, he recalled:

Danilova was one of the best. She gave very excellent classes, again a very sound, solid, technical base but added something on top of that. One also has to remember the very nature of these people, they were

Russian, they were different, they were very theatrical and played on it...it supplied the feeling that we all love if you are attached to the theatre, theatrical as well as being good solid work. And let's face it, if you are in the theatre, it's that theatricality that really gets at your gut and nothing else.

And early in his overseas experience, while a student, Zan talked of the countless hours he spent watching ballets from the wings, or as a member of the corps, using this viewpoint to study the many elements of performance:

I was immediately combining both the observation of what was happening professionally on stage with the great artists of the Covent Garden, both from opera and ballet, at the same time I was taking the classes. ... You absorbed all the different things that were happening on stage, problems that arose from a scenic or musical point of view, how the audience could vary from night to night, one night laughing at one thing, or crying over another, and the next night it would be something totally different. And when you are still learning to improve your technique, that was, really, a valuable experience.

Watching and dancing alongside some of the pre-eminent dancers of the period provided Zan with the opportunity to learn from their vast artistry:

All these people that came and danced with us....Dame deValois¹¹, Alexandra Danilova, Margot Fonteyn...The artistic...the insight was offered to me. I could stand in the wings, and on stage learning it... the dancers in the roles would be changing so you would see different interpretations night after night ...and in their various ways this provided an opportunity for me to look at how these artists worked and see what their artistry was. You could see how they cope with tensions, how they cope with difficulties, the unexpected, what they did to capture their audience

From his varied experiences, Zan discovered the value to his career of being able to learn class and repertoire work very quickly:

At the same time I studied Spanish dancing with Elsa Brunelleschi. She was the foremost Spanish teacher at that time and it was wonderful...You just started at the back of the class, nobody actually taught you the steps, you picked up the steps, and the more you picked up you could make your way forward a little bit in the class. I was fortunately able to pick it up quite well and it wasn't long before she phoned me up one day that the Jose Greco Spanish Company wanted an extra for their London Season. ...that was my next introduction to professionalism because I had to really fight my way through that one.

Zan told how a negative experience can offer a positive learning opportunity. Observing the teaching methods of a well-known *régisseur*¹² provided him with a valuable lesson in the need for a master to be cognisant of the progressive nature of ballet, of *continuing to learn* in order to stay at the forefront of new trends and changes in style. Zan explained:

¹¹ Dame Ninette De Valois (1898-2001), originally from Ireland, trained with Espinosa, Legat, and Cecchetti. Following her dancing career as a soloist with the Ballet Russes, she founded the Vic-Wells Ballet (later the Sadler's Wells, now known as the Royal Ballet), and became a noted choreographer. She is considered to be one of the most important contributors to establishing English ballet's strength and prestige, and was made a Dame of the British Empire for her work (Dame Ninette de Valois, 2008).

¹² French: a dance company official who usually directs productions, often taking complete control over every aspect.

He [the *régisiseur*] ...reproduce[d] certain ballets of the repertoire for the Festival Ballet and strangely enough, from him I learnt how *not* to go about things, because he tried to recreate the period of time when he was working, when these ballets were being created, and so he *imposed* these ballets on us, he *changed* the ballets that we were doing and *imposed* the older style. Consequently the productions lost their vitality because we weren't allowed to express ourselves in our own particular way. That was a lesson to me: never to try and reproduce exactly as it had been done by somebody else; if you are going to reproduce a ballet, or create a ballet, it has to be for those people who are doing it at *that* time and gradually let them [the dancers] take it over. So that was another learning experience for me which was very useful.

Rather than seeing ballet as a stagnant art form, locked in a particular time-frame, this experience, and others, led Zan to view it as *always evolving*:

It is important to realize that while you are teaching from all that knowledge in the past, ballet is still evolving as a dance form and therefore you have got to keep up with the flow and go along with it and encourage it, and be able to cope with the fact that there are certainly more freedoms, that some steps are approached in a different way, that there is a different psychological approach to elevation, or whatever, any of those things...

I find that every day that I choreograph a ballet, or take a class, I am always learning something new, because It's never static, I never feel static, because it is *always* evolving.

A student of Zan's also reflected this view:

They need to relate to the modern dancer...relate to the fact that times have changed and go with that.

As a teacher establishing his practice, and throughout his career, Zan applied this lesson, *seeking out professionals* from whom to learn and share knowledge. For example, back in New Zealand, he began to teach classes, using the popular training method of the Royal Academy of Dance (R.A.D) syllabus.¹³ As a beginning teacher, he recognized the need to find others who could assist him. He was grateful to be able to work with a particular well respected teacher who shared with him her methods and skills in teaching syllabus classes:

She had worked out systems whereby she knew she could get through a syllabus over a certain period of time, the number of times you can do particular exercises and all the rest of it. So from her I was able to learn, to absorb, how to go about that as far as syllabus classes went, because you have got to cover a certain amount and you have got to make certain all the students are aware of that.

¹³ The R.A.D was established in 1920 in London, England, to provide an organized system of ballet training. Started by a group of five eminent dancers interested in raising the quality of teaching standards, this group represented the five main schools of teaching of the time: French (Edouard Espinosa), Italian (Lucia Cormani), the Danish Bournoville method (Adeline Genée), the Imperial Russian (Tamara Karsavina), and the English (Phyllis Bedells) (Royal Academy of Dance, 2009). From this starting point, the Association of Teachers of Operatic Dance of Great Britain, as it was initially called, created an examination syllabus, first for teachers, and later extended to include students. H.M. Queen Mary was the first patron of the Academy, with HM Queen Elizabeth II consenting to take her place upon Queen Mary's death. Currently, the R.A.D has 13,000 members in 79 countries, and is internationally recognized as being one of 'the largest and most influential dance education and training organization in the world' (Royal Academy of Dance, 2009).

Similarly, Zan recalled making a return trip to England where he observed classes taken by the renowned master teacher, Marie Fay:

She was a teacher that I admired. I found I could learn by observing her, because I would be able to see many, many bodies. If you are sitting there observing then you have got all these different bodies around you, and you can see how each individual responds to that style of teaching. And that again is a great learning process.

Later, when Zan entered semi-retirement, the heavy responsibility of financial management that came with the job of being a company's artistic director was lifted and with it the restrictions that hampered his choreographic freedom. He found himself in another period of discovery, continuing to learn within the art form again:

...there had always been this [financial] tie to my choreography. This was released somewhat in more recent years...in so far as I didn't have any other responsibility, no other responsibility, except to choreograph and I suddenly found I had a new way of going about things so that my choreographic invention was almost a new experience for me in many ways.

In another example of continuing to learn, Zan described how, as his body physically aged, he needed to find new ways of teaching. For a ballet teacher whose life is based on movement and expression through the body, aging, and its resulting consequences, brought new challenges to teaching. Zan worked to find ways to adapt:

Now I have to think in a completely different way as I prepare my choreography. There are hurdles within my body...rather than choreograph by the feel of the body, I have to choreograph by the feel of the movement. I have to visualize so much more...it becomes more mental and more imagery.

Despite this difficulty with his physical movements, Zan viewed retirement years as bringing many positives. He felt that a life of experience in ballet, with a solid repertoire to his name, gave him the opportunity for new discovery in his choreographic work:

I felt that at an age that you are really getting on, and after seventy-one ballets, I was suddenly discovering that I was able to say things in a slightly different way, and feel freer about it. And so the last five or six years, I have been learning *again*, going over again, things that I have been able to choreograph in a slightly different way and this is great, this is good.... As a choreographer you actually never stop developing and never stop realizing that there is so much more on the horizon to do.

A student acknowledged, and appreciated, the immense effort that a master - such as Zan - brought to teaching from *a life committed to this endeavour*:

Having that wealth of experience... that, you can't learn anywhere else but from doing a 50 year apprenticeship through the teaching world.

Zin's Learning Experiences

While Zan's path to becoming a ballet master benefitted from significant outside influence, circumstances were much different for Zin. She had the singular responsibility of developing her pedagogy individually. Indeed, Zin's path to becoming a ballet master was predominantly achieved by *shaping her own knowledge and identity as a teacher*. Zin viewed her training as an extension of her natural desire to teach:

I spend my life, my *whole* life, from morning to night, thinking about ballet. Because ballet is beautiful, the music is wonderful, and I love seeing the children do well. I love the challenge...

With her student training in the R.A.D syllabus as the foundation of her knowledge, and driven by her wish to train her own dancers, Zin started teaching at the young age of 15.

She valued learning from experts in the field, but due to the lack of role models and ballet masters during her early teaching years, she had to rely on *developing her own methods, primarily independent of outside influence*. It was not until later in her teaching career that she had the opportunity to travel, visiting the USA and observing both classes and performances. However, she *participated in professional learning opportunities, and took note of the expert teaching methods and quality ballet practice* available in New Zealand. An example was attending student training concourses. At these events, teachers had the opportunity to observe guest tutors at work in class and choreography. As they typically had renowned international master teachers as course tutors, this was a wonderful opportunity for Zin to learn from observation. Later, as she became established and recognized for her training ability, she was frequently asked to be a guest tutor at such events. Other professional learning opportunities included observing any touring ballet companies' master classes, and attending the annual R.A.D. examiners' classes for teachers.

Zin explained that her own personal and professional teaching emphasis lay in *training her students to the highest possible level of excellence in classical ballet technique*. This, she stated, can only be achieved with conscious and consistent effort:

You must demand a high standard. I was always wanting the children four times a week, *loved* to have them four times a week, to get the results and get them up to a brilliant standard. Then I can ask them to do something and I know that they are thinking the way I am thinking. That's why I love to train my own students. I don't care how hard I work, my interest is getting them where I want them. And if you make it *interesting* they will come because they get *so* good.

A unique learning opportunity was presented to Zin early in her teaching career, by way of a book. Written by the Russian prima ballerina Olga Alexandrovna Spessivtzeva (1895-1991), the book contained a record of her daily training schedule, detailing each of her technique exercises. Spessivtzeva first trained at the Imperial School of Ballet in St. Petersburg, with the world renowned Russian masters – Fokine, Kulichevskaya, Sokolova, and Vaganova¹⁴. After graduating, she danced with the Mariinsky Theatre (St. Petersburg, Russia), Diagaliev’s Ballet Russes, and the Paris Opera Ballet. Considered to be one of the foremost ballerinas of the 20th century, she also made numerous historic guest appearances, danced with leading ballerinas of the time (Danilova included), and was partnered by world renowned dancers such as Nijinsky, Vilzak, and Dolin (Dolin, 1966).

Spessivtzeva was famous for her punishing training regime. Dolin recalled: “...using a chair as her barre, she would exercise for an hour until her woollen tights and cashmere sweater were wringing wet. This was her prayer to the dance, this tremendous physical approach” (p. 67). Her daily class, reported Dolin, was:

Ritual, prolonged, almost fanatically-performed exercises, first at the barre, then the adagio of unsupported slow movements, followed by the intricate *enchaînements*¹⁵ of the dance and the everlasting perfecting of her ballet repertoire. Hers was a hard, personal routine. She rarely gave lessons, only occasionally offering advice and help...Others found her teaching, her routine of training too exhausting for them, and it was far too discouraging to be seen in a mirror beside her” (p. 40).

Receiving this book was fortunate as Zin had the utmost respect for the Russian style, considering it to be the best in the world, evidenced by the ballet dancers produced by it:

I always loved the Russian system...I am very passionate about the Russian style. ...I remember the Russian company came out here [to New Zealand] once, and they did *Spring Waters*. And I will *never* forget it as long as I live. They were so amazing they had to go back and do the second half of it again. The public would not let them go.

Zin was so adamant in her conviction that the Russians were producing the most accomplished, artistic, dancers of the time, that Zin undertook an intensive period of *self-directed study*, incorporating the Russian ballerina’s technical style, methods, and work ethic, into her teaching philosophy and practice. From this, she created her *own unique syllabus, which became the foundation for her own teaching*:

¹⁴ These teachers, and their training techniques, continue to be influential in producing quality dancers, to this current time. Indeed, Vaganova went on to develop a school and method, in her name, that continues to be internationally taught in studios today. These teachers trained under the chief Imperial School ballet master, Nicholas Legat (1888-1914) himself a renowned dancer who had dance partners such as Anna Pavlova, and Olga Presobrajenska.

¹⁵ French: series of dance steps set to music.

These classes were based on Spessivtzeva - one of the best dancers in the world of the day. I wrote down all my classes to a working system that I thought I could get good results from... it took me months doing this, and I stuck to those religiously, that's how my open [non-R.A.D. syllabus] classes were taught....

Although Zin used the R.A.D syllabus as her official training program, she preferred to use her Russian-adapted classes, often crediting this as the reason for her students' successes. She recalls her students, having gained places in international ballet schools or companies, being asked if they were Russian trained. Proud of this compliment, and its recognition of her teaching skills, Zin commented:

That's the way I have always gone, and that's what I would do again.

A student recalled,

People thought I had been Russian trained, [because] I was not the normal R.A.D. That was part of Zin's teaching - not just R.A.D but open works. They [her Russian classes] were really hard exercises, different exercises, and so in that respect she was ahead of her time.

Zin's appreciation of Spessivtzeva's training and acclaim, and its influence in her practice, are validated by some of ballet's most significant contributors. For example, Dame Marie Rambert¹⁶ described Spessivtzeva as one of the world's *prima ballerina assoluta* (in Dolin, 1966, p.xii). This revered title is bestowed only on the world's most outstanding prima ballerinas, in recognition of their perfection in the art. In 1921, Rambert recalled observing Spessivtzeva during a class with the Italian Maestro, Cecchetti. She commented on her perfect form as being:

...the ideal appearance of a ballerina...[with] a wonderful quality of movement...and her astonishing capacity for work in her search for perfection. ...the suppleness of her body, the lightness and height of her jump, the lightning speed of her *batterie*¹⁷ the steel points of her highly arched feet - she had all that (p. xii).

On Spessivtzeva's artistry, Rambert described her interpretation of Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty* as: "...unique, not only because of the beauty of her dancing, but also because of the subtle transformation of mood from one act to the next" (p. xiii). So moving was Spessivtzeva's portrayal of pricking herself with the spindle that Rambert recalled feeling as though her resulting death: "...was the doom of beauty itself". Andre Levinson, eminent historian of dance, wrote: "She is unique and singular...Genius would find a worthy habitation in the body of Spessivtzeva" (in Dolin, 1966, p. 40).

¹⁶ Dame Marie Rambert is known as one of Britain's 'mothers' of ballet, a dancer, teacher, director, producer, and founder of Britain's oldest dance company - Ballet Rambert (Rambert Dance Company - History, 2009).

¹⁷ French: refers to jumps where the feet are beaten together or crossed in the air.

Sir Anton Dolin, himself a *premier danseur* and one of her favourite partners thought she was: “the most superb, the most wonderful dancer I have ever seen. ...Spessivtzeva combined...nearly all the attributes of Pavlova and Karsavina” (p. xiv). He proclaimed her a: “dedicated artiste of the ballet, a fanatical, religious high-priestess of the dance” (p. 38). He recounted an English student’s experience of taking a class with Cecchetti, at which Spessivtzeva was also present:

No sooner had she started her exercises at the barre than they all realized they were in the presence of genius...they were called up in groups in four to do the adagio exercises for the day...and fell back , one by one, and left her dancing alone. At the end...he rose, went to her, and kissed her hand. The class broke up in disorder...from then on, Olga was given a private lesson. Her influence, as the Maestro said, was too devastating to have her working in the class with other pupils (Dolin, 1966, p. 22).

Dolin noted Cecchetti’s admiration for Olga Spessivtzeva: “...even though he worshipped at the feet of Pavlova, even he could not hide his admiration for Olga, openly expressing the opinion that ‘she was better than Pavlova’” (Cecchetti, in Dolin, 1966, p. 29).

Vilzak, considered to have been one of most significant teachers of the Russian style in America, recalled Spessivtzeva’s exceptional ability: “I held many ballerinas in my arms, Karsavina, Trefilova, Kschessinka, Egorova, Lopoukhova, Nemtchinova and Danilova, but Spessivtzeva had a spiritual quality that set her apart. Hers was a ‘religion of the dance’” (in Dolin, 1966, p. 19).

Another influential event for Zin occurred early in her teaching career: that of observing another tutor at work at a week-long training school. Zin noticed the tutor’s use of well-planned lessons, her paying close attention to the students’ progress, and noted the positive effect that *excellent organizational skill* had on student learning:

Many years ago I went on a course with students and I was so impressed with the tutor - who is now a major examiner - she had everything written down. By the end of week the students had really gone away with something.

Zin applied this discovery to her own teaching practice. She found that by being meticulous with her pre-planning of classes and choreography, her time with students was not only much more effective, but she could see its success in her students’ forward progress. She continues to place a high value on preparation:

So I have always planned my classes, I have always thought that everything should be written out. You need a system where you get through so much in a term, so that you are not repeating your class, and you are covering the work, and you are spending enough time on each job, not just looking up the syllabus and thinking ‘right we will do this today, no, we did it last week.’ You need the whole term organized, or at least that’s how I work. It’s the same with choreography, you waste time if you aren’t prepared.

Another *significant influence on Zin* was a visiting *R.A.D. examiner from England, Herida May*¹⁸. May, who received her training with Maestro Serguéeff¹⁹, joined Mona Inglesby²⁰ in her newly established company, International Ballet (Harvard Theatre Collection: International Ballet, 2005). Inglesby (2008) recalls May as: “one of most valued principal artists in the company. ...remembered for the elegant and authoritative lyricism of her dancing” (pp. 99-100). Following her successful dancing career, May became a ballet mistress and examiner, known for her exacting requirement of technique and artistry in examination candidates.

While examining R.A.D. candidates in Christchurch, May gave an unprecedented number of Zin’s students the highest grades possible. She was clearly surprised at the level of excellence she had found in a city so separated from the R.A.D.’s home base, so in a highly unusual act for an examiner, she asked to meet Zin. May congratulated Zin on the superb quality of her dancers, informing her that in her opinion, Zin had dancers of such high calibre that she could form a ballet company capable of successfully staging the demanding classical ballet, *Giselle*. Such a complimentary opinion, from an impartial and highly qualified source, gave Zin the confidence to follow her advice. Thomas (1985) noted how May’s visit, was the driving force for Zin to take the substantial step of *establishing a new regional ballet school and company*.

During her career, Zin built up an extensive library of ballet books and videos, with both classical and contemporary works. She added to her knowledge by watching these intently, studying the training, teaching, and choreography of other masters, and applying her learning in

¹⁸ May, a principal dancer with the International Ballet, danced leading roles including the Lilac Fairy in *The Sleeping Beauty*, and took classes with the Maître de Ballet of the company, Stanislas Idzikowski (ex-Diaghilev’s Ballet Russes) (Inglesby & Hunter, 2008). For a short period, the virtuoso performer Harold Turner, a principal dancer from Vic-Wells (now Royal) Ballet, danced with the company, as well as many other established stars of the time, including such greats as Leonide Massine, and Nina Tarakanova. (Harvard Theatre Collection: International Ballet, 2005; Inglesby & Hunter, 2008). May’s contribution to ballet was acknowledged by the Royal Academy of Dance as an esteemed ‘Fellow’ of the association, given in recognition of her outstanding service to the association and to the art of dancing. (Royal Academy of Dance, 2004, p. 13).

¹⁹ Nicolai Serguéeff (also spelt Sergeev) was the last Régisseur General of the Mariinsky Ballet of St. Petersburg. When he fled Russia in 1919 he took with him the choreographic notations of the entire Mariinsky theatre repertoire, concerned that they would vanish under the new Bolshevik regime. He produced *The Sleeping Beauty* for Diaghilev before forming his own company. In 1925, he produced *Giselle* for Spessivtzeva to much success. After a period as a ballet master with the Russian Opera Company, he came to England, working for the Vic-Wells (again with Spessivtzeva,) before joining the Inglesby’s International Ballet. Using the choreographic scores he brought from Russia, he re-staged many of the original Russian single act and full-length classics, especially Fokine’s ballets (Encyclopaedia Britannica: International Ballet, 2009; Harvard Theatre Collection: International Ballet, 2005; Inglesby & Hunter, 2008).

²⁰ Inglesby received her student training from Madame Marie Rambert, with influences from Tamara Karsavina, Nicholas Legat, Egorova, Kchessinskaya, Serguéeff and other esteemed teachers. After dancing with the Ballet Rambert, and the Ballet Russes, at the young age of 22 she established the International Ballet company, during the London Blitz of 1940/41. May recalls how Inglesby gathered together many of the established great dancers and teachers of the time, with the goal of “taking ballet to the masses” (Inglesby & Hunter, 2008, preface ‘Overture’)

her own productions. In this way Zin treated *learning in the art form as a continuing process*. She understood the need to stay current with emerging developments. These included subtle changes or variations in technique, choreographic advances, and new training and career opportunities for her students. Zin commented:

You need to keep up with these things today. You have got to search it out. And you should be able to give the students what they need, and the information for scholarships and so forth, with the encouragement to go for it.

From the student perspective, training with a teacher who stays current is vital in developing a competitive edge:

They [the teacher] need to be aware of what's happening in the dance world itself - it is moving very fast. They need to keep pace with what is happening. [Because] If you don't get on that wave then you are going to miss the ability to make dancers professional and compete at an international standard around the world.

As one student succinctly said,

becoming an expert is not to be happy with what you know and stop learning, it is continual knowledge.

Interpreting and Making Connections with the Literature

My research into how Zan and Zin gained the knowledge to become ballet masters revealed many important elements, highlighting those of experience and continual learning. This is congruent with the argument of Berliner (1994) that experience plays a necessary part in becoming an expert, but that: “experts attain their admirable status through experience of a special kind” (p. 162). The following table displays the key emerging themes from the discovery, and since the professional practices of Zan and Zin were accomplished very differently, each master is considered separately.

**Table 1:
Key Aspects of the Masters' Knowledge Acquisition**

Zan	Zin
Zan placed importance on- <i>Gaining a thorough understanding of the art form</i>	Zin placed importance on- <i>Committing to her teaching practice from an early age</i>
Much of which he accomplished by- <i>Learning directly from many of the world's most influential and esteemed dancers, ballet masters, and choreographers while training overseas</i>	Much of her learning was accomplished by- <i>Teacher training through the R.A. D., and by developing her own understandings and methods from teaching, which came about primarily independently, and indirectly</i>
Through these experiences he- <i>Acquired an intensive knowledge of classical and contemporary ballet repertoire, and a deep understanding of professionalism</i>	Zin asserted that she always had a- <i>Personal and professional emphasis for training her students to the highest possible level of excellence</i>
Zan developed a- <i>Personal and professional emphasis for the theatrical dimension of ballet, especially artistry and characterization</i>	Her practice was influenced by- <i>The Russian style, particularly drawing from the practice of the legendary Russian Prima Ballerina Assoluta, Olga Spessivtzeva.</i>
He noted the value of- <i>Acquiring professional skills of being extremely adaptive and quick to learn</i>	This resulted in- <i>A period of self-directed study using Spessivtzeva's book, from which Zin created her own unique syllabus that became the foundation of her teaching outside syllabus work</i>
And of- <i>Seeking out others from whom to further inform his practice</i>	Zin came to understand - <i>That advanced preparation, and excellent organizational skills, were both key components to a professional practice, impacting upon student learning and success.</i>
Zan came to understand- <i>the importance of continuing to learn within the art form, staying at the forefront of new trends, including changes in style and methods</i>	Zin viewed her own learning- <i>As a process that continued throughout her career, acknowledging the need to stay current with emerging developments.</i>

The Masters' Acquisition of Expertise

Webster and Schempp (2008) recommend that teachers interested in acquiring expertise should “whenever possible...take the time to observe the lessons of more experienced or more expert teachers” (p. 23). And, as the learning of ballet is predominately achieved by the experience of observing others at their practice, studying with an expert is, therefore, particularly relevant for those wishing to become masters in the field. Indeed, for Zan, a vital component of his knowledge acquisition was his overseas training, learning directly from leading professionals. Zan’s apprenticeship in ballet was what the literature refers to as ‘situated learning’ (Parker-Katz & Bay, 2008). This learning comes directly from mentors as a socially constructed experience, within a culturally specific context. Zan acknowledged that the time observing and engaged in performance was also essential to his learning. He is resolute that his learning apprenticeship was fundamental to his understanding of the art form and his development as a teacher.

Without the opportunity to enter a professional company, or travel extensively overseas, Zin’s exposure to learning by direct contact was extremely restricted. Despite this, she actively engaged in a personal and arduous apprenticeship, from an early age. This process is supported by Gray’s (1989) acknowledgement that a dance teacher can receive training by either formal or informal methods, and by Bereiter and Scardamalia’s (1993) assertion that a person wishing to attain expert performance needs to start early, even as early as childhood. When she opened her own ballet school, Zin’s learning was continued with self-discovery, with much reflection and self-analysis on her methods. Leinhart, Young, and Merriman (1995) refer to this learning process as occurring *in situ*, meaning it is situational, intuitive, and tacit. Without direct access to mentors, learning *in situ* is distinctly different from Zan’s *situated learning* apprenticeship.

Zin’s intensive self-directed study of Olga Spessivtzeva’s work provided her with the training methods of this well respected dancer, albeit that they were acquired indirectly. While learning directly from skilled practitioners is considered the most effective means for developing expertise (Ericsson & Charness, 1994), Zin’s development is a good example of learning from “teachers/mentors in absentia” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 16). The *provenance* of Spessivtzeva, who was so highly respected by ballet’s elite, is important in understanding her significance in Zin’s teaching development. Zin’s commitment to learning and using the Russian approach in her student training, at a time where the use of other syllabi was standard practice, may be a major contributing factor in her becoming a master. Webster and Schempp

(2008) acknowledge the importance of reading as a way in which to increase one's knowledge base, citing a study by Smith (2004) who discovered that Bobby Bowden "one of the most successful football coaches of all time" (in Webster & Schempp, p. 29) had an office full of books on leadership and strategy. Zin, with her reading and extensive ballet media collection is a similar case. Like Bobby Bowden, reading and viewing enabled her to increase her knowledge and push the limits of her expertise and the performance of her dancers.

Many 'expertise' researchers have attempted to define developmental stages or phases in acquiring expert practice (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Berliner, 1994, 2004; Bloom, 1985a; Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Glaser, 1996; Sosniak, 1985). Of these, Bloom and Sosniak's three phases of learning, the 'early', 'middle' and 'later' years, are claimed by the authors as being determinable from participants' comments. Ericsson extends the three phases to include a fourth called 'eminent performance', describing it as being the phase in which the expert makes a unique contribution beyond that of typical knowledge. Making a unique contribution is, indeed, true of both masters in this study. However, the *notion* of phases, while broadly applicable to Zan and Zin's journeys in ballet teaching, can not be applied to their practice as the postulated three phases could not be identified in this research. Their interviews did not indicate any defining moments showing the development of a ballet master's practice as a process of definable, discrete phases. Rather, the title 'ballet master' is an accolade bestowed from the milieu in recognition of their contribution to practice, and is typically identified by student success and quality performances.

Glaser (1996) proposes a route to expertise by the learner going through, what he described, as a 'change of agency', becoming increasingly self-sufficient over time. In his theoretical framework, the learner is at first fully dependent on others ('externally supported'), then shows a decreasing need for structure with more professional apprenticeship guidance and dedicated practice ('transitional') and, finally, is able to develop into an expert when he/she has the necessary skills to succeed, is able to seek out challenges, and can find external support when needed ('self-regulatory'). My research supports with Glaser's model. Both masters are aware of this 'change of agency' in their own abilities over time. This is best seen in their moving from structured ballet lessons to a time of apprenticeship during which they learned from other masters and their final progression to being fully self-reliant and independent practitioners. Again, as with the previous notion of phases, their path to mastery was not discrete occurrences definable by certain time periods, progressive abilities, accomplishments or awards, but more as

a continual effort in learning, full of convolutions and circular pathways in the quest for excellence within an always evolving art form. This is in keeping with the views of Bloom (1985b) and Sawyer (2006), who note the need to consider learning as not defined by finite stages, but more aptly as a continual, or cyclical, process.

The literature provides much discussion and a variety of views on the factors necessary to becoming an expert. Gardner (1993) concluded that the achievement of great innovators is a reflection of a long and intensive period of learning. Ericsson (1996) and Bloom (1985a) support Gardner, agreeing that the learning of expertise requires many years of concerted effort. They propose time frames for reaching expertise. Ericsson's allows ten years, while Bloom extends this to fifteen. However, in the path to becoming a ballet expert, ten years seems inadequate. While the views of dance teachers and research are that the length of time to become an *expert dancer* is consistent with Ericsson's time frame (Clippinger-Robertson, 1988; Urena, 2005), Zan and Zin's practices show that a much longer period is required to become an *expert teacher*. It extends from the years of childhood ballet lessons to well into adulthood. However, the effort that Zan and Zin have given to their training and teaching practice is in accord with Ericsson's (2007) notion of deliberate practice, through which a person must engage in many hours of effortful work in order to improve.

What is obvious is that the intensity the masters have given to acquiring their knowledge and practising has given them both a comprehensive command of the field. Shulman (1987), in his taxonomy on teacher expertise, refers to the domain-specific knowledge of a teacher as 'pedagogical content knowledge', explaining it as that "special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of the teacher, their own special form of understanding" (p. 76). This resonates with Zan and Zin's practice, in that a ballet master's expertise appears to be an individually constructed practice, unique to each teacher. Grossman's (1990) research found that a comprehensive knowledge of subject specific content is acquired from a number of sources. These are: apprenticeship of observation, acquiring subject-matter knowledge, teacher education, and classroom teaching experience. Each of these sources was clearly seen in the knowledge acquisition of both masters.

Continuing the Quest to Learn

The interviews revealed that both masters placed much effort and importance in continuing to learn, viewing their practice as a never-ending accumulation of knowledge and experience, beginning from the very first ballet lesson and continuing, unabated, throughout their careers. Striving to improve knowledge and quality of practice in this way is a recognized trait of experts (Bell, 1997). Both masters emphasize the importance of looking for ways to improve and stay current with new developments. One example is Zin's 'deliberate practice' beyond the studio, whereby she spent many hours observing ballet practice from her extensive media collection. Her video recordings and DVD's contained many of Zan's rehearsals and productions, and those of many international ballet companies. This enabled her to further extend her knowledge, stay up-to-date, and reflect on her own work. Zan also described his hours using the internet as a research tool for his teaching, choreography, and production work. And in addition to seeking out opportunities to learn from other esteemed masters in the field, both, in their leadership positions, established a network of friends and professionals in the field, sharing and learning from each other. This continual effort to learn is in accord with Ericsson and Charness's assertion that experts are "continuously striving to improve and reach their own best performance" (1994, p. 744). Zan and Zin's study of 'master artist' performances would be considered by Ericsson and Charness as falling into their category of self-directed, and deliberate, practice. Their work ethic also supports the findings of Collinson (1996, 1999), who states that professional knowledge should be considered as a dynamic enterprise with the goal of staying current and in the forefront of its practice. Indeed, Zan makes the comment,

My qualifications are a *lifetime* of experience in the art form. And there are no certificates for that, only an enormous amount of information.

However, Ericsson and Charness (1994) also note that experts typically reduce their level and intensity of work with increasing age. On this point my research differed. The interviews and observations show that both Zin and Zan have continued to work extremely hard, and perhaps with more intensity in the latter half of their careers. And many of their more recent choreographic works have been acknowledged as their finest examples. Both of them think that this may well be due to the fact that a life spent in the art form has provided them with a vast base of experience from which to draw. It was not until they reached their 70s (well beyond typical retirement age) that they began to reduce their workloads. Even now neither of them has stopped. They continue to be actively engaged in productions as of this writing. According to Collinson (1996), this is not unusual with exemplary teachers and can, in fact, be expected.

Their commitment concurs with Gilbert's (2005) view that, "we need teachers who want to spend a life time learning" (p. 33). And Warren (1996), in his study, found dance masters continued to work into an advanced age, showing a constant curiosity to learn and "desire to discover new ways to teach an old art" (p. 10). Accounts of other famous ballet masters show similar longevity of practice (Bournonville, 1999; Fay, 1997; Massine, et al., 1968; Roseman, 2001; Warren, 1996).

Influential Teachers and Experiences

The understanding that ballet's pedagogy and lineage is "passed down through an oral and kinaesthetic tradition, from the words and hands of teachers to the bodies of their students" (Zeller, 2009, p. 84) is supported in this research. Zan explained that the lessons of his varied experiences have been incorporated into his philosophy of practice, nuances of technique, and artistic style. He told the story of one of his students who went to Britain and appeared as a guest artist with Madame Rambert's company, a company in which he was once a member. Rambert asked the student if she was one of Zan's, which Zan interpreted as Rambert's recognition of something in the student's work that was a reflection of her teaching.

An important influence for both Zan and Zin was their training in the international Royal Academy of Dance syllabus, taking their student and teaching examinations in the program. As teachers, Zan and Zin both used it as an examination medium for their students. While they acknowledge the value of such syllabi, both masters were clear that they preferred to teach in a style that reflected their own personal understanding of the art form. For Zin, the influence of the Russian style was pervasive. For Zan, there were many influences drawn from his training experiences. This refusal to rely exclusively on any one teaching system is a noted trait of ballet masters (Warren, 1996).

The masters' and students' views on syllabus use may also indicate an important difference between the teaching practice of a typical teacher and that of a master. Perhaps a typical teacher needs the security of a syllabus; a master may prefer to draw more deeply from many sources of knowledge, both technical and artistic, beyond the confines of a single syllabus. This idea is expressed by a comment from Zan on the limitations in teaching with a lack of experience:

Teachers can only react and rely on their own experiences - and if they haven't had any more experience [than syllabus] then how on earth are they to reproduce the art?

Although most of Zan and Zin's learning experiences were positive, there were some examples of how not to teach, such as Zan's story of his frustrating experience with a particular *régisiseur*. According to Knight (1994), these negative experiences contribute to learning and the development of one's educational philosophy: "some people pull you towards their style; others repel you and you react against their style" (p. 119).

A view that is supported by this research is that of Bloom (1985a), whose extensive study showed that during the phases of expertise acquisition, the participants had worked with the best coaches or trainers available. He also noted that during the final phase ('the later years') the participants who gained international success had trained from masters who had reached that level themselves or had trained other accomplished students. Indeed, Zan and Zin's paths demonstrate both these points. They have studied from masters before becoming masters themselves (albeit by indirect methods for Zin), *and* have both taken part in producing internationally successful dancers. Therefore, perhaps another significant idea coming from my research is that an absolutely fundamental requirement to becoming a ballet master is having studied from past masters. This assertion does not imply that every student who learns from a master will become one. Rather it views learning from a master as being one of the key ingredients necessary in the path to becoming a master.

Discovering a Shared Pedagogical Lineage

The discovery of the impact of significant others on the masters' knowledge acquisition supports Zeller's (2009) assertion that in the world of ballet "lineage matters" (p. 57). The masters had either trained, or studied, some of the most influential dancers and masters of their period, many of them being instrumental in ballet's historical development and an important part of establishing ballet as an art form as we know it today.

An illustration showing the shared pedagogical lineage of the two masters' pedagogy is worth including (see *Curtain Calls – The Masters' Mutual Pedagogical 'Lineage'*, p. 243). It traces connections which extend to some of ballet's most significant pioneers, reaching around the globe. It is evident that the masters' knowledge acquisition had been informed by some of the same key people, albeit by different paths. The shared Russian influences are evident in Zan's understanding of artistry, and Zin's technique. This inter-linkage between the sources of Zan and Zin's knowledge and practice is an unexpected, and enlightening, discovery. It is evidence

for the way in which learning can be shared in vastly different ways, with Zan having travelled to Europe and Zin remaining in New Zealand.

Acknowledging the significance, in the ballet world, on 'who trained who', the discovery that even the two masters' students are unaware of Zin and Zan's personal journeys to becoming masters, and the findings of many inter-linkages in the masters' learning experiences, the illustration of Zan and Zin pedagogical lineage is particularly interesting, and demonstrates their significance in the historical continuation of ballet.

SCENE TWO

Why do Zan and Zin teach ballet?

Zin, recalling a discussion with another teacher:

I asked her ‘Do you love this [teaching]? And her enthusiastic response was ‘it’s like champagne bubbles to me’. I thought that was a very good quotation, because that’s what it is like to me; teaching ballet is like the bubbles in champagne. That’s how much I enjoy it; you see, I can’t wait until this afternoon to take these students!

The following scene attempts to answer the question of why Zan and Zin devoted their lives to the teaching of ballet.

Emerging Key Themes

While the previous scene highlighted differences in the masters’ learning by discussing their journeys separately, this section brings to light their similarities by *presenting excerpts together*. This allows the use of subtitles to present each theme. As in Scene One, key points in the text are emphasized by the use of *italics*.

Being Natural

Zan and Zin offered what could be considered as two quite simple reasons for their enduring devotion to ballet. They see it as being something that not only *comes very naturally to them, but feels natural too*. For Zan, this stems from his belief that dance is a vital part of the human experience:

It’s an emotion most feel inside themselves...I always say dance started when the first cave man jumped up and down outside the first cave in front of the first cave woman – and developed some sort of simplified steps as to how he would look best! Dance is such a natural thing for me...is a very natural thing. I find it hard to understand when people think it’s an unnatural thing for the human body to do.

And Zin commented:

I have always had a teaching instinct. It’s something that you *have*.

Teaching as a 'Gift'

Zan and Zin also consider their lives immersed in the art form, and their ability to teach, to be a 'gift'. The notion of a 'gift' is viewed by them in two ways. First, both asserted that to be an expert, they must have the 'gift' to teach ballet – elaborating upon this by explaining that a master teacher has a natural ability for teaching, an ability which they are born with. Zin commented:

It's a rare gift. Like that of a great pianist, it's an art that just must be in you. I honestly think it's natural, that it is something you are born with. Nobody can really tell you how to teach, no school can, I don't think they can, you either can do it or you can't.

And, similarly, Zan stated:

It is not the case that all professional performing dancers are going to make good teachers, very few of them are really going to make excellent teachers - because it is a gift – it's the way you interpret what you have done and have experienced to pass on the knowledge to others, and not just to continue to perform in front of the class.

Their students also believe that the ability to be an expert ballet teacher is a 'gift':

I think that an expert has to have knowledge over time, obviously, from experience teaching. But it doesn't necessarily have to be on a piece of paper. Some people just have an *innate* ability to be able to inspire, to be able to recreate visions, like with technique – they have the ability to get someone to do something really well. It's a rare gift, and not a lot of people can claim it.

And:

After having worked with both Zin and Zan and many, many, other teachers in my career, I can tell you this – Zin and Zan have the gift for teaching. And I don't mean just their ability with technique; there is just something incredibly *special* about them, which comes from deep within. It's like they were put here, on the planet, to teach us ballet. To use the old cliché, they are 'born to teach'.

As a second interpretation of 'gift', the masters *considered themselves privileged* to be part of this art form, finding much enjoyment in their practice:

Zin: I would never have changed places [with music], you get so much *joy* out of teaching. Ballet is beautiful, the music is wonderful, and I love seeing the children do well.

Zan: One can only be grateful to just be part of it...it has been a life's journey and you obviously feel that you have assisted in building up something. I find there is enormous satisfaction in being able to pass on what I have been fortunate enough to learn and also to see the talent that can develop.

And a student commented:

It is something that only really comes from the heart, not as someone trying to make a business out of it, not anything else but someone that loves dance so much and wants to see other people get the same sort of joy that she did from it. It is so unique and so special that I doubt that I will ever see any dance teacher around the world that does it. I mean you see dancers that have it but it's hard for those dancers to make the

transition to be the teacher. Because she did it at such an early age - it seems to be what she was born to do – it's very unique, very unique.

Emotional Connections

These last quotes show the *strong personal and emotional connections* that both masters feel for ballet, and its teaching. This was constantly evident in Zin's interview statements, including:

It's something I *love*, and I *love* teaching. That's my *passion*. Ballet is on my mind all the time - because it's my passion. And a teacher needs to be *passionate* about what they do.

And a student of Zan relayed this emotion in his work also:

... I always felt there was pleasure there with him; he always got pleasure from what he was doing. There was always a sense of pride with what he was doing.

Zin's students recognized the emotional depth to her teaching, including the *personal enjoyment*:

Ballet, obviously, made her tick. It was really what got her up in the mornings - the love of dance. And I think more than any other teacher I have seen, she has a love of teaching dance.

For Zin, her *passion for ballet*, especially for quality teaching, was the driving force that sustained her practice and that of her students. Her students recognised the passion that she had for the art and its practice:

Very few teachers I have seen are devoted and dedicated to their art, to the art of teaching ballet. Very few people would put teaching and their students before anything else in their lives. ...Her passion drives people.

And similarly:

She is just so passionate, she translates her passion into how she teaches. She has that much energy, that much passion in teaching. In my professional life I don't think I have ever come across another person as passionate about dancing as Zin. So it's a very rare quality she has. I think she has never stopped loving it, that's what is very rare.

Zan's students also spoke of the passionate nature to his teaching:

That passion that Zan has – that's what keeps us going. To me, a 'master' is those people that have this amazing dedication and passion for ballet. What with all the ups and the downs of New Zealand dance, a lot of people would just have thrown it away, but these people have stuck it out, stayed committed to keeping the traditions alive and help build its future.

Obligation to Pass on Knowledge

Zan and Zin recognised that an important part of their desire to teach is the strong *obligation they feel to pass on their knowledge* to their students. Zan identified this as one of the key reasons for continuing to practice well into his ‘retirement’ years:

I know I can still pass on this heritage, without being stymied by the past. I can help students look to the future...how they can add to their ideas and their own works. ... This is important, *vital*, in the progression of dance – past, present, and future.

A student commented,

A great dance master has to *want* to do this – pass on their experience and wisdom, and patience.

Both Zan and Zin assert that a master teacher is one who can do this *successfully*. Zan stated:

There is an art to teaching that has to be studied because it is just not passing on knowledge, it is *the way* you pass on knowledge. All the knowledge - all the experience in the world – is absolutely useless if it can’t be communicated to the dancers you are working with. And the only thing that makes any of this is experience. We can have all the knowledge in the world, but it is only the experience of using that knowledge that really defines and develops us as individual teachers.

He explained the requirements needed for this endeavour:

I think the expert or master teacher, *first of all*, has to have acquired a tremendous feeling for the art of dance, or dance as an art form, whose experience has been such that it has embraced a whole range of talents, a whole range of dance ideas, whether it be technical ideas or whether it be staging ideas or whatever. I think there are so many different components that are gathered together in the dance art form, and *to be a master teacher you have got to be able to pass that on*.

Students concurred with this:

They [ballet masters] need an absolute knowledge and understanding of what dance is first, before they can pass that on. They nurture younger generations, bringing them through and keeping traditions alive.

To further emphasize this point, Zin drew upon a familiar expression: ‘the proof is in the pudding’. She believes that the teacher is fully responsible, and accountable, for the learning and development of his/her students; the true value of a ballet teacher’s ability is seen by simply looking at the quality of the students. She clarified this further:

The students are the product of what you are yourself, or what you teach. Your success is what you produce, what you see. It’s very honest. What you give [to a student] is what you get [from that student]. As one examiner said years ago ‘*Well, I’m sorry ladies, but what you see in front of you is what you teach*’. There is no use saying ‘oh they haven’t got it, or they don’t do it, or I don’t teach it that way.’ That’s a lot of absolute rubbish. It *all* comes from the teacher.

Zin continued:

So everything relies on your teacher, *everything*. If you have got a good teacher who knows what they are doing, who has excellent results, then you can't go wrong.

By passing on their knowledge, the masters are taking a vital role in the continuance of the art form. Zan recalled being aware of this as early as his student days:

[As students] we were very conscious of being part of the art of the ballet and being part of the historical development of the dance. We were also conscious of the people who came along to advise us...to guide us through...we would always know that there was something there that they could give us that we would never have been able to discover on our own, because *it came from the past* and had been handed on to us, and those of us that would go into teaching, or choreographing, directorships, whatever, it was then *our responsibility* to try and hand that down on *to the next generations* - and so it's passed on.

Zan noted the need for a teacher to always be considering one's own contribution to ballet's forward direction. Making conscious decisions in that regard is important, he asserted, because the way in which teachers pass on their knowledge to students becomes:

...an experience that they [the students] pass on to the next generation.

Informing their students about the role that they also take in the continuum of ballet is important to the masters. Zan felt that this facet of a student's education is often overlooked:

There are not many students who have really any sense of their place in this vibrant art form – where it has come from and even imagine where it is going to. I would particularly wish them to be aware of the historical background to the art – how the art has developed to the point where it is now – I believe that is vital.

Able to reflect back on their work, after a life in its practice, the masters were both well aware of being part of the continuum of the art. Zan commented:

It's enormously satisfying when people say to you 'remember so and so, and how great it was at the time', that sort of thing. And you realize that you have added something, but they have added something to you too, because they were there at the time you were imparting the knowledge to them - it's a give and take situation.

... the number of dancers that you have been able to assist, to move into the profession, either as teachers or as performing artists. And you have seen these people move into different companies in different parts of the world, and even, most importantly here with our own country in New Zealand, and you know you have had a direct input into what has made the career of those dancers so successful.

On the contribution of Zan, one of his students commented:

Someone like him has so much to give to New Zealand dance, professional dancers especially. So many people in the industry – professional dancers - have been so influenced by him in one way or another. Whether it is just meeting him, working or dancing with him – but just about every New Zealand dancer has been influenced by him in one way or another... I think he is amazing, to be still working and still willing to pass on that knowledge and wisdom, and keep dance alive.

Knowing that ballet is continuing to develop gave Zan reason to feel confident about the future of ballet:

Something that continues to excite me about dance is how it is always developing...in the hands of so many people right around the world. The future has never looked brighter as far as I am concerned.

Interpreting and Making Connections with the Literature

In this research I discovered four sources of motivation for a life committed to teaching ballet. Interestingly, both masters agreed on all four. They are presented in Table 2. In the section which follows, each of these reasons for devoting a life to ballet are further discussed, comparing the masters' motivations with those identified in the literature.

On this particular aspect of the masters' practices, the students made many contributions.

**Table 2:
Summary of the Masters' Reasons for a Life Devoted to the Art Form**

<p>Zan and Zin teach ballet -</p> <p><i>Because -</i></p> <p>They felt their work within the art form came very naturally to them and, they considered their lives immersed in ballet, and their ability to teach, as a 'gift'</p> <p><i>and -</i></p> <p>They felt a deep personal and emotional connection to ballet, and its teaching</p> <p><i>which created -</i></p> <p>A strong desire and sense of responsibility to pass on their knowledge to their students</p> <p><i>and through this -</i></p> <p>They wished to take part in the historical continuance of the art form.</p>

Teaching Ballet - Both a 'Natural' Endeavour and a 'Gift'

The masters shared their understanding that their ability to teach ballet, and their desire to do so, seems to them to be very natural. Dr. Raoul Gelabert (as cited in Clarkson & Skrinar, 1988), Director of Dance Kinetic Education Institute in New York, explains that this feeling, reported by many great dance masters, emerges from a intuitive kinaesthetic understanding of the body. It is, he states: “an integral part of their lives” (p. vi). He continues: “the great masters of dance have an instinctive wisdom for producing artists, one which has been successful throughout the ages...unfortunately, these teachers are the exception rather than the rule” (p. vi).

In the same vein, Hanna (1987), a well respected dance anthropologist and theorist, sees dance as being an instinctual, innate, human endeavour, fundamentally important to physical, cultural, social, psychological, economic, political, and communicative behaviours. She believes: “dance is human thought and behaviour performed by the human body for human purposes” (p. 5). Immersed in dance, and all it entails, the masters’ statements reflect these views.

Both masters described their teaching ability as a ‘gift’, and because of this, they felt a compulsion to teach. Their students concurred. Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) saw that excellence is a combination of innate ability, eagerness to work, and “an adequate power of doing a great deal of very laborious work” (Galton & Darlington, 1972, p. 37), all of which are readily evident in Zan and Zin’s practice. Some recent research has suggested that the notion of innate abilities or capabilities, or ‘giftedness’ is invalid (Ericsson, 2007; Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Starkes & Ericsson, 2003; Webster & Schempp, 2008). These researchers see ‘expertise’ acquisition as a learned activity achieved over many years (Webster & Schempp, 2008). Ericsson refers to expertise as being developed by the effort of ‘deliberate practice’.

Without entering into the extensive and continuing ‘nature vs nurture’ debate on expertise – previously discussed in the literature review - it seems reasonable, from the evidence presented in this research, to suggest that *both factors* - inherited ability and effort - may be at play in developing a master teacher of ballet. Such a position, according to Gardner (1995), is not a radical point of view, but gives due consideration to both sides of the debate. In the field of dance literature there is a common consensus that great dancers and teachers possess a natural ‘gift’ for teaching (Austin, 1982; Schlaich & DuPont, 1993; Warren, 1996). It is also evident that Zan and Zin’s years of dedicated training and experience have been important in their outstanding accomplishments (Tan, 1997). Perhaps the view put forward by Noice and Noice

(1997) helps to level out the debate. They concluded, from their research into the artistic dimension of acting, that “that no amount of practice can move someone to the top level” (p. 465), hinting that there are, indeed, further reasons to success. And tellingly, leading expertise theorist Ericsson (1996), who claimed that reaching an international-level of expertise is a process of deliberate practice, also acknowledged that the debate over the role of innate individual differences has yet to be resolved. Indeed, in 2007, while holding firm to his stance on an individual’s engagement in sustained deliberate practice as the primary determinate of expert performance, he added that the possibility exists of some ‘genetic pre-deposition’, perhaps the activation of dormant genes through extended and intense practice (Ericsson, 2007). This resonates with Gardner’s (1995) view that “exceptional performance can come about only when one beholds a happy confluence of biological proclivities and situational supports” (p. 803).

Both masters felt honoured and privileged to have spent their lives within the art form. They likened this experience to having been given a special gift. Further, they talk of being very grateful, expressing their appreciation of what this experience had given to them, personally and professionally. When Zan reflected back on his life in dance, he shared some of his feelings and understandings:

...the most exciting thing is that none of us know what dance will evolve into. I get enormous satisfaction out of seeing one of the great ballets of the past performed extremely well, and I can get a tremendous amount of satisfaction from some contemporary works that show, in a completely different convention, the personal feelings or statements of the new choreographers.

Discovering the Masters’ Emotional Connection to Ballet

In addition to the masters’ viewing of their involvement in dance as being a ‘gift’, they revealed the depth of their emotional connection to the art form. Zan and Zin’s statements, and that of their students, emphasized the emotional, and passionate, nature of their feelings for ballet. This ‘love’ for the art form started with their own personal learning and remained throughout their lives. It pervaded their practice. This is in agreement with Schlaich and Dupont’s (1993) study, which found that outstanding dance teachers enthusiastically express their joy and love of teaching. Sharpiro (1998) comments on emotionality in learning, saying “the act of coming to know is a passionate one” (p. 11). Press (2001), taking a psychoanalytic self-psychology perspective, examines this more deeply, discussing the emotional need of a person to feel ‘vital’. She contends that a person interacts with the world in order to engage in activity that

will nourish and support him/her, thus creating feelings of being authentic, competent, and meaningful – all of which sustains vitality, and develops one's nature.

In 1998, a discussion, led by noted academic Peter Salovey, co-founder of the theory of 'emotional intelligence', focused on the issues of intelligence, learning, and happiness. Included were leading theorists and researchers Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, Montessori, and Goleman, (Hanson, et al., 1998), and during the course of discussion, it became obvious that emotion and passion play a significantly more important role in learning than traditionally believed. More recently, anthropologist Hanna (2008) asserts that emotive feelings "...are inherent to successful dance and to education in general" (p. 497), and from this comes a significant source of motivation.

These perspectives led to the hypothesis that the masters' deep emotional connection provided the impetus needed - *the motivation necessary* – to sustain the enormous drive and effort to reach expertise and persist with practice. This is supported by Posner (1988), Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993), and (Day, 2008) who assert that a central issue to becoming an expert may be the motivational force of the passion that an outstanding teacher has for their endeavour. The drive to expertise, state Bereiter and Scardamalia, comes from three motivating forces inherent in the effort. The *first motivator* is the enjoyment inherent in the activity. Csikszentmihalyi (1991, 1997, 2004) coined the term 'flow' to describe this conscious experience. Salovey (in Hanson, et al., 1998), describes Csikszentmihalyi's concept of 'flow' as the psychology of optimal experience, stating that achieving a state of flow is an important determinant of happiness and creativity "...the key to self-motivation". Further to this, Gardner (in Hanson, et al., 1998) asserts that the process of flow is self-rewarding and the essential component that "keeps people going". This is evident in the masters' practices, with the characteristics which Csikszentmihalyi identifies as 'flow' being observed (see *Curtain Calls – DVD: #1 Exhibiting Flow*). They show themselves: to be in full control of the environment; with a disregard for any self-conscious behaviour – demonstrating without reserve; totally immersed in their teaching – leaving everything from their own lives behind them when they enter the studio; and with a resulting loss of time monitoring – always lamenting how fast the time has gone. The *second motivator*, called 'second-order environment', is feeling relevant and supported by the sub-cultural environment in which one works, with connections to others in practice or via historical links. This is also evident in Zan and Zin's practice, as they discuss their interactions with knowledgeable others in the field, and feel as though they are playing an important part in

continuing the art form. The *final motivator* is the ‘heroic’ element to their practice, described by Bereiter and Scardamalia as the “arduous efforts that benefit society but that are disproportionate to what society provides in the way of rewards and support” (p. 104). Certainly their students view their teachers with such devotion it seems reminiscent of hero-worship, but the masters, themselves have a very modest expectation of their effect on society.

More so, they, and their students, leave the impression that a significant motivational force for ballet masters is the importance they place on training quality dancers, and passing on the knowledge to others. This is discussed in the following section.

A Desire to Pass on their Knowledge

While Scene One revealed that both masters identified knowledge acquisition and experience as key features in becoming a master, an emphasized component of their practice was the importance of their being able to successfully *transfer their knowledge* to their students. Acknowledgment that they achieve this comes from comments made by the students about their masters’ practices: “Zin was a perfectionist, and I think she wanted to pass this on to us”, and “I think I have taken on, quite unconsciously I think, what Zan said because it feels natural, it’s almost like you are dancing from within.”

The literature refers to this, fittingly, as ‘transferability’ (Ollis, Macpherson, & Collins, 2006). Ollis et al’s (2006) study on expertise in sport refereeing found a crucial element to achieving excellence was “the ability to transfer the appropriate skills and understanding.” The masters’ views are substantiated by dance theorist Judith Gray (1989). She asserts that while: “dance teaching is the dynamic, interactive process of transmitting skills and knowledge of dance”, the key task is “... to effectively transmit the skills and knowledge of dance to learners” (pp. 5-6). And as Zin remarks that: ‘the proof is in the pudding’, Gray posits that the quality of the teacher’s knowledge is a crucial factor in this process, as what teachers pass on to their students is only an accumulation of what the teachers, themselves, have acquired. Shulman (1987) claims that what distinguishes an expert teacher from a novice is the ability to effectively transfer pedagogical content knowledge. He asserts that this transfer:

lies at the intersection of content and pedagogy, in the capacity of a teacher to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by students (1987, p. 14)

This statement could have been written with Zan and Zin in mind, as findings revealed them to be competent in every aspect of his assertion.

Taking Part in the Historical Continuum of Ballet

The masters' view that transferring their knowledge was one of the most significant reasons for their dedicated practice, had an important corollary: both Zan and Zin have played a vital part in the continuation of ballet as an art form. They both felt a personal responsibility to continuing the art form through their work with their students. Zan commented:

...I have always felt we have been guardians of the heritage of the past but we have also had to be instigators of developments of the future.

On this view, he agrees with other ballet practitioners. Konstantin Sergeyev, dancer, choreographer, and artistic director of Kirov Ballet, when answering the question "Do you perform only the well known classics?" replied "Classical ballet is the heritage of a dancer's years, each new generation speaks differently again through those classics" (Dunlop MacTavish, 1997, p. 205).

Jack and Linda Vartoogian (1997) and Cass (1993) identified the awareness, and responsibility, of professional dancers to keep the collective memory alive, passing down its traditions from artist to artist. And, Austin's (1982) research on six world-famous dance professionals²¹, while illustrating the devotion and dedication of dancers and teachers, also noted that they all expressed their feelings of responsibility for the continuation of the art form. He poetically writes:

...the dancers will go and leave only a deserted stage, but there is another generation, young and eager, waiting in the wings; and it is to this new generation in ballet schools, dance academies and in the corps de ballet of companies that the famous artists speak through, even across the void of all those lost and forgotten years. They live on, as they would have wished, in all those classes and studios, and the young dancers of today have them as their inheritance (p. 10).

Ballet master Marie Fay (1997), reflecting on teacher responsibilities, adamantly states that the continuation of the profession should be every teacher's *first* obligation. "Their role," she explains, "is to make sure that our art form receives on a regular basis a new generation of highly qualified dancers" (p. 9).

²¹ These eminent stars of dance history included: Marie Taglioni, Anna Pavlova, Isadora Duncan, Tamara Karsavina, Olga Spessivtzeva, and Alicia Markova.

This research showed that both Zan and Zin understood their responsibility to this continuum; saw it as being an important element of their practice, and one which they actively worked to achieve. Consequentially, both Zan and Zin have been significantly influential in the development and direction of dance, adding their unique perspectives and contributions to the art form through their teaching and choreography. The avenues to achieving this have been their training of quality dancers, their contributions through choreography and performance, their taking lead positions as artistic directors, and their involvement with related endeavours such as boards, societies, and associations. By taking a vital role in the continuation of ballet in New Zealand they have become forever enrolled in New Zealand's ballet history. Ballet is an art in which 'apprenticeship of observation' is the key learning method (discussed previously in Act One, Scene One). Consequently, the student's resulting style, and perhaps later, their teaching, will almost inevitably be a reflection of their teachers' knowledge and practices. Dancers trained by Zan and Zin, will 'carry' their practices forward. Indeed, Zan and Zin both thought that was the case. As such dancers can be found throughout the world, dancing or taking lead administrative positions in companies or arts-related boards, and teaching ballet to the next generation, Zan and Zin's teaching practices and contribution to the art form will endure.

Coda

After their student years, Zan and Zin's path to master-ship was an individual endeavour, developed by the experiences of using their knowledge in various circumstances, learning from each and applying it. In the typically isolating working environment of a ballet teacher, there is very little opportunity for external input or advice from others into daily practice. Developing teaching ability therefore requires experimentation with teaching methods and choreography, finding the necessary drive for achievement, reflection on their practice, and initiative in finding others from whom to learn. In this way, a teacher constructs a very personalized working knowledge which is unique to this specific domain (Berliner, 1994; Ericsson, 1996; Tan, 1997), and unique to each teacher (Chen & Ennis, 1995; Leinhardt, et al., 1995).

The significant findings of this research - the discovery that the masters' experiences were fundamental to their formulating and establishing their own personal pedagogy, theories and beliefs – is in concord Corbin's (2008) assertion that “each person experiences, and gives meaning, to events in light of his or her own biography or experiences, according to gender, time and place, cultural, political, religious, and professional backgrounds” (p. 10). Zin and Zan have acquired master status in spite of their very different social and political environments, experiences and learnings. As Hong (2003) notes, “Dance, like any other type of knowledge, is socially constructed and reflects the perspective, experiences, attitudes and values of the people and culture from which it emerges” (p. 153).

Zin felt that her progression as a teacher was not a reflection of her first two teachers' styles, but emerged from her natural ‘gift’ for teaching and passion for the art. The most significant factors that helped her to establish her successful teaching methods and skills are an early start in teaching, willingness to independently learn from experts in the field (as in her intensive study of the Russian technique, and significant experiences with high level tutors and examiners), and the aspect that she views as most important in providing the necessary drive and daily determination to work so hard - her unwavering devotion and dedication to the teaching of quality ballet.

Zan's key learning experiences began with his overseas opportunities. This exposure to the best dancers and teachers of the time saw him taking on many ideas from those with whom he

trained. This contributed greatly to his understanding of the ‘master’ concept and assisted his development into a master himself. The most significant factors in Zan’s learning appear to be two: first, his exposure to the ballet world elite in his training and dancing career, which provided him with a deep understanding of artistry and professionalism; and second, his all-encompassing wish to contribute to the forward direction of ballet through a life devoted to the art form.

An illuminating discovery of Act One was the strength of Zan and Zin’s devotion to learning and teaching ballet. In fact, in many ways this defined who they are. Their love for ballet and its practice demanded a never-ending commitment and unwavering dedication from them. This was freely given and never seemed to diminish, despite it often resulting in their having to make personal sacrifices with family and finances. Dedication is clearly one of the major factors in their success as ballet teachers. As dance director Gloria Newman (as cited in Schlaich & DuPont, 1993) eloquently summarizes, a dedicated teacher needs: “a trained eye, a creative mind, a passion for the medium, and a touch of the missionary” (p. 87). Within this devotion is the inherent responsibility of transferring their knowledge and love of dance to their students. The literature uses a number of descriptors for this: a quest; a personal calling; or a mission (Korthagen, 2004; Vartoogian & Vartoogian, 1997; Zeller, 2009). Certainly, these suitably describe the vision and effort of Zan and Zin. This level of dedication is not uncommon in ballet masters; Inglesby (2008) made a comment about one of her past ballet masters which could equally be expressed of Zan and Zin: “Ballet, and the upholding of its traditions, were his life” (p. 76).

A sense of ‘mission’, I believe, is clearly a source of the masters’ unrelenting driving force and self-motivation, maintained unabated throughout their careers. The net result was their noteworthy contributions to the art form and its continuity.

Appropriate at this point is a quote from one of dance history’s most important modern choreographers, Doris Humphrey (1956). Addressing a graduating dance class at the Juilliard School, she proclaimed:

And one more thing I shall expect, wherever Fate may lead you: that you will spread the light of understanding among the people you meet, and do your bit to further the progress of the dance either as a teacher or a dancer or, best of all, as a choreographer (as cited in Anderson, 1974, p. 180).

As the Curtain Falls...

Despite the two very different methods by which Zan and Zin gained their knowledge, an unexpected discovery was the pedagogical lineage extending back from Zan and Zin to significant past masters, choreographers, and dancers, and the revelation their practices were informed by some of the same past experts and great pedagogues. This new understanding recognizes the importance of masters in the historical continuum of the art form. Act One illuminated the reasons why a person may choose to spend a life devoted to this art form. There is a surprising consistency in this between my two masters, revealing their deep emotional connection to ballet and its teaching.

From these discoveries, several key dimensions have been illuminated that appear central to a master's practice:

Table 3:

Act One - Key Dimensions of a Master's Practice

On a quest to gain a deep understanding of the content specific knowledge of ballet, a ballet master seeks out all available sources of learning, and is informed by influential experiences and encounters with note-worthy practitioners, particularly past masters and others significant to the field.

A ballet master considers his/her personal and professional learning in the art form to be a life-long endeavour, teaching with an unwavering commitment to producing the highest standards of practice possible.

A ballet master considers his/her teaching to be an innate ability, a 'gift for teaching'.

A ballet master credits his/her passion for the art form as the source of his/her drive and devotion, providing the necessary dedication and motivation needed to overcome any and all barriers to success, and sustain its continuance.

A ballet master takes a vital role in the historical continuum of ballet, adding his/her own contribution while creating an enduring link from the past to the future.

ACT TWO

Exploring the Masters' Professional Orientation

It is the first intermission. Behind the curtain there is a flurry of activity as the stage crew work quickly to change the sets, sweep the floor, and flood the stage with dry ice. The dancers start to reappear from their dressing rooms, changed and ready to begin. The audience hasten to return to their seats, and as the theatre lights are lowered, the orchestra begins the introductory notes for Act Two. The story continues...

As the Curtain Rises...

Act One described the masters' deeply committed and thorough understandings of the essential elements of their practice. One of these elements was their professional orientation towards their practice. Andrzejewski (2009) describes this as: "the constellation of a teacher's affective traits that gives aim, direction, and focus to educational decision making and practice. These affective traits include: attitudes, values, beliefs, priorities, preferences, positions, and dispositions" (p. 17). Understanding this dimension of practice is noted by Davies (2008) as needing attention. He states that researchers tend to focus too much on cognitive competency and skills, often ignoring the characteristics and virtues of the human heart, "forgetting the intangibles and non-quantifiable assets" (p. 198). Personal characteristics such as beliefs, concerns, and demeanour "influence how teachers teach and how students respond" (Webster & Schempp, 2008, p. 26).

As both masters place high value and importance on their professional orientation, seeing it as an integral part of their practice, gaining a more in-depth understanding into this area is the focus of Act Two. As in Act One, two framing questions create separate scenes for this Act. The intention is to look closely at the masters' practices to reveal their professional dispositions (*Scene One*), and to gain an understanding into what they believe to be the most important elements in their teaching practice - the factors that they value and regard most highly (*Scene*

Two). Recalling my discussion in the Overture that Act Two of a classical ballet typically contains the more ethereal component of a ballet, the following two scenes consideration of the ideological and noetic understandings of the masters sits well with this metaphor.

Each Act of a classical ballet, while continuing the story-line, has its own focus and objective. Often this means it has a very different choreographic design and intent, complete with its own set, costumes, and lighting plot. Similarly, I have ‘choreographed’ this act with a variation on my structural frame in Act One. This change keeps the structure of two scenes, and while not dramatic, offers a different treatment for the analysis and discussion. In keeping with the essence of conducting qualitative study from a constructivist viewpoint, I made this variation as a sensitive response to the problems of finding the most appropriate way in which to present my work. The adjustment, described in detail below, was the result of responsiveness to the emergent nature of the study, as opposed to any need to maintain a strict adherence to a pre-set scheme.

For each scene in Act Two, following a short introduction, a section called ‘key themes’ is presented. This consists of the key points that emerged during the data analysis - identified and presented as a number of separate sub-headings. As for Act One, these are supported by pertinent excerpts from the masters and students, and germane observations from their studio practices. For the most part, the views of the two masters are considered together. However, unlike Act One, where the descriptive account is presented separately from the interpretative discussion, here, as each key point is introduced, it is given a more introspective and in-depth consideration, with connections, where relevant, to similar findings in the work of other renowned practitioners in the field of dance. Additionally, with each illuminated point I include any relevant interpretative comments, informed by the literature.

Melding interpretation with descriptive accounts is not uncommon in qualitative work. It is seen by theorists such as Wolcott (2001) as a selective and subjective decision that each researcher must make based on his/her own “storyteller strategy” and “personal style” (p. 32). However, he cautions that it is important to explain and justify the reasons behind such decisions, advice that I have followed.

A section entitled ‘discussion’ follows. It provides a précis of the discovery, and a reflective consideration of the masters’ practices, taking an over-arching view of this component of their practice, and discussing any unexpected consequential discoveries from their work.

A coda contains my final reflections on the masters' professional orientations. And as the curtain falls, I put forward the key dimensions of a ballet master from this Act, adding to those from Act One.

SCENE ONE

What emerges as the ballet masters' key professional dispositions?

My whole life has just been dedicated to teaching. ... You have got to - you dedicate yourself to the place. You dedicate yourself to the art, and you must be completely dedicated to your students. If you are a master tutor you want to get the best out of the students, and you work yourself to exhaustion to try to do that. – Zin

Gaining a better understanding of a pedagogue's dispositions is seen within the current literature as an emerging enterprise (Dottin, 2009). Katz (1993) defines a disposition as: “ a tendency to exhibit frequently, consciously, and voluntarily a pattern of behaviour that is directed to a broad goal” (p. 2). And dispositions, states Dottin (2009), are seen in teacher actions. They are “not a state of possession, but a state of performance” (p. 84). Considered an important component of teacher knowledge, they are typically included in models of teacher practice (Collinson, 1996; McCutchen, 2006; Shulman, 1987; Shulman & Shulman, 2004).

Theorists and researchers (Andrzejewski, 2009; Debenham & Debenham, 2008; Korthagen, 2004) call dispositions many names including attributes, essences, traits, qualities, behaviours, temperament, habits, and wisdom. Many lists have been constructed in the attempt to describe them. While generalized lists may make an informative starting point, scholars encourage each domain to find and develop a list that best describes its own particular area of focus (Bradley, 2001; Kimmerle & Cote-Laurence, 2003; Minton, 2000; Smylie, Bay, & Tozer, 1999; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995; Warburton, 2002) .

Warren's (1996) research on dance masters discovered that the most important factor of their practice is 'personality'. He claims that a master's personal charisma brings a high energy to the studio, with joy and expressiveness, all of which create an environment where learning becomes irresistible to students. There is a connection here to Fay's (1997) view on the role of the dance teacher: “the student's devotion will come from the almost irresistible interest in the subject, motivated by the teacher's technically and artistically challenging class” (p. 3). Warren

also describes the practice of dance masters as having an almost ‘magical’ quality. I feel similarly about my two ballet masters, a view shared by their students. Further, Warren claims that this special quality the masters bring to their work almost defies written explanation, and to fully appreciate it, it must be experienced for one’s self. While the readers can not experience the masters at their work, I hope my interpretation can portray the essence of the experience. To that end, identifying the masters’ ‘dispositions’ is the goal of Scene One. The most significant of these are presented below.

Emerging Key Themes

The following section sets out the key dispositions of Zan and Zin that emerged from the data analysis, presented with sub-titles. Where applicable, I have also added comments made by other renowned classical ballet masters and practitioners in the field that show similar dispositions, and discuss my discoveries with reference to the literature. Key points in the text are emphasized by the use of *italics*.

A Quest for Perfection

The first disposition that was evident from Zan and Zin’s practice was the effort that the masters gave to be always *striving for perfection*. They seemed to be constantly *looking for ways to improve* the students’ class work and performance, in both technique and artistry, always requiring much of themselves, and their students. The masters also revealed this attitude towards their work, in their discussion of their *professional quest for perfection*. Zan stated:

I have never really felt the complete elation that everything, every aspect, has worked out from start to finish one hundred percent. ...I’m not good at accepting tributes because I am always so conscious of those things I wanted to be better, or were unable to achieve.

He laughed when recalling how his students used to refer to him:

I had the nickname of ‘BTTB – Back to the beginning!’ But at the same time you really *do* have to go *over and over and over* each group of steps until they are moving in the direction that you want them, and most importantly that everybody involved is doing the same thing. The difficulty is making twenty dancers look the same, while making each individual *absolutely imperative*. It’s like taking a chord or a phrase of music- if you were to take one of the instruments or a couple of those notes out, or a piece of poetry, or in the script - you move two or three words and it just does *not* make the same sense- it’s the same with dance - if they are not all doing the same thing, if they are not all in unison when unison is required then you get a disjointed feeling and it just looks a mess.

The students saw their masters' legendary *attention to detail* and demands for perfection as never-ending endeavours:

In class, she would readily express her happiness if we performed a step perfectly, and with the right quality. But in the theatre, I never got the sense she was truly happy with a performance. I think it's because, really, in ballet, perfection is an unattainable goal. On stage, with all that tension, while you might execute one particular step - let's say an arabesque - just wonderfully, you might just as easily stuff up the next one. When you rely on your body for full artistic expression, the saying 'you're only human' really applies here!

And while the students appreciated the effort of their master in developing their abilities, they recalled the *necessary repetition of work* that this desire for perfection created:

I remember having to repeat an exercise over and over until he got exactly what he was looking for. If you didn't do what he was asking for, he would make you do it until you got it right.

Furthermore,

She would say 'Just one more time, and sometimes there would be 15 'just one more times'! But she wasn't happy until you had it right, and so you would do it again, and again! But we never dared to say 'but you just said 'just one more time!'

This disposition is seen in the work of other professionals in the field. Inglesby (2008), while with the famous Ballet Russes, recalls her experience with rehearsal director Michael Fokine, describing him as being "quite rightly, merciless. Everything had to be perfect, and the matter of exhaustion, either ours or his own, did not enter his thoughts. A martinet, he required unremitting perfectionism" (p. 38). A similar disposition was seen exhibited by Balanchine, "the least detail was significant, every element worthy of attention" (Fisher, 2006, p. 17).

A Source of Inspiration

Independent of whether the master is teaching syllabus, open work, or taking a rehearsal, and regardless of the number of students, the comments from the students and the observations of the masters at work reveal that not only do they communicate their knowledge, but also they do so in a way that was a *source of inspiration to their students, providing challenges, and setting high standards for personal achievements* (see Curtain Calls – DVD: #2 Inspirational Teaching). Zan explained:

I have always tried to make dancers feel there is no end to where they can go, I encourage them to expand themselves and really get something out of it.

A student discussed the way Zin inspired her:

She had very high expectations and I think we worked very, very hard to meet them. She would say ‘last year all the girls all got honours’ so you would try extra hard. I think that, possibly more than for yourself, you wanted to do it for her. She would inspire you through high expectation, ‘setting the bar high’, in such a way that you would work really hard, do whatever you could, to get there – to do it for her. For example, if she wanted you to do five pirouettes you would just work and work and work until you could do five, whereas someone else might say ‘do a double’, which is all most teachers ever expect, and so that’s all you would do, you wouldn’t *think* to push harder to do five.

And a student recalled Zin telling her class about a dancer she had previously trained who had gone on to enjoy a very successful ballet career. Zin used this dancer’s abilities as a source of inspiration:

She would tell us that this dancer could do 72 fouettes on a spot no bigger than a twenty cent piece. And you would think ‘if she can do 72, I can do 72!’ Zin would put that potential in our minds.

The masters were deliberately *encouraging, and motivating* with their students to improve their performance by pushing them through their own comfort zones and perceived limits. Zan recalled:

There are all sorts of other things you can do to challenge dancers, and I think this is *totally* important. Dancers *need* to be taken beyond their comfort zone - to understand what they are really capable of achieving. For some reason after the dancers know the steps they then have to be *really* encouraged to understand that they need to go *beyond* their comfort zone to understand what they are really capable of achieving, to search for the *utmost* you can do.

A student related one way in which Zan accomplished this:

He had a little walking stick, and when we were doing an extension or something like that, he would hold our arm up with the stick – encouraging us to hold it just that bit longer so we didn’t bring it down and come back into ourselves. Or he would put the stick up there [indicating shoulder height] and say ‘come on, you can get that leg up to there!’, and I did. He set challenges in that respect - it made you think, and it was fun, it was exciting. And we learnt to go beyond what we were doing.

Zin spoke of the need to make the learning environment an enriching experience for the students, motivating them to work hard and find success:

They are many reasons why kids might not be happy when they arrive, but I try to turn them around – ballet should be a wonderful place to be, one which they can’t wait to get to. Why? Because you [the teacher] make it wonderful for them. So they get better and better, are achieving well, and want to be there.

The students saw these teaching dispositions as key:

I think the best things that teachers can do is to inspire and motivate. And a lot of students only realize when they leave, just how much they actually did things for her because she inspired them. When she’s not there, they lose that. Other teachers, they just don’t create that same feeling.

And:

There are many dimensions to it, but I think you need to be inspirational. To be able to grab attention, maintain attention, be able to push and keep invigorating. An expert –there aren't boxes you can tick, to me it doesn't matter how many diplomas you have, it's whether they can get kids to *want* to dance and to take them to the top.

Zan and Zin's practices are similar to those of other ballet experts. Renowned teacher Marie Fay (1997) asserts that creating an inspirational atmosphere in the studio removes the need for discipline. She states that the task of inspiring and motivating the students should be considered by a dance teacher as a duty, or indeed, a privilege. She recalls Nureyev being asked why Pushkin was considered such a great teacher, to which he answered, "he made the enchaînement so attractive, one just felt one had to do them no matter how difficult" (p. 3). One of Pushkin's last students, Nikolai Kovmir, who became a soloist with the Maryinsky Theatre, explained how Pushkin seemed to be inspiring not just his students but himself, and so "he enticed us along with him" (in Albert, 2001, p. 73). Another noticed the encouragement that was characteristic of Pushkin's style, "He always tried to find the words to restore a student's strength, to keep the fire burning in his eyes throughout a class or a rehearsal" (ibid, p. 77). Fisher (2006) reports that Balanchine's choreography was often challenging to dancers, requiring them to move in unusual and unexpected ways. Comparable to the above comment on Pushkin, Fisher explained that this not only challenged his dancers, but Balanchine as well. In dance, the strong link between challenge and demand is well recognized (Erkert, 2003). Demanding the best from one's students should, in best practice, come from providing them with a challenging environment. This is evident in the work of both masters. Dance educationalist McCutchen (2006) summarizes the masters' attitudes toward their work when she says "you only get the quality you teach and expect" (p. 130).

An Intensity of Practice

Both masters showed a high intensity of practice in their work, exhibiting boundless energy, focus, engagements and perseverance. Observations showed that they never took any time to rest during their class or rehearsal times, being always engaged with the process from the very moment they entered the studio (see *Curtain Calls – DVD: # 3 Intensity of Practice*). Zan stated:

If you are going to be part of it, you have got to do something that makes you worthy of being part of it. So there is no time that you can sit back and just say 'oh well, yes, I did that little bit, that's as far as I go today'. Always you have to go on, and on, and on.

Students discussed how Zin would encourage them to *make use of every minute of available time*. For example, even if she was busy correcting a student she was always alert to what was happening around her, constantly checking to see if the other students were on-task. If she saw them chatting or not practicing she would make comments such as “you can’t do that triple pirouette, what are you talking for?” or, “don’t stand there watching her get good – you practice it!” Similarly, in rehearsals, when she was focusing on just one or two dancers in a rehearsal, a student recalled her saying to the others in the studio “everyone else – you are the understudies, get to the back and learn it. I might need you to do this if ‘so and so’ gets sick!”

Zin’s intensity, stated the students, achieved a number of things. It kept them on-task, encouraged them to help each other to perfect a move or step, and also to work harder to accomplish a skill that another student could already do.

This work ethic required Zan and Zin to have *incredible focus and energy*. Zan explained the need for focus within the rehearsal environment:

When you are watching the dancers rehearse a piece - you actually sit there and do every step within yourself and you are looking all the time to see what needs to be added, or is somebody doing too much. There is never *one* moment when you just sit and let them do it without any reaction from you at all.

While this level of intensity would be exhausting to most, Zin placed much importance on having, and *maintaining a high energy level* for one’s work, considering it to be a vital component for achieving student success. She added,

But you *really* have to put as much energy into the first class as you do in the last class, which personally for me is a bad thing because at the end of the day I am absolutely worn out!

Students of Zin’s talked about the tremendous dynamic energy she brought to the room and with it a sense of hard work:

Some teachers will sit in a chair and point to you from that chair, lecturing you - but not Zin. She was a wealth of energy. She would be jumping around doing it with you – with her stick out and slamming it on the floor - because she loved it so much. That was the way she thought things should be done and it really worked.

Zan displayed a similar teaching demeanour, noted by his students:

I thought he was a hugely charged person, you felt motivated all the time just because that’s the way he was, and you wanted to keep up with him. He moved around the class constantly, he was a person with so much energy, always projecting and giving to people – he seemed to do that naturally without even having to try.

The students also discussed the masters’ *extraordinary perseverance*. When correcting a fault, they continued to work with the student(s) until not only was the fault corrected, but the student

had gained an understanding of the change. A student of Zin's recalled having a placement problem with her pirouettes throwing her off balance. She explained how Zin *encouraged her to persist* through the many attempts needed until finding success, and the importance of that lesson:

Many teachers would just say, 'Well, you can't do that', or 'That's not your thing', but she would be looking for a *reason* for why you fell out of the pirouette, or why that didn't work. And she would stay with you, working with you, until it was fixed, and that's why I can do so much today, is that she would sit there with you for a half an hour, if that's what it took, and just watch you doing pirouettes and have that patience and *be with you* while you were doing that. And so you carry that over to your other aspects of life. You don't just pass things off and say, 'Oh, that's just the way it is.' You would go 'why is that, let's look a little bit closer' and see if you can find a reason and change that.

Another student commented:

Knowing she would never give up on you made you work harder still. She gives the clear impression there was no way out but through success! She *never* accepted a defeatist attitude from a student – always saying to us 'there is no such thing as 'can't'.

Zan and Zin's effort in this regard – never resting, always working with intense focus - is similar to Balanchine's practice, which is described as having an unwavering, laser-like, focus and an immense drive (Fisher, 2006). It is also in agreement with the practice of one of Europe's most renowned ballet teachers, Marika Besobrasova. Warren's (1996) research on Besobrasova reports her saying that in order to understand how her students are feeling and moving, she endeavours to set aside her own thoughts and feelings in the effort to give fully of herself to her students.

A High Level of Creativity

Another disposition that both masters showed in their practice was a *high level of creativity* – seen in their choreography, class structure, and exercises. This provided an immense variability to their practice. This maintained a high level of interest for their students, and perhaps also for themselves. Zan discussed his creative approach to taking open classes:

Quite often what I do is take two or three ideas or steps and use them in different ways – I show [the students] how they can be used in a quick time, then in a slow time, then slightly differently with different accents, so that the anatomy is used in different ways, using the *same steps* but with *different* anatomical movements. When I can see that they can understand that, then they realise they can use a certain vocabulary but use them in *different ways* with *different movements* and then I feel that we are getting somewhere. That means that I can take a whole hour and a half and discover that I haven't got as far as I intended to do in that class and yet we have covered a certain amount of ground which is valuable ground, nevertheless.

A student recalled his class:

His exercises - they were almost like little mini shows, they had a beginning, middle and an end. Not just doing steps. It was the whole dancing, getting the flow of movement; it was a great change from having other teachers who were pretty technical and doing simple stuff to get it right.

And Zin discussed the need to remain inventive with choreography, even with her youngest students:

For instance, [I will] take a spring point and turning it into something else, I might have turned the spring point around half way through, perhaps added a coupe, and a teacher may say, 'Oh but they will never do that!' but it challenges them even though they are little. It is exactly the same step only done with a coupe or with a little trick in it that fits the music, and will look very different.

The creativeness of both masters was not limited to their studio work, but was equally evident in the many facets of a production. Zan and Zin both explained how they took an active and creative role in all facets of a production, making key artistic decisions on music, sets, costumes, lighting, publicity, and more. For example, Zan discussed one of his recent full-length works where he collaborated with the composer on the ballet's composition, often listening to pieces over the phone and providing his input. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993, p. 121) argue that creativity "remains one of the most revered of human characteristics. In some ways it is more like a virtue than ability. But it is a virtue that one may believe in wholeheartedly and yet find oneself unable to practice successfully" (p. 121). In this area of the master's practice, Zan and Zin can, indeed, be reported as being extremely successful. But Zan added a caveat to being a creative person. He noted that one needs to be aware of not becoming too isolated in one's practice:

Any creative person has to be careful in that it becomes a very lonely situation, as 80% of what you want to discuss can only be discussed with yourself, due to you not wanting to be seen as indecisive and you don't want other influences to influence you.

He described the creative process of designing and choreographing a complete new ballet as an emotional experience:

Every time when starting a new ballet, you have a moment when you feel really excited about it, then the reality starts setting in, and from that excitement you can sink into the depths of depression trying to find what you want. I think this is part of being someone who can create original process and thought. You have to be willing to accept all that, suffer when it does happen but ride through it. And meanwhile *never* let the dancers know [these feelings]!

The masters' creative abilities clearly extended to all aspects of their practice, and was also evident in their approach to problem-solving in and out of the studio. It was often done in ways that Sternberg (2008) describes as novel and inventive. Zan and Zin's quest to be creative in their choreography aligns with Dewey's (1934) statement: "If the artist does not perfect a new

vision in his process of doing, he acts mechanically and repeats some old model fixed like a blueprint in his mind” (p. 50). Putting new life into revivals and historical pieces and providing the uniqueness to new dance works, showed their lack of repetitiveness or duplication of others’ past work.

Taking a different view, Morris (2003) believes that the traditional way in which ballet is taught leads to a lack of creativity in the art form. She further states that this is due to the reluctance of teachers to embrace change. This certainly does not seem to be true of Zan and Zin. Both were constantly working to stay up-to-date and in the forefront of practice, showing high levels of creativity within this endeavour. Interestingly, studies of the work of scientists suggest that creativity arises, for the most part, from intrinsically motivated and consciously undertaken hard work, and is typically achieved through a life-time of dedicated practice in one specific domain (Sawyer, 2006). This statement most fittingly applies to the work ethic and practice of Zan and Zin.

Self-Assurance and Reliance

Both masters consider that a strong *personal conviction and belief* in their own work is of paramount importance to their practice. They showed evidence of being *highly confident in their own abilities*, standing behind their decisions. For example, in Zin’s discussion on placement, stance, turns, and so forth, she is adamant that her theories and methods are the best approach, and will bring about the best outcomes for her dancers. These, she stated come from her study of the Russian technique and her own understandings generated from years of teaching experience:

I don’t believe I have ever deviated from what I believe is right.

This was clearly seen in a student’s comment, recalling Zin’s disregard for other methods and her firmly held convictions:

She had a very clear vision of what was right. Sometimes she would say ‘others might do it that way, but we do it *this* way – don’t worry about what you hear, this is how *I* want you to do it’. So, even though in an examiner’s class they might show you a different way of performing a step, she wanted it done her way because she firmly believed it was the best.

This disposition was also noted by a student of Zan’s:

He was so focused, he knew what he wanted.

And when Zan was able to have full choreographic license with a new ballet, he showed a self-confidence and certainty in his decisions:

I am going to do what I feel I want here, rather than for anybody else.

Zan's self-belief in his decisions provided him with the *determination to continue* despite any criticism of his work. Zan recalled some of the difficulties he had to face on returning to New Zealand in 1957, including negative reactions to his effort to move the art form forward. People told him he was "too far ahead of his time", and warned him to "be practical, be realistic." His *tenacity* helped him to stay true to his path. For example, he believed that returning home after a successful dancing career in Europe would be seen as a positive contribution to dance development in New Zealand. The reality was far from his expectation:

I had great plans but... we weren't greeted as very popular at first, only because we were seen as a threat, which I think was a great shame. I thought I was coming back with a reputation. I thought a reputation was going to be *the thing*. Goodness gracious me, some of the places we danced in and roles that I had danced - *that* was a reputation... We really came down to earth, to the realities of all that is involved in creating a new way of life in the artistic world in New Zealand in the late 1950s.

Zan recalled his frustrations he experienced from people's negative attitude when he tried to share his overseas experiences and learning:

It was like stepping back almost into a cultural desert. We would start to talk about a season in Monte Carlo, or a season in New York, London, whatever, but it was just as though a heavy curtain came down, *clonk*, in front of us. Nobody really wanted to know. In actual fact it wasn't their fault. In those days there was no TV, people didn't realize the advantage of being able to see these places, to be able to associate with the various theatres or types of cities that they were. They knew about them but to most people it was a way of us sort of showing off, that we had done this when so many people had not. And it wasn't like that *at all*, I mean we were just stating facts. But people found it very hard to accept that.

Therefore it is not surprising Zan felt that New Zealand's 'tall poppy syndrome'²² had some early consequence to his career:

I have always felt that the tall poppy syndrome is a reality, and this, I think, happens due to our small population. People like you to be kept down to size. I felt that when we first came back the tall poppy syndrome was so obvious that it cut us off at the ankles, and we were lucky that they ever grew again. Now, after all these years, of course, it is quite different. I now find that the tall poppy syndrome doesn't worry me, personally, at all any more but I see it happening in the arts. And also, of course, in so many other aspects of life.

This identifies a unique New Zealand context to the masters' progress. As mentioned in Act One, Scene One, both Zan and Zin's early years in dance were at a time when ballet was emerging as an art form in New Zealand. The world was at war, and to learn from ballet's elite

²² Tall poppy syndrome, a pejorative term, describes a frustratingly common New Zealand cultural attitude directed towards those who try to rise above the average. When this occurs, be it by merit or from self-opinion, the tendency of the others is to 'cut down' that person and return them to the crowd of normalcy.

in Europe was hardly possible. Lacking money, support, a collegial network, and engaged in a continual battle against the ‘tall poppy syndrome’, Zan and Zin both showed extraordinary devotion to ballet and a determination to succeed. Perhaps the difficulties, themselves, contributed to the masters *developing a strong self-assurance and confidence* in their own practice; and also led to them to seek out a close-knit supportive network of like-minded people, and doggedly continue their work without attending to negative influences.

Understanding that a life committed to ballet requires much *reliance on oneself* in the quest for success, either as a dancer or teacher, provides an explanation for the masters’ strong sense of self-belief. Developing this level of autonomy brings with it an independence in their practice, and a self-driven and determined attitude towards their work. This concurs with Schempp’s (in Berliner, 2001) assertion that “experts have a good deal of independence of the opinions of others...they are confident in their domain of practice” (p. 477). Similarly, a well-known pioneer in dance education, Margaret H’Doubler (in Gray, 1989), spoke of this same need to be a self-reliant practitioner, stating: “we are our own teacher, textbook, and laboratory” (p. 6).

Being Reflective

In the interviews, the masters discussed the importance of their being reflective practitioners at all stages of their careers, assisting their own progress and understanding, and that of their students. Zan recalled using reflection when he first started teaching:

From that slightly self-conscious period I became very aware of striving to do something. I think you develop gradually along to a point where you discover certain things about yourself, first of all. You discover you have to adopt a slightly different angle of imparting your knowledge; you have to realize it’s not you that’s important in this particular case: it’s the dancer you are working with, because that’s the body through which your knowledge is going to be seen. You have to work out how you can reach *that* person in *that* body.

Zan’s reflective attitude is also apparent in the following frank review of his own choreography:

Well, there are very few ballets that I can say I think I have attained all the goals that I have set out. In complete works there will be one or two sections that I know, or feel, are not developed in the best way. There are some ballets that I have done that I have felt have been, that my brain, or creativity - if you like - has adequately served the idea from which it originated, from which the piece originated. If a work proves to be unsatisfactory, I won’t use the word devastated, I just feel that I have let myself down, but mostly I would feel that I have let the dancers down. Because of the amount of energy that has gone into a work that I have devised, if it has not proved satisfactory then, to me it is a waste of their energy and I have let them down. I have to say, fortunately I can’t, at this point in time, think of any work that I would say was a complete and utter waste of time. That may be because of my philosophy that you learn more from your mistakes than you learn from your successes so it could be that I have tucked it, psychologically, away, and thought ‘oh, well that’s a good learning experience’, but on the other hand, I have never really felt the complete elation that every aspect, *everything*, has worked out from start to finish one hundred percent. One or two I have been very, very pleased about, very happy.

Zin spoke about how she would often leave the studio asking herself how to go about improving a certain element of a student's work, and continuing to dwell on it. Sometimes, she recalled, she would even wake in the night with the answer, or a choreographic vision. Her students recalled her working with them the day after a performance, helping them to fix a particular lift or turn with which they had struggled, before that evening's performance:

She went through the journey with you as.... it wasn't as though she was a teacher and she walked out the door and that was it. No, she walked out the door and went 'I wonder what we can do to fix that problem' and for the next 6 hours she would be thinking about it, she would be up in the middle of the night or it might come to her in her sleep and she would take notes and she would bring it into class the next day.

And Zan recalled taking the time to assess his own teaching work:

You can tell when you haven't given a really good class, when you feel dissatisfied with yourself. That's when I question myself and say 'why do I feel like that, what happened today that that didn't work, why didn't it work?' And then I try to avoid falling into the same situation again.

Being a reflective practitioner is an area in which the literature has much to say (Alter, 2002; Bolwell, 1998; Cancienne & Snowber, 2003; Debenham & Debenham, 2008; Dewey & Archambault, 1964; Fortin, 1992; Killion & Todnem, 1991; Schön, 1987; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). Other similar terms also fit within this frame: self-monitoring (Webster & Schempp, 2008); reinvestment of learning (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993); and critical thinking (Chen, 2001; You, 1991). Tan (1997) finds that reflective practitioner experts objectively assess their work, honestly identify problems, and work to improve their performance. Because of this, he continues "they are, therefore, better able to accurately analyze the cause of their failure, and take corrective action. Experts' superior self-monitoring skills and levels of self-knowledge are attributed to their vast knowledge base and the way they store that knowledge in memory" (p. 33). Schön (1987), whose work on reflection has been credited for its recent gain in popularity (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004), sees a reflective practitioner as being a person who does so within and on their practice, considering both their actions and intentions. By doing so, they 'engage in a conversation' with a problem in order to solve it, a process which Schön describes as 'reflection-in-action' and 'reflection-on-action'. These processes are clearly applicable to Zan and Zin's practice. In a parallel way, Webster and Schempp (2008) use the term 'self monitoring'. They assert that "through self-monitoring, outstanding performers dedicate substantial thought and attention to developing an intuitive sense of their strengths and weaknesses, which in turn leads to the implementation of strategies for maintenance and improvement" (p. 23). Again, the practices of both Zan and Zin reveal such efforts.

Humility

Comments made by both Zan and Zin reveal that neither expected, nor sought out, accolades as a way of feeling validated. Indeed, in the interviews, both preferred to focus the discussion on their work, and were clearly reticent in speaking about themselves as exceptional practitioners. Despite their well-recognized places as ballet masters, they were *unassuming* about their undeniable successes. This was evident in this comment from Zan:

I'm not good at accepting tributes, but I am always so conscious of those things I wanted to do better, or was unable to achieve.

While Zan acknowledged his status as ballet master, he added:

I don't have any sort of false idea that I am the picturesque grand master standing out there waving a stick around, watching these things emerge from my own shadow. It's nothing like that at all, it's quite the reverse.

Similarly, Zin commented:

I mean there are *thousands* of people more knowledgeable than me in the world for teaching ballet, I know very little in comparison to many others.

And when discussing her personal views on her new piece of choreography, Zin stated:

So I don't think I have any aspirations of being great or anything like that, I just hope it turns out. I want to have it looking great so it will please people...but I might be absolutely useless!

It is clear that while they may, outwardly, show a strong conviction in their abilities; they hold a modest and unpretentious view of their own importance. Humility was also one of Balanchine's dispositions (Fisher, 2006). Of his work, recognized around the world as exemplary and visionary, he stated "I am not genius, I am craftsman", and when praised for his creativeness and outstanding ability, he rebutted "Only God creates; I assemble" (p. 26).

Discussion

A number of dispositions were found to significantly contribute to the masters' abilities to be highly effective and efficient teachers of ballet. They are presented in Table 4. A discussion, with further interpretative comments, follows.

**Table 4:
Key Dispositions of the Masters**

Zan and Zin’s professional dispositions revealed that they -

- strive for perfection in all aspects of their practice
- are a source of inspiration for their students
- endeavour to motivate, encourage, and provide challenge for their students
- have a high intensity of practice, with boundless energy, focus, and perseverance
- are extremely creative in all facets of their practice
- have a strong self-assuredness and reliance
- are reflective in their practice, using this to guide them in their learning and work
- are modest and humble as to their abilities and status within the profession.

The dispositions that have been identified seem to arise from the masters’ immense passion, dedication, and commitment to their practice. Such passion, asserts Day (2008) is “a driver, a motivational force emanating from strength of emotions” (p. 77). The traits that the master teachers exhibit closely align with the viewpoints of Jack and Linda Vartoogian (1997), who state:

Inspiration, talent, and the example of great dancers may be crucial starting points, but these factors are only a beginning on the often gruelling and long road in professional teaching. Dedication is paramount: aside from the long working hours, the teacher is never off duty from the essential priority of maintaining the students crucial ‘tools of the trade’- the body (p. 37).

From this extraordinary dedication comes the immense effort and energy that Zan and Zin put into their work, done with much thoughtful consideration and careful reflection. Dewey (1916; 1964), often considered the ‘founder of reflection’, found that those who are reflective in their practice typically have three personal attributes – open-mindedness, whole-heartedness, and responsibility. These attributes are still relevant. Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac (2004) report on their importance in the practice of expert sports coaches. Dottin (2009) asserts that pedagogical dispositions are habits of “mindfulness and thoughtfulness” (p. 85), stemming from the consistent internal motivation of the teacher to conduct themselves intelligently and make sound professional judgements.

To discover these dispositions, within the field of dance, scholars have attempted to list the possible pedagogical dispositions or traits of quality teachers. McCutchen (2006), when considering specialist dance teachers in schools, posits seven traits that should be cultivated: desire to let others shine; determination and perseverance; dual perspectives; a broad view of dance; energy; positive professional attitude, and a willingness to learn new dance forms. She lists the key responsibilities of the teacher as inspiring, nurturing, providing individual attention, engaging an interest, demanding quality, and being reflective. Schlaich and DuPont (1993), examining the work of eleven modern dance teachers, list six qualities of outstanding teachers: love of movement and teaching; basic knowledge of dance; supportive attitude; clear communication; musicality; focusing beyond technique. Fay (1997), a ballet master herself, states that in her view the characteristics of a master should include diligence, total commitment, sacrifice, self-denial, dedication, and perseverance. The diversity shown in the lists above gives weight to the literature's insistence that each field, and indeed, *each genre* within a field such as dance, needs further exploration to identify its own contribution in this area of effective practice.

Although my research does show some alignment with the findings of others in the literature, I wish to emphasize that my aim was to illuminate the key dispositions of *Zan and Zin's unique practice* by identifying the factors that appeared to be central to their success. This was accomplished by letting the elements emerge from within the data, not by trying to structure them into previously presented lists or models. In this way, discoveries attempt to answer the call to illuminate dispositions from the dance genre of *ballet*.

SCENE TWO

What do the masters believe to be the most important elements of their teaching practice?

The most important thing for me is for a dancer to enjoy what they are doing. It mustn't feel as though you are actually imposing something on a student. You have got to try and find the inner self of that student – each one as an individual – encouraging that at the same time as you are teaching them the basic technical skills that the dancer has to attain and acquire. I have always tried to make dancers feel there is no end to where they can go with the art form. - Zan

Schlaich and DuPont (1993) claim that to help teachers learn the art of teaching dance, an examination into what successful teachers perceive as being most valuable is needed. This, they maintain, is more important than providing endless lists of exercises; teachers need to know “HOW to teach, not WHAT to teach” (authors emphasis, p. xi). Smylie (1999) describes the values that a teacher should have in their professional orientation, and states that “knowledge without values is aimless. ...Teachers should have the character to act consistently with the highest value of their profession” (p. 46). Webster and Schempp (2008) note the important role that teacher concerns play in teaching, noting that the most effective teachers are primarily concerned about the impact they have on their students when teaching, and for their students' success, whereas less effective teachers focus on self-concerns such as appearance and mannerisms. If that is so, then exploring this aspect of practice, with teachers who are acknowledged in their field as being exemplary practitioners – identifying their concerns and highlighting the values that they attest as being pivotal in their practice - is a worthy endeavour. This is the focus of Scene Two.

Emerging Key Themes

The following section seeks to illuminate what Zan and Zin believe to be the most important elements of their practice. Comments by other renowned classical ballet masters and practitioners in the field that show similar understandings are added and discussed with reference to the literature. Key points in the text are emphasized by the use of *italics*.

The Aesthetic Quality of Ballet

Both Zan and Zin clearly want each student to gain an appreciation of the fundamental nature of ballet, starting with understanding the essence, *the very core*, of the art form – the *importance of the aesthetic element* within even the simplest of steps. It is important, asserted Zin, that the students understand the emotional feeling, the beauty, inherent within each and every movement:

A soul is what you have to have for ballet. That is what I try and get through to them - to let this show, with sincerity, on the stage.

In the same way, Zan stated:

Everything we do as a dancer has to show this, it comes from a motivation that starts at the very centre of your core - call it your soul, call it whatever you like – then it moves outwards, projecting out beyond the frame work of our own bodies. We have to know how to extend this, how to extend ourselves, not stopping at the fingers, not stopping at the feet, not stopping at the tip of the head. And the old cliché of the ‘eyes being the window to the soul’ is absolutely vital, and you see it so rarely, so rarely.

Extending this point, he added:

It’s to make the whole body speak – it’s the eye line, the head-line, it’s everything - there is almost an emotional reaction to every step.

Zan and Zin’s students echo their masters’ value on aesthetic understandings, showing that this perspective came readily across in their teaching. For example, Zin’s students spoke of her encouragement to ‘feel’ the dance, and to look for *expressive inspiration in the music*. Zan’s students commented on how he was always trying to draw more artistry out of his dancers, in the studio or theatre. Within this, they recognized his particular attention to characterization:

He wanted you to really work on your artistry, create a living character... not just acting it. ...with a total *giving* to the steps and what you are doing.

The masters’ insistence on the vital importance of the aesthetic element in dance is synonymous with other professionals. Wigman (1886-1973), an influential pioneer in German dance, claims “dance is a language of the soul and is understood on that level” (as cited in Howe, 2000, p. 145), and “dance is not representative, not mimesis, but rather an expression of the essence. It is a tangible expression of the intangible, invisible, that which is unutterable” (p. 143). Similarly, Horosko’s (2005) biographical work on the celebrated modern dancer May O’Donnell reports her depth of feeling in dance, quoting her as saying “It goes down to your soul. ...When they release their spirit, their entire being becomes involved in what they’re doing. They become different people, at least for the moment” (p. 124). Dan Wagoner, in Schlaich and DuPont’s

(1993) research on modern dance masters, believes that the true art in dance lies in the ability of the dancer to illuminate the central aesthetic idea within a work. Understanding the importance of this in the masters' practices and the effort given to imparting this to their students so they may form their own artistic and aesthetic interpretations, is clearly a key element.

Zan's particular emphasis on characterization and Zin's on classical quality are important to mention at this point, as they show that while both masters stress the huge importance of aesthetical understanding in ballet, they each bring their own emphasis into their work. This ties in with Hodgen's (1988), assertion that each dance genre has its own established aesthetic embedded within it, and to it individual masters bring a distinctive aesthetic interpretation.

From the time when I trained with Zan and Zin to the present, neither of the masters seemed to have changed his/her aesthetical position. While they have both adjusted to the evolving changes in style and the public's current notion of aesthetics, at the very core of their work they remain steadfast to their own aesthetic visions. This finding is in contrast to that of McCutchen (2006), who asserts that one's personal dance aesthetic often changes over time "with experiences and education" (p. 257).

However, both masters also mentioned how, on occasion, they had to ignore their own personal aesthetic in order to create ballet works with a particular audience in mind. Zan explained that this came about from an enforced requirement of making a production financially successful. Thus he worked to produce works that aimed not necessarily to please him, but that met the particular public's aesthetic expectation. This resonates with McCutchen's (2006) view that there are two types of aesthetic standards in dance: personal – that being one's own unique preference and inclination, and communal – the cultural collective ideas of what is aesthetically pleasing and artistically significant.

Considering and Encouraging the Individuality of each Dancer

The masters both spoke of treating all students *equally*, making each feel important and included, and helping them to develop their own individual style. Zan stated:

The students must feel that you are not talking only to the best dancer in the room, but that you are talking to every dancer – as an individual - trying to achieve their utmost. ...it mustn't feel as though you are actually imposing something on the student, but helping them to find their inner self - encouraging *that* to come out at the same time as you are teaching them the basic technical things that dancers have to acquire and attain. I think that *first and foremost* you have got to recognize that each body is an *individual* body, and anatomically each body is different.

Zan commented that a master needs to be successful in many more dimensions than just teaching ballet skills:

You have to be able to really get to know the student, how they think, where they are coming from. That needs communication – asking questions, answering questions. Its really psychology, too.

A student recognized Zin’s insightful nature, commenting on how she seemed to understand and teach with consideration for each one’s *personality and ability* while managing to give attention to all the students in her class:

She really seems to ‘know’ her students – who she could push and who she had to be a little softer with. Of course, when it came to casting for shows, obviously someone had to do the leads and whoever was best suited to the role ended up getting it. But in *class*, that’s something I love about Zin, everyone, no matter if they were two foot or six foot, or short, fat, wide, medium, everyone was pushed equally, she wouldn’t just go to the good students. In the teaching *I* have seen - that’s very rare. Typically teachers have a couple of favourites and they work with them and everyone else has just to follow along and turn up to rehearsals and sit at the sides. Not Zin, she would have everyone up dancing, *everyone*.

For those viewing ballet from the outside, this focus on individuality may seem contrary to popular thought, as most teachers view studio teaching – like a school classroom - as a group learning environment. Perhaps the typical images of the traditional classical ballet class or corps de ballet with twenty or so identical looking dancers, working in complete unison, encourage that perception. However, Zan and Zin understood that for dancers to make it beyond ‘adequacy’ they not only need to establish a superb technique, but find within themselves a special and unique quality to their art.

This focus on individuality finds agreement with other master practitioners. Legat’s work (in (in Albert, 2001) is recorded as being determined by “his concern for the individual students and artists in his class. The technical level demanded of each student was in accordance with his specific abilities at that particular stage of his training” (p. 50). This, states Albert, “was the “intelligence” of Legat’s method” (p. 50). The masters who contributed to Schlaich and DuPonts’s (1993) research project spoke of the need to encourage and support the individuality of each student. Most noted that although they demanded precision, the source of life in dance is the unique essence that comes from each dancer. And, Beaumont and Idzikowski (2003) recognize the importance of understanding each student’s unique requirements in terms of physical body type and temperament, and the resulting consequence of masters needing to adapt their teaching accordingly. Kimmerle and Cote-Laurence (2003) describe an effective dance teacher as one who is knowledgeable about his/her students, and who adjusts the teaching material in light of each student’s readiness to move forward in skill development. They claim

that understanding the “the learner’s capabilities” (p. 5) is a necessary tool for intelligent decision-making in the classroom.

Further, Collinson (1999), in her ‘triad of knowledge’ model of exemplary teaching, calls her second component ‘interpersonal knowledge’. This form of knowledge, she asserts, includes the ability of an expert teacher to focus on relationship building with their students, working to gain an understanding of them as individuals. This was clearly evident in the master’s practices. Zan said:

I expect each student to always be attaining the best they can with the technique, the technical abilities that *they* have.

These findings concur with the views of Brighthouse (2008), who contends that passionate and outstanding teachers are those that believe success is “possible and expected” for each of their dancers, and take failure to reach a particular student as a “challenge to their own teaching, not a sign of the pupil’s inability to learn” (p. 18).

An Ethic of Care

The title for this section, an ethic of care, was taken from Collinson’s (1999) work on redefining exemplary teaching. I borrowed it as I found it typified Zan and Zin’s views and practices. She lists the qualities of care: compassion; respect for self and others; empathy; hope/optimism; giving and receiving, and finding others’ strengths. These descriptors resonate with Goleman’s (as interviewed by Hanson, et al., 1998) views on emotion. Goleman, a leading authority and author on ‘emotional intelligence’, defined it as being “how we are aware of our emotions, how we handle them, how we motivate ourselves, how empathic we are, how we handle relationships with other people.” These emotional factors were clearly exhibited within my masters’ ‘ethic of care’.

Many dance genres are available for students, some of which do not require the high standards and physical demands of classical ballet. Zin recognized and appreciated the commitment that a dancer must have to stay focused:

You have to be very dedicated to be a classical dancer.

Zan spoke similarly about the rigours of learning ballet, and the fact that dancers are sometimes not able to find security and comfort in their work, and often work with a level of pain:

Ballet, as an art form, is one of the most depressing art forms that one can undertake because you are putting so many demands on your own body that its very unlikely that you are going to have many opportunities to feel very happy about it because it always feels uncomfortable - I like to try to take that discomfort zone away, knowing full well I never got rid of my own when I was dancing and knowing that most dancers don't, because dancers as a species normally remember things they have done not so well much more than they remember or think about that things they have done much better.

A thoughtful and deep understanding of the strict discipline and emotional requirements of ballet training was shown in the masters' empathetic and compassionate attitudes towards their students. They both work with enormous effort to ensure their students find their experience of learning ballet to be *enjoyable* and *fulfilling* as possible. Zan commented:

My *main* aim is to feel that the majority of people in the class feel that they have attained something and enjoyed the class - enjoyed what they are doing. I think that's important.

Legat (in Albert, 2001) held similar concern for his students, understanding from his own years as a dancer the learning value in creating a positive classroom atmosphere. He wrote of how he tried "to lighten the burden of strenuous exercise by timely jokes and lively music" (p. 49).

Zan also stated his aim for every student is to develop his/her own sense of worth and accomplishment, to:

Believe in themselves, and make their own statements.

Zin explained how she would try to create an *uplifting atmosphere in her classes* in which the student could forget any problems they might have:

It's no good being boring, you have to be enthusiastic and motivating for them, so they love it, and want to come back for more...making it exciting, making class the best place to be. I always tell them to leave their troubles at the door.

A student's comment showed his appreciation for Zin's effort:

This is something that only really comes from the heart, not as someone trying to make a business out of it, not as anything else but someone that loves dance so much and wants to see other people get the same sort of joy that she did out of dance, from it, is so unique and so special that I doubt that I will ever see any dance teacher around the world that does it.

Both masters wanted their students to benefit from their experience in the art form. Zan stated that he wished for his students to have:

Learned to appreciate the meaning of dance, the meaning of ballet in the framework of their own lives, how they are using that particular art form to express themselves, or express some idea in the art form....to have broadened their minds, opened their vision of dance in the widest way so they are not inhibited by what they can do.

And Zin hoped that through her teaching she had helped her students to *appreciate the art form*:

The love of the art, and the great wonder of music. How lucky they are to have experienced it.

Zan added:

I think the greatest thing one can ask, and the *most* one can ask, from anyone you are working with, is that you finish up with their respect - for yourself and the art form that you are involved in.

Clearly, from students' comments, these *hopes of the masters* did come to fruition. Many students spoke passionately about how they truly enjoyed and valued their experiences in ballet, and gave the credit for this to their masters. A particular student provided an eloquent summary, saying:

The experience I received, the self-confidence, and sense of self I got from it. It was priceless really. I remember seeing him last year following a performance, and he just smiled and gave me a nod and I knew what that meant from him – and so it meant the world to me.

While student comments showed an appreciation for the art form they also expressed their heartfelt appreciation for their master's effort and all the facets of knowledge that they gained from them:

I think he is amazing, to be still working and willing to pass on all that knowledge and wisdom to keep dance alive.

And one student stated how she viewed her master's practice:

It's not just about teaching, it's being a psychologist; it's being a manager, being a friend. There are lots of little intricate things. It's a very difficult thing, but you [the student] know it, you *know* what is great. It's a very rare thing.

Another expressed how much she valued her master's contribution to her practice as a professional dancer:

I hope he is proud of what I am doing. I hope he can see bits of what he has taught me in what I do on stage.

Similar sentiments are seen in a personal memory shared by Fisher (2006) in her biography of Balanchine. Many years after being a dancer in Balanchine's company, she had occasion to meet him backstage. Hugging him, she nearly wept as she came to realize, in that moment, how much she had learned from him. Gelu Barbu (in Albert, 2001), acknowledged as one of Romania's finest dancers, wrote the following in a personal letter to Pushkin,

My dear Alexander Ivanovich, you will always be my best memory, I will always be grateful for the fact that it was you alone who turned me into a dancer. ...You cannot imagine how I appreciate you and love you, my only teacher! (p. 81-82).

Sosniak (1985a) recorded similar emotions from pianists, noting that they spoke in reverent tones about their time under the tutelage of a master, recognizing its significance, and seeing their master as a role model for what they themselves wished to become.

These comments revealed the extent to which Zan and Zin strove to ensure that their students enjoyed their ballet experiences, and benefitted from their time devoted to its learning. By helping and encouraging each student to find success, and passing on their passion for dance, they hoped the students would also come to an informed understanding of dance, and appreciate it as an art form. They hoped to develop the students' senses of self-worth, provide them with the motivation to stay committed to their learning, but most importantly, allow each one to advance his/her art as a personal endeavour. This clearly gave the students the feeling of being valued and significant. They felt their teacher truly cared about them, took a personal interest, and through this established trust. Zan's teaching persona was described by one student as:

... fatherly, rather than dictator-ish. You trusted him. I felt there was a nurturing aspect to what he was doing, whether it was nurturing youth or tradition. He always tried to give whatever he could to people – a great generosity of spirit in giving.

A student recalled similar feelings from her years of training with Zin:

She made you feel special, believed in you, so you believed in yourself and worked even harder! You would do anything for her in class. She seemed to really 'see' through you, able to read you emotionally. It's extraordinary really, especially because when I see her today, I still feel she can do the same! It's a unique kind of closeness, and because of it she remains a very special person to me.

Another student commented,

She has a real love for her students. She knew their personalities well too.

It is evident that the masters considered these emotional factors, described by Collinson as their 'ethic of care', to be of paramount importance for their students. They were central to their practice. Davies (2008) defines passionate teachers as those that "care to make a difference and care to challenge... real care both looks after the person as in individual and challenges their performance, attitude and commitment" (p. 202). This aligns with Stinson (1993), who notes that a valued competency of a dance educator is that of recognising students' emotional needs. And similarly, Collinson's (1999) asserts that excellent teachers are concerned about each student's learning and well being. However, Zan and Zin's practice contrasts with the findings of Gilbert (2005) who discovered that private studio teachers often used "fear and criticism as way to 'inspire' students" (p. 34). Such traumatic experiences she considers the primary reason most students give up their training due to feeling unsafe and unhappy in that environment.

The depth of emotionality in Zan and Zin's practice was made particularly clear to me during an interview with Zan. Stopping at one point, and after a contemplative moment, he made the following telling comment:

Do they [my thesis supervisors] understand, or can they see the emotional content of this? In fact, it's an *imperative* part of the whole thing, isn't it?

Recently, the role that emotions play in learning has been found to be of significant importance in understanding the theory of practice. Leading theorists, such as Salovey, Gardner, and Csikszentmihalyi, and Goleman (interviewed in Hanson, et al., 1998), and Hanna (2008), put forward important ideas in this regard. Salovey asserts that "emotion and passion play a much larger role in human growth and development than we ever imagined". Goleman states that emotional intelligence, while largely hidden, is a crucial component in how well teachers educate, with knowledgeable teachers realizing that a student can not engage in learning if upset or distracted. Zull (2002) claims that emotions "influence our thinking more than our thinking influence emotion" (p. 74). He explains that the brain wants to be both safe and happy: the emotions evoked in learning affect both our reasoning and memory. And from the dance field, Gilbert (2005) sees the need to "train the next generation of teachers to value the role that emotions play in learning" (p. 34). Current theorists urge teachers to be more empathic and perceptive towards the emotional needs of their students. Both Zan and Zin already have a well developed understanding in this area. They work hard to create a positive and nurturing environment for their students, resulting in an atmosphere conducive for optimum learning.

Developing 'Professionalism' in their Students

I found that both masters placed a major emphasis on 'professionalism', considering it as *important to help the dancer to develop a correct professional attitude* towards their work. It had been highly relevant to their own careers in dance, and it was therefore something they endeavoured to communicate to their students. Gaining an understanding of the 'professionalism' required in the field of classical ballet – something both Zan and Zin consider to be *a necessity in order to be successful* in the art form – is in agreement with Gray (1989) when she states "the student must integrate the processes of self-teaching, learning to learn, resource utilization, reflection, experimentation, and self-evaluation" (p. 6). Developing a professional attitude encompasses many factors, some of which are explored below. A past student, who now holds a significant artistic teaching position in a major international ballet company, said that:

I remember watching Zin working on Giselle, and seeing the professionalism that she instilled in those girls at that age. She was tough and she was a perfectionist –perfect lines, perfect feet, everything. I still consider what she achieved with such young dancers to be amazing. I was still a junior, but this experience stayed with me. And it took a very long time for me to see such clean corps de ballet work again. And the Queen of the Wilis – I was amazed, for someone so young to be that good – I have never seen that, ever since.

Zan and Zin expected themselves, and their students, to work hard and *give the best possible effort* at all times. Zin stated:

You have got to be sure you do the very, very best in terms of teaching – be that exam work, or pas de deux, or whatever. It's your responsibility.

They asserted how unwilling they were to accept anything less than the best achievable result.

Zin viewed this as a daily goal for herself and her students:

...work like crazy, and demand the best, the best! I don't want them to be anything else. If you are a master teacher you work yourself to exhaustion to try to do that...not to be satisfied with 98%, don't be happy until you have good 99 and 3/4%! Like legs as high as they can go, heads as fast as they can turn on pirouettes, until lesson by lesson you achieve the results. You will soon find out how good your standard is when you have a visiting company like the Russians, and then you think, 'oh, go back to the barre, dear.'

Zan noted how his past masters instilled upon him these values:

From Idzikowski, it [the value learnt] was expecting everybody to do the best they could with their individual capabilities. His sincerity in trying to help each individual, and the enormous encouragement that he gave me as a young student. From Rambert, I learnt that you keep going no matter how terrible things seems to be, you just keep going, fight back, and don't give up. Otherwise you don't last two seconds because it's very, very hard.

A student recalled Zin's attitude on expecting her students to work hard:

She said to me 'you know, if you let one minute, *even one second*, go by, you are going to regret it in ten years time, you are going to look back and say 'why didn't I work harder then.' She gave us that idea that it was always thoroughly worth putting in the hard work now. And it wasn't long until you actually saw the results and realized she was right.

Development of the need for each student to acquire an understanding of the *personal discipline* needed for studying ballet, while typically not overtly explained by the masters, was clearly evident in their daily practice (see Curtain Calls – DVD: # 4 Developing Self-Discipline). The masters understood that without the self-discipline needed to perform the daily drill work, and repeat a particular step or piece of choreography countless times, a student would not reach the required level of achievement. This view is underlined by Fisher (2006), who notes that discipline is “the first fact of existence for professional dancers” (p. 60). Similarly, Zan commented:

Classical ballet training is now seen by so many as being so demanding, so involving, so rigid, that it takes too long to get anywhere and therefore they look for the easy option, but those who do follow through with it - follow a classical training - are more likely to finish up with the self-discipline that is required to study such an art form. A great percentage of students I have taught have developed this self-discipline. A number

of students in later life have said to me they are most proud that they have had that period of self-discipline, and that discipline, over the years, has become an important part of their memory and a pleasing memory.

He explained how self-discipline is also needed when preparing to perform, in maintaining energy over the entire run of a production, and in dancing roles for which they may not necessarily feel best suited:

That side of professionalism was instilled in me as soon as I got to England and started studying with some of the great masters – because it doesn't matter two hoots whether a dancer loves or hates what they are doing, *professionally* they have to have the right approach to develop their role. Because we have all danced things we didn't really like doing, or we have watched somebody else doing things we thought we should have. But professionally you have to take the role you are given, and explore it to its *full* dimension.

Another area of 'professionalism' that the masters viewed as important is the need for a dancer to be extremely *adaptive and responsive*. Learning these skills, and being able to apply them to new situations and new learning experiences, especially choreography, was highly valued by both Zan and Zin. Zan recalled coming to understand this from one of his many pivotal learning experiences as a new member of a ballet company. On one such occasion he had to perform before an audience after very little rehearsal opportunity:

I had to go on [stage] in these ballets very quickly, sometimes learning them in an afternoon, without even knowing the music exactly. I had to develop my own instincts in how I fitted in with other people, not as a person, but as a character...It was a tremendous experience of picking things up quickly and then trying to make myself into one of the characters without really having sufficient rehearsal or knowledge to do it.

From this experience and others, Zan noted that developing adaptability and flexibility can lead to advancement for a dancer. Unexpected opportunities were often presented to dancers, and those who are ready and willing to grasp them could find themselves moving ahead quickly, for example, from the corps to soloist within an afternoon. Mona Inglesby (2008) recalls how she was called upon to dance a mazurka with very little knowledge of the choreography and going on stage with only one run-through prior to the full dress rehearsal. With the help of her experienced partner she managed to perform it successfully.

Zan and Zin also considered it important to provide their student with the opportunity to learn the *professional theatre-craft of classical ballet*. Developing an appreciation for the theatre environment, coping with the stress and anxiety of performance, learning the skills of full stage make-up, and discovering the etiquette of a life backstage, were highly valued by the masters as important professional learning experiences. To that end, both offered the opportunity of frequent performance seasons to their dancers. One of Zin's students recalled his appreciation of learning how to be a 'professional' dancer while still young, spending all holidays in a production:

It became second nature to us, you learned how to do things yourself, your make-up, fast changing, set changing, how to handle prima donnas', all of it. And if it wasn't a full house, you still learnt that a 'professional' dances the very best they can, whether its for 5 people or 5000. Because the theatre is where the art form is, not in the rehearsal room or studios. It's all on the stage. And when I got into an international company, I had all this 'professional' knowledge that others didn't have a clue about. That gave me great confidence.

Zan explained how having a master teacher who role-modelled a professional attitude had been significant for his own understanding in this regard. He recalled his learning from one of his great masters, Idzikowski:

He was *wonderful* because he was just so *absolutely* professional, and he was my introduction to pure professionalism, even down to his pianist, Madame Edvina. She had also been a dancer for Diaghilev and she was the *epitome* of the dancer who had grown old... played with a wonderful rhythm. She would make comments if you happened to pass the piano after you had done an *enchainment* [French: combination of dance steps] then there suddenly would be a frozen silence and the 'Maestro', as we called him, would be glaring at her - and he reminded everybody that this was *his* class. That was my introduction to pure professionalism because he expected *everybody* to act in a completely professional manner.

Zan's *exposure to role models* (other company dancers, master teachers, and guest artists) had provided him with many opportunities to experience and understand the importance of professionalism. This was firmly cemented in his mind, he recollected, from his winter tour of the English provincial theatres with the Ballet Rambert. He observed the professional attitude of others within the company as they danced in small cold venues, often while suffering from exhaustion and injuries, and yet still gave their best to every performance. He accepted this work ethic as part of his 'professionalism', and endeavoured to be a role model that would also, likewise, inspire his students.

Sosniak (1985a) asserts that a master teacher should expect a strong work ethic from students. As students progress in ability and age, the masters expect that they should have developed, and be able to display, the required professional attitude – a strong work ethic – in their practice. Their efforts in helping their student to develop this vital element were recognised in students' remarks. In fact, both Zan and Zin's students reported that the professional approach they had developed to their ballet work benefitted many other facets of their lives, proving to be important regardless of their career choices. They had learned respect - for themselves, their masters, for dance, for the etiquette of ballet, for self-discipline, and self-reliance. The following two student quotes summarized the views of most. For Zin:

In essence, that is why she is such a good teacher, it's because her students didn't learn just how to do ballet, they learnt how to get on in life, and the rules that are required to be good at anything – whatever it is you want to do. It's this attitude that gets you ahead in the dance world, and very few have it.

And, for Zan:

He instilled all the professional ideals needed with a good balance between discipline and enjoyment. I felt like he was always trying to prepare people and give them those tools, not just for a professional career in ballet, but for life. And I consider myself extremely lucky to have been influenced by such a wonderful man with just so much to give.

Baryshnikov (in Albert, 2001) noted this disposition in Pushkin, stating how he worked with his students over several years, “determining fully the course of their formation, both professionally and as human beings” (Foreword, vii). The foundation of Pushkin’s teaching career was “his profound professionalism.” This included the qualities of being self-prepared and taking responsibility for his work. He was recorded as often saying to his students, “If you can’t last the class, you won’t be able to last the performance” (ibid, p. 28).

Interestingly, the masters spent very little time discussing their personal or private lives, either in their interviews, in the studio, or with their students. Even after years of training with them, the students knew very little about them outside of their studio work. The masters had a purely professional attitude in their work, and felt their private lives were not relevant. *They maintained a totally professional relationship with their students*, actively standing apart from personal involvement beyond that of a dance teacher – student relationship. This means the students did not see any of the masters’ emotional insecurities, concerns, or doubts. Zan and Zin seemed completely confident – in their teaching, their choreography and their belief in their students. Zan, however, recalled his nervousness when watching the premier of one of his ballets:

I live the whole thing again. And if I know there is a difficult moment coming up - whether it be a technical performance thing or a technical stage difficulty - then I hold onto my program a little bit harder or grab my wife’s arm and hold it a little harder - my wife has said she would rather not sit with me on opening nights!

Fisher (2006) reported the same of Balanchine, noting how he kept his private life to himself, with often those most close to him not being aware of issues pressing upon him. And, both Zin and Zan acknowledged how a life spent in challenging enterprises, places enormous demands on practitioners, is often isolating, and brings emotional consequences. Zan stated,

I have run the gauntlet of every emotion you could possible think of...but I think that if you can go through life, up to this date anyway, and say you have never been bored, then something is working in the right direction!

Passionate teachers, claims Day (2008), typically portray an ordered control and professional calm, yet behind this bubbles “...deep, potentially explosive passions, emotions bringing

despair, elation, anger and joy of a kind not normally associated in the public mind with work” (Nias, as cited in Day, p. 76).

Discussion

Although it was evident that Zan and Zin had their personal teaching emphases and styles of practice, they shared similar values and concerns about what they believed to be important to their teaching practice. These are presented, in summary, in Table 5.

**Table 5:
Identified Important Elements of a Master’s Practice**

<p>Zan and Zin gave importance, and placed high value, on –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - imparting the vital aesthetic understanding – the necessary quality, or ‘soul’, inherent to ballet - considering their dancers as individuals, and encouraging each to explore and bring their own unique aesthetic and performance individuality to their dancing - building relationships with their students, developing a knowledge of each dancer’s strengths, needs, and ability - having an ethic of care, demonstrating an empathic and emotional perceptiveness towards their students learning, and showing an understanding of the enormity in both the learning process and discipline that are vital requirements to find success in this art form, - demonstrating, and promoting, the development of one’s own professional attitude and approach, valuing this an integral component of a dancer’s practice - helping their students to gain an appreciation and respect for the art of ballet through their training and performance opportunities.
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While Zan and Zin consider technique and artistry to be foundational requirements of the art form (the focus for discovery in Act Three), this research revealed their strong emphases on the aesthetic elements of ballet. In dance, aesthetic experience, concludes McCutchen (2006), “elevates us from the ordinary to the extraordinary, from the usual to the rare, from the mundane to the special. Artistic encounters register in our minds (i.e., cognitively), but when an art work actually strikes its mark aesthetically it resonates in the heart” (p. 257). Considering the essential place of the ballet aesthetic to practice and performance, it is important to note the emphasis that the masters gave to developing their students’ understanding and appreciation of it and other linked elements: ballet as an art form; the place and importance of music to ballet;

and the need to unify music and movement in order to produce for each student to discover their own unique and expressive artistry.

Both masters appreciate their students as individuals, developing a strong knowledge of each student's abilities and attributes. They understand the emotional factors at play in learning and the value of a professional approach to the art form. There is a clear connection here to Ericsson and Charness (1994), who assert that within the art domain, while technical proficiency is necessary, at a certain point in a student's training it is no longer enough. Understanding and artistic expression must be added. This concurs with the view of Jackson (2005), who states that in addition to transferring the knowledge of dance technique and artistry effectively, another key responsibility of a dance master is transferring the necessary discipline and self-motivation. Similarly, Dame Margaret Scott (as interviewed by Cass, 1993), founding director of the Australian Ballet School, when discussing the importance of the teacher's role, notes there are "many things a dancer needs - right body, attitude, spirit, talent...it's like a cake. ...[because] a talent without work goes nowhere".

Coda

The masters' personal understandings and dispositions, developed during their learning and teaching experiences in classical ballet, have established a strong professional orientation in their practice. This links with Collinson's (1996, 1999) 'triad of knowledge' model - which she developed to provide a framework of exemplary teaching that extends beyond the cognitive dimension. She explains that the third component of the 'triad' - the intrapersonal knowledge of the expert - is composed of the teacher's reflections, ethics, and dispositions. Zan and Zin both spoke passionately about the attitudes and character traits needed for success - both for themselves and their students. They were both found to share many of the same dispositions and understandings in respect to what they value in their practice. They believed that success as a professional dancer required a high level of commitment, and they worked enormously hard to help their students gain their own professional orientations. Both Zan and Zin's practice and the consequential comments made by their students fit well within Fried's (in Brighthouse, 2008) description of a passionate teacher. When we reflect on outstanding teachers in our lives we remember "what they cared about and that they cared about us and the person we might

become. It's this quality of caring about ideas and values, this depth and fervour about doing things well and striving for excellence, that comes closest to what I mean in describing a 'passionate teacher'" (pp. 13-14). Zin and Zan's practice also ties with Day's (2008) analysis of the dispositions of outstanding teaching, noting that they require 'intelligent passion' in order:

to maintain a commitment over time, courage to persist in caring for every student in the class, those who are able and those who are not, those who are interested and those who are alienated...to continue to believe in and be actively engaged in one's moral purposes and not to default under pressures of effort and energy. Leading well, over time, is a struggle and it takes intelligence and passion to continue to encourage self and others (p. 89).

While Zin and Zan consider it vital for a master teacher to have a thorough knowledge of technique and artistry, the masters firmly believe that the development of the right professional orientation is a central requirement to success – both as a dancer, *and* as a teacher. Both felt the responsibility to *transfer their knowledge and understandings*, in this regard, to their students.

Acquiring and Passing on their Professional Orientations

Zan and Zin's significant experiences informed their understanding and methods of practice. Zan constantly reiterated that his professionalism orientation had been passed on from his own masters and the renowned artists with whom he had danced. Indeed, he credits their influence as moving him from student to professional. He placed high value on his students' studying with teachers who emphasized these requirements. The significance of the apprenticeship model has been noted previously in Act One, Scene One. It is relevant to note its application to the transference of professional orientation to students. Being a role model for students, notes McCutchen (2006), is a key responsibility of a dance teacher. Zan and Zin took this responsibility very seriously. Vartoogian and Vartoogian (1997) note that, becoming a professional dancer requires a:

total commitment to punishing demands of long hours; physical endurance through repeated classes and rehearsal; and restrictions in the personal life including, for many, weeks or months spent away from home on tour. Professional dancers are not simply gifted, or even created from years of dedication and practice – they must possess, in addition to these qualities, a drive or compulsion (p. 11).

The two masters not only modelled the appropriate behaviours of a professional in classical ballet; they also discussed with their student the qualities that were needed. Their teaching was both implicit and explicit (Collinson, 1999). Their students all commented on how Zan or Zin were always demonstrating their professionalism and modelling excellence. Students were keen to emulate them. Collinson (1999) notes that excellent teachers model these important elements

of their practice, hoping that they will be internalized and reflected back in their students work. A student comment showed how with Zan and Zin, this, was indeed, the case:

To me, I can automatically spot someone who has trained with Zan because of their professional standards, and morals, and etiquette, and I see that straight away.

Modelling such behaviours fits well with Eisner's (1994) view that these attributes are not explicitly taught, but *implicit* in the teaching experience. Equally, Sosniak (1985a) reports that students were both motivated and inspired by their masters, speaking of them in reverent tones, and had *unconsciously* learned their attitudes and habits. Sosniak's findings are supported by the student comments in this study.

In summary, from my discovery in Act Two, I believe that gaining a correct professional orientation was critical for Zan and Zin in their quest for high levels of expertise, and in their being able to successfully develop dancers of international repute.

As the Curtain Falls...

This Act gave further insight into the masters' personal reflections, actions, and philosophies on teaching ballet. It revealed their professional orientations, from which several key dimensions were illuminated that seem central to include in the emerging prototype of ballet master:

Table 6:

Act Two - Key Dimensions of a Master's Practice

A ballet master's professional orientation is an accumulation of understandings learned from a life spent dedicated to the art form, informed by significant others in the field, and his/her personal philosophy of practice.

A ballet master is not only knowledgeable on the artistic and technical dimensions of the art form – he/she also has an intimate understanding of the values and dispositions needed to become successful as a dancer, and works to provide his/her students with these, typically modelling the correct attributes in his/her own practice.

A ballet master teaches from a student-orientated view, considering the individual nature and abilities of his/her students, and encouraging the individuality of each dancer's personal performance aesthetic.

A ballet master's professional orientation is developed with particular relevance to this specific domain of practice, through a life passionately committed to providing a value-driven and quality professional practice.

ACT THREE

Exploring the Masters' 'Expertise-in-Action'

The second intermission gives the dancers a moment to breathe and re-centre in preparation for their roles in Act Three. Filled with costume changes, make-up repairs, and hair adjustments - the time flies by. Meanwhile, Act Three sets are moved into place, the stage floor re-swept, and before long the stage manager makes the call - "Act Three beginners to the Stage!"

As the Curtain Rises...

This Act illuminates the ballet masters' 'expertise-in-action'.

One of the major goals of a ballet master is to create dancers who embody dance excellence. However, this is not achievable without the highest quality of practice from the master. This work, a joint venture between master and dancers, occurs in the 'closed door' studio environment – with outsiders experiencing the culmination of years of practice in the eventual perfected performance. Clarkson (1988) notes, "behind the beauty and grace that the audience sees on stage, and underneath the magic of costumes and makeup are bodies that undergo rigorous physical training" (p. 21).

Over days, weeks, months, and years, the master provides continuous, repetitive, and progressive training for his or her dancers. Dame Margaret Scott (in Cass & O'Rourke, 1988), founding director of the Australian Ballet School, highlights the importance of students having an expert teacher from which to learn: "the teacher is their eyes... forming, training, preparing, shaping the body" (Interview comment). Dixon (2005) also emphasizes the need for co-operative endeavour, with the teacher helping each student to develop "a comprehensive and workable understanding of the body's composition and its efficient use in ballet technique", so that the dancers become "whole, integrated movers who can sense and feel their movement" (p. 76).

Act Three looks at the masters' intensive work within this closed world. It aims to discover the complex set of knowledge and skills that dance masters bring to their practice to help students reach their potential. I undertook this task by collating the data into meaningful contextual themes: first, the studio – focusing on the masters' teaching of ballet classes (Scene One), and second, the process of performance creation – following the masters through the stages involved in producing new ballet works (Scene Two).

During analysis I found it difficult to find a way to discuss the masters' teaching of technique and artistry in isolation from one another. Fay (1997) explains why: "Dancing is an art and, as in all arts, quality and technique are inextricable. The simplest step, arm or head movement is just an element of the whole art, and each part of that whole must contain the twin components of quality and technique" (p. 2).

Key points, relevant to studio practice, have been uncovered in Acts One and Two, such as the masters' personal emphasis on technique and artistry, and their dispositions, such as desire for perfection, intensity, and creativity. It is difficult, and artificial, to separate the masters' expertise into discrete areas of practice when, in reality, they exist as a whole. However, Act Three looks at a new context: the studio and performance environments. This provides 'triangulation', an important methodological consideration in research (Stake, 1995; Wolcott, 2009). While there is inevitably some overlap with previous findings, there are some significant new ones. And, because the students form an important half of the learning relationship (Cass & O'Rourke, 1988; Dixon, 2005), in this chapter student views are referenced often, with much emerging from their viewpoints.

Each 'scene' consists of a short introduction, a descriptive discussion entitled 'emerging key themes', and an interpretative discussion entitled 'interpreting and making connections with the literature'. Act Three concludes with a coda, and as the curtain falls, I put forward my final synthesis of the key dimensions of a ballet master that have emerged in this new context.

SCENE ONE

Ballet Class - What are the Masters' key elements of practice?

My philosophy is that if you don't have good technique - you don't have anything. Therefore, dancers have got to be superbly trained; they are nothing without their training. – Zin

Dr. Raoul Gelabert (in Clarkson & Skrinar, 1988) cautions that the recent increase in dance's popularity is resulting in old masters being replaced by “younger, less experienced innovators” (p. vi). He claims that while dance has become more technically complex, many dance teachers have a “lack of true understanding of the dance technique and physical structures” (p. vi). There is a consequential increase in injuries. Clippinger-Robertson, (1988) reports that most dance injuries are chronic, not traumatic, and are brought on by over-practice with incorrect placement and positioning. The inaccuracies in teaching can be small and subtle, but lead to excessive and dangerous stress on muscles and joints.

In 2005, an international group of leading artistic directors – from companies as diverse as the Bolshoi (Moscow), the National Ballet of China, the Royal Ballet (London), and the Scottish Ballet – met to discuss the future of ballet. Agreeing that there exists a current crisis in training young dancers, they urged teachers to return to a solid training in basic ballet skills. While the private studio or conservatory learning environment provides dancers with a performance-orientated instruction, with an emphasis on the mastery of technique and refinement of artistry, this is generally not regulated. The teaching quality and quantity varies considerably (McCutchen, 2006). Artistic Director of the Scottish Ballet, Ashley Page (in Higgins, 2005) notes the need for teachers to provide their students with a complete training: “there are some people who cannot do the mazurka, the czardas, the polonaise” (Interview comment). There is a great need for teachers who have a comprehensive knowledge of ballet, a complete grasp of proper technique, *and* understand the correct methods of teaching it.

Zan and Zin fall into this category. They are acknowledged as masters. Exploring their expertise-in-action within the studio provides insight into competent and correct practice.

Emerging Key Themes

The following section explores how the masters develop their students' classical ballet technique. Second, it explores their work on developing the artistic dimension of ballet. Additional important elements, beyond that of technique and artistry, were also found to be embedded within Zin and Zan's teaching, and these have also been included. Key points in the text are emphasized by the use of *italics*.

Developing Classical Ballet Technique

Zin emphasized the importance she placed on developing a *strong, and correct, classical ballet technique* for each student:

I am very, very classical orientated. It's technique first. The student can't do anything without technique.

And this, she stated, takes time:

One lesson won't find technical success, over time you will know if you are achieving the standard you want. It takes weeks, even months, for somebody, for instance, to get out of a bad habit and to see technique moving forward. That's why it's imperative that you teach them right from the word 'go', the *right* way to do things.

Zin taught all ages of students in her practice, yet she noted that at all levels of practice, her philosophy remained the same:

You still use the basic technique. With the age considered, of course, how you handle a six year old to an eighteen year old are *entirely* different things, but the technical side of it will always be the same, you will always have stance to correct first, weight placing, line, and so forth.

Zan explained his teaching responsibility as being:

...to help the dancer train as a classical dancer – as far as I am able. And in such a way that he or she can also absorb the contemporary and modern technique required of dancers today. A dancer today has to be versatile – you only have to look at the use of triple bills in companies – they do a bit of everything.

Training a dancer, Zan explained, extends to every facet of practice. Each step needs to be given the necessary attention to produce the required movement. Students recognized the *thoroughness* of their master's technical practice, and their *attention to detail*. One of Zin's students commented:

So you always knew your work, you knew where your heads had to be, your arms. She taught all the little things – the details that were absolutely necessary to create a perfect technique. And this is what got me to a standard where I was able to, technically, compete with everyone in New Zealand.

The first part of any ballet class is a series of exercises at the barre. This is crucial for establishing correct positioning and alignment. Stance, Zin maintained, is the basis of a ballet dancer's training. Often she would work her students at the barre for an hour, out of a class time of 90 minutes. Students recalled her frustration when she discovered her barre teaching had taken so much time, saying with annoyance "well, we will just have to leave it." But she was unwilling to cut short her emphasis on the fundamentals of technique, even taking time at the start of every rehearsal to make sure all students were suitably warmed up. A student commented on Zin's emphasis on correct technique development:

She was hugely focused on getting the basics right at the barre first - starting with looking right and standing properly. For example, when we went en pointe - she was very patient, making sure everyone could do the first basic steps of rises and relevés properly, before going onto anything else. That's a difference I have noticed with other teachers is that they just skip through the barre exercises, whereas she wouldn't move on until everyone could do it correctly - and if that's all you did in 15 minutes then that's all you did!

Zan discussed two areas of his technical practice. The first is the importance of the supporting leg and its effect on correct alignment:

I'm a great believer that your supporting leg should be like a plinth, whether you are doing développé, extension into attitude, or rond de jambe, whatever, the supporting leg must remain absolutely still. Then the rest of the body - the torso, the working leg and arms- should be free to move in the directions you want. But once you start moving that 'plinth' out of alignment then you have got a great deal of difficulty with your balance.

And the second was the use of directional change:

My teaching work at the barre has to do with quick changes of direction so that the whole body learns how to cope with this. The supporting side has to anticipate the whole time or the line will be thrown out. You have to work out what part of the body has to motivate the movement - has to anticipate the movement so that the whole thing flows and maintains the classical integrity without making it look harsh.

Zan also spoke of the need for clear definition in a dancer's execution of steps:

In everything that they do, including linking steps, such as coupes and chasses etc, - these should not be 'errs', but very clearly defined because that's what I admire about many of the very fine modern classical dancers.

After completing the barre work, the students move on to the second component of class, called 'centre work'. This is a progression of exercises starting from slow, fluid movements (adage) and culminating in fast, large jumping exercises (allegro). A particular focus of Zin's centre work was her emphasis on students developing a strong facility for executing turns. A student noted:

She really worked on the high [leg] pirouette position, which I think I have always carried through, through all the other training, and it was a great benefit to me. It not only helps your turn, but helps your position

and the line, and everything like that. We would spend hours on turns, pushing through to two, three, four, as many as we could possibly do. Once Zin had helped you establish the correct technique and feeling for it, it was like you could pirouette forever.

Corrections, Zin explained, are an important part of a teacher's work; the teacher needs to be *constantly working the student's body*, physically assisting each student into the correct position or through a movement, and asking them 'can you feel the difference?' She encouraged the student to repeat the step until they understood and developed a new muscle memory so they could perform the step without her guidance. A student recalled her frequent experience of this in class:

She was very 'hands on' - she would manipulate your legs, your feet, and your arms and put all in the right place - *then* have you look in the mirror to see that it was right and so that you could feel it and see it. So she just didn't tell you what to do; she made your body aware of how it should be looking.

Zin's students also described her ability to demonstrate technique for the class, appreciating this *modelling of correct form and function*:

She was also very good herself, she had amazing turn-out and splits and could lift her legs high and her feet would point and her hands would be in the right place. So she would set the example and you could see what to do and then do it - unlike other teachers who were awful or whose feet were turned in.

On this same point, another student added:

I don't believe you can teach technique effectively if you can't do it yourself or if you don't have a really good knowledge and understanding of how it should look. To be a really effective teacher - to get really good results - you need to be able to model to the students the correct way of doing something, or if not model yourself to be able to explain it in such a way to get that needed line or the angle, or whatever it is.

Zin would often demonstrate a correction, or correct technique, on one of her students. A student explained,

She would gather the people around a particular student and she would work on the student – showing the correct technique. By watching her everyone would be able to see their own mistakes in that student and we would then go back to the bar. Zin would then get everyone working on it and go along the bar – correcting.

The students commented on how the masters are to *effectively communicate* their instructions and corrections, with clarity and clear purpose:

The way he spoke to us, he always got us to understand and remember it – that's really hard to do! But with Zan you get it straight away, and you can see it change, you can feel it change it – which is just amazing. Sometimes with steps you can keep doing it over and over again and they keep going wrong, and it's basically all in your mind, and he can cut through that and get rid of this mind block.

And,

She had a way of articulating how to do things so that you could apply it to your body – it may be just the simplest thing needed, or a visualization that works, and all of sudden it becomes obvious, it just made sense. It's important that a master can put into words what is needed, and that comes from knowing within

their own body what to do. And not just explain it in one way, but have four or five ways because we all learn differently - you can give one correction to one student and it just won't work for another.

Another emphasised that, from the students' perspective, successful communication is absolutely vital to a master's practice:

If they can't communicate...well, it doesn't matter how brilliant you are as a teacher or a student, you won't get there. But with a master, this knowledge can come through.

Similarly, Zin stated:

You might be the best, the most knowledgeable teacher, but you must be able to get through to the students, and that is what really proves your worth.

Students often spoke about how their master seemed to be able 'to see all' that was occurring within the class, describing it as having a '*developed eye*' or a 'natural eye' for ballet. This ability enables the master to identify the smallest error, despite the number of students or the complexity of the exercise.

They have an 'eye' for seeing things – what looks good and what doesn't. But from my experience I think that it is a natural gift that people can see why things are going wrong and how to fix it – it's like having a sense for how things should be done. Very few people out there have that 'eye'.

Zin provided a simple explanation, saying:

I suppose it's having an eye for what you think is right and what looks good. In terms of teaching, it is often said that 'a plie is a plie is a plie', but it's having an eye for helping the student to perform a correct plie that makes the difference.

A student of Zin noted how she had the ability to 'read' what was needed in terms of further practice, staying flexible and adjusting her work as needed for each class:

If she felt that something needed to be practiced, then she would keep putting that in. Her knowledge was such that she could go where the class needed to go, rather than having to stick to a set structure. And therefore she was able to set great exercises that were, really, just what you needed.

Zan also viewed student corrections as vital for their learning and improvement, light-heartedly stating:

If teachers were paid by the repetition of corrections we would be rich!

However, he also considered that, at times, it is important for students to have the opportunity to practice their exercises without constant instruction or intrusion from the teacher:

I set an enchaînement and once I'm sure everyone has the rhythm of whatever it is, then I will let the dancers go - watch them without my voice being part of what they are doing. Correction is necessary but if my voice is heard the whole time - shouting out 'jump or 'get that head up' or whatever, - it becomes perpetually part of they are doing. How can they *feel* a step if I'm shouting out all the time what they should be doing? I do the same thing with professional companies when I am choreographing or teaching a

ballet. After I have taught the steps for a certain section then I let them go through that without any words from me so they have an opportunity to bring their own intelligence as to what and where they are going, and *then* I can add to it. But it's important not to be part of it all the time. There are students, I think, that get *so* used to the sound of the teacher that they are lost when they don't have that voice and I think that - artistically - it is a very bad thing.

The students also noted that the masters made any corrections in a positive and encouraging way, without ridicule or humiliation:

He didn't yell at you, or across the room, but would come over and talk, so you never felt embarrassed about what you were doing wrong.

Zan, as artistic director, worked with dancers in preparation for performance seasons. Working with semi, or professional dancers - who had already spent years developing their classical technique - allowed him to focus on choreography and productions. Zin recounted similar shifts in her practice when she worked with semi- and professional dancers in her companies. However she also continued to train young students. Regardless of a dancer's age or status, both masters emphasized the importance of the daily technique class; the need for all dancers to work diligently to maintain and improve technique.

Beyond Technique - Developing Artistry and Dance 'Quality'

Zan and Zin placed huge emphasis on artistry. They consider it to be fundamental to the art of ballet. From the moment their students begin their first studio exercise, or embark upon a new piece of choreography, Zan and Zin insist on them coming to an *understanding of the artistic dimension of ballet, and the need for its embodiment.*

Every ballet master has his/her own interpretation of a perfect dancer and brings this to his/her practice. Zan, while respecting the importance of technique, also believes the dancer must understand and fully explore the artistic dimension:

You have to have a technical base but while we were always working to improve technique - it was always in relation to artistic development. The technical aspects become secondary - they have to be good, they have to be the best that they can possibly master - but it's secondary to how you express yourself.

He took this point further:

As far as presentation in classical ballet goes, people talk about a dancer being self-contained with a quality of ease, which is fine - yes it's really great - but at the same time a dancer can be *so* self-contained that they do *not* project anything. They may move in the right way, absolutely brilliantly, and if you know a great deal about dance then you admire these things tremendously. *But* they can also leave you quite cold as they are *pure* technique. I feel it has to have *something more*, that it has heart, that it makes a statement.

While Zan acknowledged his teaching could be seen to exaggerate the importance of performance, this was his underlying philosophy of dance:

...is what I was there for, that's what I felt my career was about – performing this art.

Zan's students concurred, explaining that while he paid attention to their technique, his focus was primarily on their artistic development. He wanted his dancers to understand the purpose and reason behind each step, to '*feel the step, feel the movement*' and expected every exercise to be 'danced' as if each was, in itself, a performance.

He was concerned about technique but more focused on how we expressed the way we danced and getting the finishing touches on top of what we were doing – it wasn't for yourself, it wasn't self-centred, you had to give it out, taking it beyond yourself. I grew to love his classes...his exercises such as port de bra in the centre – were just so beautiful and you felt beautiful doing them. So you could dance your heart out, they were just so artistic, so interesting and fun.

Zan and Zin often used the word 'quality' to describe the nature of the emotion and sensitivity that each dancer needs to project. They both stressed the importance of developing 'quality'. It encompasses many skills and attributes, including line, lightness, lift, effortlessness, extension, light and shade, and so forth, all of which contribute to artistry and stage presence. Zin explained:

I'm very passionate about the 'quality' of a dancer, students have got to be technically good, but they have also got to have a beautiful dance quality which produces a fine dancer. You can't just have technique with no quality of movement or no appreciation of music.

A student of Zin's commented:

Zin not only wanted us to execute the step or move correctly, but - always - to enjoy it and present your work, it was to be 'danced from your soul'. Even when doing mundane curriculum work for an exam, she expected us to 'perform' each exercise. 'Listen to the music!' she would say, 'hear it telling you what to do'.

A lot of other teachers never told you to do this; they just focused on technical comments. Before exams she would have us doing mock exams and make us focus on the *performance* of it, saying 'if you can't do it in class, you can't do it in the exam' - those kind of things. She really wanted to see that side of it developed in us, so it became second nature - it wasn't meant to be something you would turn off or on.

In particular Zan and Zin stressed how artistry needs to start from within the body and extend outwards to the audience. Zan commented:

I keep talking about eye-line, eye-line, eye-line! If there was one thing that I believe most dancers miss out on, and that would be the use of eyes. Nine out of ten dancers - students in particular, but even professional dancers - have no understanding of what their eye-line really means. To them it only means the area you look in relation to what you are doing. You notice over and over again, that a dancer may be doing a series of enchaînement and the eyes will dip down each time they are going to go into the next step, and that's like a retraction each time – a disconnection. It is one of the most difficult things for a dancer to really become aware of because I think that they get so concerned about what the anatomy of their body is doing with a particular technical step that they remain 'in' themselves and don't really feel that essential thing that is part

of the step as well - that it's outward moving, outward looking. A dancer, or a student, needs to be able to extend feeling outwards - beyond the finger tips, beyond the footwork so that, spatially, it moves beyond the body.

His students picked up his message:

He was always on about the eyes - not letting the eye focus drop, and extending the movement every time, and you can tell the dancers he had taught because of it. And every year a new lot of students would come in and we would cover that element again and it made me think 'yeah, I am learning, I got that.' I realize, now, how much I had learnt from that.

Zan also explained how he used an analogy to help his students understand the need to show light and shade within their dancing:

I relate the dance to, say, reading poetry or looking at an energy graph. I use these sort of scenarios to explain that if their energy graph simply stays along a straight line, they wouldn't have any ups and downs, or if it's a piece of poetry, one straight vocal tone would sound dull and uninteresting.

One student was impressed by one of Zin's most accomplished dancers. Watching her in rehearsals, he recalled the effortless quality she exhibited:

She looked so relaxed – when she moved it looked so effortless, so easy, so elegant and beautiful. If you can see dance done that way it's just the most amazing thing in the world. And to see such complicated steps - you sit there and go 'how did she do that?' - because I didn't see where it came from or what happened. With most dancers you see where it starts from and this loses the mystique and the magic that surrounds it. This is the tension that is seen in most students, and they don't turn into dancers until they release that.

Developing an artistic understanding, Zan believed, comes from finding the *correct motivation* from within oneself:

I think that interpreting even the most basic steps is imperative. I believe the students have got to be given the opportunity to understand where the step is taking them and what the extension of their own being is...because you have got to expand outwards, not keep it in. I try to get across to the students that there is no time when you are doing any step that doesn't have some artistic value, doesn't have to be done completely as in a performance... because if a student feels they only learn 'steps' in class then they won't actually start to perform or understand performance until they go on the stage.

He continued,

Motivation has to be added to the anatomical technicality so it's already within you as you develop this quality with each step and that it is an extension of yourself. You don't wait until you've learnt a series of steps and some strange time in the future say 'Oh now, I'd better make that look a little bit better by doing so and so'. You start interpreting *everything that you do* - right from the start.

Zan appreciated the difficulties students have in discovering the motivational energy inherent within each step of dance:

I learnt - when studying the piano - about the amount of energy that one puts through one's fingers and the body to get various sounds out of the instrument. And I've always thought of the human body as being an instrument and therefore, in the same way as playing a piano, you have got to play your body with the same sort of care and attention to the amount of energy that you use at any one time in a particular part of the

body and how that energy flows through to that area - what complements it, what motivates it, what is required to suddenly do a movement that is going to surprise the viewers but not come as a surprise for you. It becomes so involved that it has to become, to a certain extent, automatic. But as a teacher or producer it's your job to gradually impart that sort of knowledge to the dancers so that they understand – that's one of the hardest things to do because dancers, particularly younger dancers, don't tend to think in that way, they tend to think 'it's an arabesque - how long do I have to stand there?' They don't think of the sculpture that they are creating, the way they are moving through space, that sort of thing.

Both Zan and Zin considered *musicality* to be essential in the development of personal artistry. Both masters had studied the piano in their youth. They considered that this grounding provided them with inspiration in class and performance. Zan believed that students need to develop a similar appreciation of music and an understanding of its influence in their dancing:

Musicality is *vital* – dancers need to be very aware of the musical, rhythmic, construction. They must appreciate the music, appreciate the quality of it.

Zin was explicit on the importance that music plays in her daily teaching:

It tells me what to do, where to go. For example, in choreographing enchaînments, I will give the pianist a time signature and ask to hear something. The music gives me some idea of what the pianist intends to do, and influences how I construct the steps.

She illustrated the significance that music plays in her teaching with an anecdote. Invited to tutor at a ballet course, her pianist was an experienced ballet accompanist who had worked with the Russian Ballet School at the Kiev:

He was probably one of the most brilliant pianists that anybody could ever have. I was so enthused and impressed with his music, but by lunch time I was absolutely exhausted as one could not help but dance to his music. I remember saying 'I can't go back!' [for the afternoon sessions], but of course I did. We had the most fantastic week because his music was such an inspiration to me.

A student of Zan's noticed his constant engagement with the music in class:

He would listen to it, then do something 'twiddly' with his feet as he worked out the steps he wanted, then show it to you. He was always working with the feel of the music.

Both Zan and Zin *linked technical class work with choreographic elements*. This was important for their students for a number of reasons: maintaining high interest; providing a change in routine, and a challenge; extending their knowledge; and developing an understanding of choreography. Zan commented:

I like to think things out, think of a class that has a logical follow-on, right from plie through to the very end of the class. I take an idea and adapt it to each and every exercise so that it is achieving the purpose of the exercise - which is tuning that particular part of the anatomy - as well as achieving artistic interpretation. I may decide that I am going to do most of the exercises with a quick turn or some sort of turn from one position to another at the barre, or starting off in reverse, then reverse on the other foot, or just doing half of it, combining it in some way. Therefore nobody comes into my class and actually knows what they are going to be asked to do. Then I follow that on into the centre, so that I am always trying to follow a particular train of thought right to the very end...gradually building up to allegro, the point where you are

trying to defy gravity, with your whole body launching itself into space to create certain mobile sculptures, without breaking your neck. And once again, every step is done with a *performance* quality in mind.

This, dancers reported, was invigorating, ‘pushed’ them in their training, and enabled them to feel as if they were ‘dancing’ as opposed to simply taking their muscles through the required exercises:

Zan’s classes had a choreographic theme to them, but were more formal with the base and grounding for what you really needed to know. I remember his exercises being like little mini shows, with a theme which started at the barre and that he would work into the port de bras, adage, and allegro. You had to think, as this theme grew, and it showed that you can add different qualities to dance. It was about understanding the flow of movement. And this was a great change from having other teachers who were only focusing on the technical side, and only doing simple stuff.

Another student commented on Zin’s dynamic class work:

I remember always hoping that she would announce that today’s class would be ‘open work’. These classes were so *invigorating*, totally made you use your brain, and were an experience of discovery into new ways of making exercises - that had been boring when done for syllabus – so full of movement and *dance*. It was like being able to flick a switch from drill to performance, and our pianist would also give us the most amazing pieces of music to be inspired by. Zin would have us incorporating pirouettes with plies, port de bras with grand battements. And we *loved* it.

This use of *non-syllabus* or ‘open work’ was an important component of both Zan and Zin’s teaching. Zan felt that training that included only syllabus work could restrict the students’ progress in understanding the true nature of ballet:

I have to be honest and say that teaching a syllabus never gave me that amount of satisfaction. I always recognized their value but from my own personal teaching experience I found it restrictive. And that restriction flows through into the recitals that teachers give; there is no comprehension of the artistic balance. Promising students can be reduced by the nature of the syllabus.

A student of Zin’s also highlighted this problem with syllabus work:

In ballet, lots of kids grow up only with exams - doing the same set of exercises for a whole year. Whereas Zin has never believed in that; she didn’t want you to become ‘programmed’ as a dancer. And by her having that philosophy she was able to set great exercises and it was just what you needed. With her knowledge of steps and such a great appreciation for music, she got you used to ‘dancing’ everything.

Zan stated,

When I am teaching non-examination classes - and I am not trying to cover a syllabus – I’m covering, what I believe, is the art of dance - how to project certain steps, what it should look like at any given moment. The point here is - you need to look *beyond* the prescriptive ingredients of the course work to find the creativity needed for ballet.

A difficult part of a teacher’s role was communicating the realities of becoming a professional dancer. Both Zan and Zin emphasized the need to be sincere and *honest with students* about a career in ballet. Zan explained:

You have got to remember that 95-98 percent of the students that you teach over many, many, many, years are *not* going to make it professionally. So the remainder, some of whom may believe that they are going to be the answer to the future of the art, you have got to help them understand that they can be as good as they can be, and so have something that is really *worthwhile* in their life. But you have also got to prepare them to cope with the fact that they may not get a job in the profession.

One of Zan's students, who started his training late, recalled Zan's candid discussions with him regarding his future:

I was wide-eyed about what I was going to do. I remember him bringing me down to ground and making my look at the bigger picture, pointing out the hard work that had yet to put in. He talked a lot about what you need to achieve to be a professional dancer and what you need to focus on, and the reality of the professional industry. And because he had been through those realities he knew what he was talking about. I was lucky because I see a lot of people these days that still haven't discovered those realities and are still quite in up in the clouds about the whole industry and what you do in it, and why you do it.

However, when Zan and Zin discovered students who showed promise and potential, they encouraged them, *sharing their vision of future success*. One student tells how Zan inspired her to continue towards the goal of a professional career:

He almost made me believe I had a duty to dance. He would say 'If you are given a talent, it's your duty to use it.' That's the kind of thing that helped keep you working!

Another reported that because of Zin's belief in her ability, she gave her full commitment to ballet training instead of pursuing other possible options:

Zin always gave me the impression that there was always going to be a place for me in the ballet world, a special niche for how I danced and who I was, implying that if I worked hard, and kept at it, that I would make it. I think this was really important, a huge influence on me.

These successful students remarked how Zan and Zin were always positive about their futures, and when the time was right, encouraged them to enter competitions with the hope of being 'discovered', and to expand their horizons beyond their home towns:

There comes a point where you have to go, move on, and Zin wasn't afraid to let go of her dancers. I think some teachers are very protective of their dancers, but Zin was very much about training you and getting you headed in the right direction towards a career.

Interpreting and Making Connections with the Literature

Dance teaching is an individual endeavour. As Gray (1989) notes, it is the dance teacher who is “responsible for the preparation, presentation and evaluation of the dance material” (p. 6). Van Rossum (2004) agrees, saying “the impact of the dance teacher on the career of a young dancer can be decisive” (p. 36). Zan and Zin take this responsibility extremely seriously, providing the very best possible training experience for their students.

The following key elements of the masters’ ‘expertise-in-action’ are presented in Table 7. A discussion, focusing on particular areas of their practice, with further interpretative comments, follows.

**Table 7:
Ballet Class - The Masters' Key Elements of Practice**

When teaching class, ballet masters –

- establish a **correct classical ballet technique** in their dancers, thoroughly attending to the smallest detail of practice, making sure the fundamentals are in place before progressing to more complex and advanced steps
- encourage **artistic understanding** from the very beginning of a dancer's training. They help students to create a personal and expressive dance 'quality' by drawing on the emotional motivation inherent within each and every dance step, and the inspiration of the music.
- are **clear and effective communicators**, giving corrections often and meaningfully - drawing on a variety of methods and strategies. This results in a positive and significant learning experience for students
- have a '**developed eye**' - seeing all that occurs within their studio, noticing each and every student, identifying errors for immediate correction
- are exemplary teachers of prescribed syllabus, but often choose to **teach beyond the syllabus**, bringing originality and creativity to their class work, and through this diversity of practice provides interest and inspiration to their students, extending their knowledge and abilities
- **provide a vision and goals** for students who show the potential to reach professional status, while being honest about the difficulties of attaining this objective
- convey to all students a sense of the physical and aesthetic **value of learning ballet**, whether or not a professional career is possible.

The Teaching of Technique and Artistry

Technique was clearly the basic building block of the masters' classes, with the masters focusing on correct execution, especially on areas such as stance, line, placement, rotation, and other particulars of form and function. As Dixon (2005) states, "If classical technique is to be performed efficiently, then classical stance and good alignment must be anatomically mastered" (p. 78). The masters thoroughly understood the importance of an appropriate progression in difficulty, and the time and commitment that must be given to this by both the teacher and students. This effort in developing the technique of dance was recorded in Legat's studio practice. Albert (2001) states how Legat knew that "without a mastery of the alphabet of an art, art is impossible. ...[He] diligently and lovingly polished the details of execution of each step" (ibid, p. 50).

Maintaining discipline in technical development requires constant effort from the ballet master during every class. Zan and Zin showed strength in this area, always demanding that students attend to the correct form and 'preciseness' demanded in ballet. For example, Zin's students knew that for any exercise or enchainment, if the arms, leg, or head line were 'off', the exercise would be halted, fixed, and repeated until it was performed successfully. This aligns with Pushkin's teaching whereby he "forbade carelessness of form for the sake of increasing the number of turns"(Albert, 2001)(p. 135). He was recorded as saying: "You can't impress me with ten, I've seen sixteen pirouettes. Show me three done cleanly, stop in fifth position, and put your feel in demi-plie – and that will make me happy" (p. 135).

Mastering technique, however, was not enough. The Russian ballet master, Michel Fokine (in Dolin, 1966) insists that "Technique is only a means, not an end; [you must] learn to dance, not execute steps" (p. 5), and renowned ballet pedagogue Black (in Zeller, 2009) insists "class is the technical aspect of dance, and it should be combined with a sense of artistry at the same time" (p. 72). These views are shared by dance researcher, lecturer and critic, Theodores (1996), who states it is vital that a dancer develops a fully realized ballet technique, as the "vehicle through which the expressive values of the choreography are ultimately served" (p. 155). From observations it was evident that the Zan and Zin placed huge emphasis on developing the students' understandings and expression of artistry. My findings, and the student comments about their teachers, found parallels with the views put forward by Albert (2001) when discussing Pushkin's studio teaching,

It is class that develops and supports the technical, physical, and artistic form of dancers, and knowing how to combine these three elements is what distinguishes the truly talented teacher. Pushkin was a master of all three aspects of the art of pedagogy. His methodology intertwined them organically in the structure of his class. From the first movements at the barre to the classical variations that crowned every class, there was a harmonious and logical progression...students acquired a mastery of the technique of dance and developed their physical strength while being taught not to ‘work’ but to dance (p. 112).

Shulman and Shulman (2004), from the field of teacher education, propose that teachers must have an understanding of child development and developmentally appropriate practice. Understanding the student body, and more specifically its changing nature during adolescence, is considered by ballet pedagogue Fay (1997) to be imperative: “It is hard enough for a student to play a musical instrument, paint a picture or recite Shakespeare when feeling under the weather. Yet, the violin on which he or she plays is the same solid, unchanged instrument every day. Nor do the paint-brush, paint box, canvas or chisel change. But the adolescent dancer’s instrument - the body - regularly plays unpredictable tricks for years” (p. 6). Zan and Zin were strong on this aspect of practice. A student commented on Zin’s understanding, and explained how, after returning from the summer break, her increased height had affected her ability to perform complex turns:

My centre of gravity was completely thrown, and after being one of the best turners I was now the worst. I felt useless. She helped me to find my new alignment – it took heaps of practice and patience, but she stuck with me and I got it back.

While the masters recognize that ballet is typically taught with a strict adherence to protocol - “according to the laws of classical dance” (Albert, 2001, p. 135) - they recognize the value of incorporating non-syllabus exercises in their teaching. This provided their students with new challenges, maintained interest, broke the often tedious repetitiveness of practice, and gave further opportunity to engage with the artistic dimension. Scheff (2005) suggests that this is highly desirable. Reflecting on Pushkin’s studio exercises – while set on the logical progression of the Russian school – were re-sequenced and rearranged by drawing from his own dancing experiences and his belief as to what would best progress his students. Albert (2001) reports, “As always, Pushkin was not afraid of innovation and was receptive to everything that seemed reasonable...every one of his classes was a step forward, a search for more perfect paths for raising young dancers” (p. 147, 158).

Zan and Zin ably meet one of Fay’s (1997) major aims for class teaching: “to develop in young dancers an artistic sensitivity which is combined with a precise technique” (p. 21). This aim is the central, most crucial, task of a ballet teacher wishing to produce a dancer of excellence, yet those in the field state it is often lacking in the education of young dancers today (Albert, 2001;

Clarkson & Skrinar, 1988; Clippinger-Robertson, 1988; McCutchen, 2006). Albert states that the new generation of teachers prefer:

...to show off the high technical level of their students, overlooking the fact that classical dance is called classical precisely because it is about the perfection of line, smoothness of transition, and softness in landing after jumps. ...Too often, in the rush to acquire technique, dancers lose beauty and purity of execution (p. 135).

Communication and Corrections

Dance educator, McCutchen (2006) considers that a dance teacher should not only be fully knowledgeable in the language of dance but also be able to set clear goals, model excellence, and demand quality. An effective teacher, she thinks, is one who earns the respect of others. Zan and Zin met these criteria.

A key component of their work was providing students with correction as often as needed, honing in on the many small details of every ballet exercise. Zeller (2009) reports on Black, an outstanding ballet teacher. She was precise with her corrections, directed them towards specific dancers, and made complex ideas simple. Esteemed ballet teacher, William Christensen (in Warren, 1996) notes that while corrections are needed, a teacher needs to “criticize with love” (p. 45). To this, Zan added his view that there are times the teacher should remain quiet, letting the dancers have the opportunity to feel the movement and express themselves without being bombarded by a constant stream corrections.

It is evident that a master teacher’s observational skills must be strong. Bell (1997) considers that true experts have the ability to assess a situation and identify issues that are ‘atypical’. And Schempp (2006) describes experts as being able to “critically view” events in their practice, achieved by: focusing on the relevant; drawing inferences; staying alert to the atypical, and; critically analyzing the events for quality and performance. Zan and Zin are both keen observers and successfully exhibit the skills from Schempp’s list. Kimmerle and Cote-Laurence (2003) believe that being a proficient observer is critical to the process of being able to adapt content and instruction, and therefore maximize student learning. Within the ballet world, this heightened perceptual ability, often referred to as having an ‘eagle eye’ or ‘developed eye’ is highly valued (Zeller, 2009). Zan and Zin students were very aware of this ability of their masters, noting how their heightened powers of observation allowed them to objectively and critically analyse and correct their work. Tan (1997) explains that experts have acute perceptual

capabilities with which they can “see details or information that other people either miss or dismiss” (p. 31). Drawing from their extensive domain-specific knowledge, they can interpret these critical cues and find solutions: “simply put, experts see things in a different, more insightful light” (p. 32).

‘Enchanted Leadership’ - with Passion and Vision

Students noted Zan and Zin’s ‘positive presence’ in the studio. Despite the difficulties of advancing with technique, this ‘presence’ was the primary reason why they continued to learn ballet: “it was almost addictive!” one student commented. Good teachers use strategies of student engagement, praise, and motivational incentives (Lazaroff, 2001). But there seems to be more to it than that. According to Caldwell (2008), a stimulating environment is a consequence of the teacher’s passion, optimism, trust, respect, vision, and strategies for teaching, all merging to create ‘enchanted leadership’. Fay (1997) notes that ballet masters need to create an atmosphere of trust and love, and portray confidence and optimism towards their students: “students need to feel that we believe in their abilities” (p. 7). Albert (2001) notes this in Pushkin’s work, stating how Pushkin’s students felt a strong level of support from him which extended beyond their time under his tutelage. They trusted their teacher, often having shared many moments of sorrow and joy during their time together.

Zan and Zin’s students made comments that would classify their teachers as demonstrating such traits contained within the term ‘enchanted leadership’. They emphasized how the masters provided them with a vision of their possible futures and a sense of their duty to foster the art form. Davies (2008) notes that passionate leaders can conceptualize and articulate a vision and convey a sense of importance and urgency within the possible reality of each individual student.

SCENE TWO

Producing Performance - What are the masters' key elements of practice?

Ballet is a piece of art – it is an artistic work. In my teaching I have always felt that the artistic development is absolutely imperative. I believe everything is performance. - Zan

Zan's interpretation (above) fits well with that of esteemed philosopher Susan Langer (1953). Langer, whose thinking on dance has had a major impact on its becoming established as scholarly endeavour, describes dance as being “unmistakably and essential art” (p. 184), and “the creation of forms expressive of human feeling” (p. 60). More recently, Alter (1996) adds to this: “Dance is a performing activity, and its product is seen in the process of performance” (p. 174).

Zan and Zin spoke passionately about the importance of providing students with performance opportunities. They considered it to be a vital component of their training. Zan explained:

Whatever happens [in their careers] it is going to be of tremendous value both as a training ground for those who may move into the profession but also something tangible for those who don't make it into the profession - they can look back on and say “at least I have achieved this.”

Since Zan and Zin are acknowledged as masters, exploring their expertise-in-action within the performance context offers further insight into the nature of their practice.

Emerging Key Themes

This scene explores the masters' progression - from thought to action - as they prepare and produce a new ballet work for the theatre. The stages of practice dealt with here are pre-production, rehearsal, performance, and finally, the curtain calls and reviews. Key points in the text are emphasized by the use of *italics*.

Pre-Production

Both masters discussed the *enormous time and deliberation* that they spent in the pre-production phase of a ballet performance, completing this well before beginning the first choreographic rehearsal. Zan's first consideration is his intended audience:

You embrace audiences of the past, present, and the future. Something in that program has to appeal to everyone.

A significant dimension was their *consideration and engagement with the music*. Zin explained:

First, I find the music. I have got to find a piece that really suits the ballet [vision]. I listen, and work my choreography around my music, and it has got to fit to the *minuet* second. To me, everything moves to music, so everything *must* go with the music – you have *got* to bring that level of musicality to your choreography.

Music provided Zan, too, with the inspiration for his choreography:

Music is enormously important, absolutely essential, to me. It's the music that inspires me. For instance, I can take all sorts of choreographic ideas from what the music tells me - now that can be narrative ballets or non-narrative ballets, or even abstract ballets.

For Zin, musical choice depends on the ballet's requirements and must be selected with the story (if there is one) and the age and abilities of the dancers in view, with the *aim of showing them to their best advantage*.

Once the music is selected, there is the task of choreography. Zan and Zin explained how consideration has to be given to how the ballet will *look from the audiences' many perspectives*, including the different angles created by people sitting in the front or back of the stalls, the circle, or the very back row of the gallery. They customarily created their choreography before beginning rehearsals. Zan was clear that egotism must be kept out of the process:

There's nothing to stop you being an individual and you can develop that too, but you can never start at a level of personal ego.

His constant hope was that his work would elicit an emotional response. While some of his ballets had a comedic intent: "Nothing warms my heart more than to make people laugh", his ballets aimed to *provoke thought, deliver a message, or provide a memorable experience*:

There are some ballets I might do in which I certainly don't want the audience to feel entertained. It might be drama, maybe I am trying to make the audience feel uncomfortable. I would say what I would hope to have got from any audience, from any ballet, is 'reaction'. And there are many, many different forms of reaction.

This wish to provide emotional depth is seen in his personal response to superficiality:

If someone comes up and says 'that's pretty', then that's pretty awful as far as I am concerned!

Zin's and Zan's *choreographic ability covered many dimensions of ballet*. Zan's students spoke highly of his vast repertoire, and noted his talent for producing full-length original ballets and re-staging classics. Zin's students noted her love of the romantic classics, her aptitude for producing the "classic white ballet" and her gift for choreographing beautiful solos and pas de deus. Students also noted how both masters brought originality to their choreography, showing an incredible diversity in each new work:

No piece was the same, they were all different and each pushed you in different directions.

Zin discussed her preference towards choreographing neo-classic ballet:

That's probably what I love best of all, you can do what you want to do with the music, keeping the choreography in mood with the movement.

When choreographing, Zin explained the constant need to *consider the dancers*:

I think it is very important that whoever you are choreographing for will be happy with it, with something that suits them.

Zan and Zin both *attend to all facets of preparation*. They customarily prepare *extensive choreographic plans*. Zin explained that she did so that no time would be wasted:

Something I have learnt from teaching - either class or choreography - I have got to make sure I know exactly what I am doing before I can impart it to the student.

When producing a work for a professional company, Zan explained his reasons for creating detailed production plans:

I need to be very, very clear about everything before I start, including style. If it is a character ballet, I consider idiosyncratic work of each particular character, including the corps de ballet. By the time I have finished the preparation I have a whole plan with all the choreography worked out, because it has to be done to the music - in relation to every count. I developed my own method of graphically looking through a whole ballet and can see the layout visually - showing me how many dancers are involved in each section - I can see that for three minutes there have been twenty dancers on stage and following that for one and a half minutes there are two dancers on stage - it gives me the idea of how it is moving- number wise - because from an audience point of view their interest has got to be maintained in various ways. I find this to be a great help as a quick reference because before this layout I used to be in the middle of a ballet and think 'wait a minute, what did I do back ten minutes ago? Did I have that same pattern? Did I have those same people?'

His plans included every bar of music, including the counting of the phrases:

Of course it is absolutely essential that I understand the counting so that I can pass it on to the dancers. It's what I call 'dancers counting' because it may not be musically absolutely correct, but as dancers will hear

things in different ways you have to make one interpretation - *your* interpretation - and gradually let that go so they can take it over once they become a cohesive group.

As part of their preparation, both masters *consider the time available* for producing the work, and *prepare rehearsal schedules* so that all the choreography can be learned. This includes time for fine-tuning and ‘polishing’ prior to performance. Zan explained:

For instance, for a major work, if I have six weeks of rehearsals, my plan will show each day, each session, who is involved, how long that piece is going to be, how much I hope to cover. Every single part of the ballet and every single character are listed and I can look at that and see how many times I have rehearsed, or given rehearsals by the third week – and so I can be absolutely certain I have covered everything. Everybody on the staff has a copy of all this preparation so that they know where I am heading and we meet regularly and make any adjustments that are necessary. So, hopefully, nothing is left to chance. I usually try to make certain that everything is ready in a month, leaving me the next two weeks to ‘nip and tuck’ and get ready for the production week.

Rehearsal

When beginning a new work, the masters make a point of *sharing their vision and aspirations* for the new ballet with their dancers. Zan believed it was vitally important to let the dancers know what he hoped to achieve. He was aware that many of his students would be new to performance and had very little experience to fall back on. He tried to convey his feeling for the piece, so that:

...the unfamiliar becomes familiar in a very short period of time.

Zin also shared her goals and expectations, to enthuse her dancers:

It gives them something to think about, and something to work towards.

Helping the dancers to understand the musical intent, from the very first rehearsal, was also an important consideration for each master. Zan commented:

Now, there are quite often things you [the choreographer] have to do that are seemingly against the construction of the music - that may be a choreographic device that you have introduced for a particular reason - therefore, musicality in *all* its aspects is got to be understood [by the dancer].

Observing their rehearsal practice, Zan and Zin’s role can be interpreted as being similar to that of a conductor of an orchestra (see *Curtain Calls – DVD: # 5 ‘Conductor’*). They were *always in complete command*, directing all activity and seemingly capable of watching every dancer. They had the attention of the dancers at all times. When watching a run-through of a piece of the new work, their hands, body, and voice were used like a conductor’s baton – they subtly

guided the dancers as they progressed through the piece. Their students were well aware of this, noting Zan and Zin's organizational abilities and attention to detail:

Zin always knew her material and music very well – she was totally prepared. Even with repetitive phrases that would stump us in knowing what part we were at, she always knew where she was in the music, saying 'no, that's blah-blah-blah', and she was always right - she always had the right piece of music with the right steps. And she never wasted any time.

When I observed Zin's teaching, I noted how she would include steps that the student(s) was not yet able to perform (see *Curtain Calls – DVD: # 6 Choreography with Challenge*). She explained that she was not setting them up for failure, but giving them steps they would be capable of perfecting prior to the performance. This was part of their learning. It provided them with a *personal challenge*, and *helped them to advance* in their training. One student noted how Zin left no 'down time' in her choreography. Some teachers may include four or eight extra counts for the dancer to move from one point to another in preparation for the next phrase:

But not Zin, she left little or no time between one phrase and the next, and when I first learnt the choreography, it seemed impossible that I could make such a tight transition. But Zin explained how, with time, it would be possible, and as you became familiar with the work, and perfected it, you found that she was right. If she had left those extra counts free, I would have spent them standing in preparation – waiting, and that is really the look of an amateur.

This lack of gaps, explained the student, created fluidity to Zin's work, a point of difference between the work of a typical choreographer and a master.

Zan similarly *considered his dancers' strengths and weaknesses* in his choreography. A student commented:

For me, I wasn't – at this time – technically strong, but I could jump high. So he drew on this, and it's something that you could see in his work, that he picked up on people's strengths and brought them out. And if things weren't working, then he would make the effort to talk with you, see what you thought might be better, or change it so you could achieve it. He didn't leave you to struggle.

In rehearsals, both Zan and Zin *repeated a work* many times until they were satisfied that students knew and understood it, and presented the best possible interpretation. On this subject Zan explained his view:

You really do have to go over and over and over each group of steps until they are moving in the direction that you want. And most importantly that everybody involved is doing the same thing. The difficulty is making twenty dancers look the same but making each individual absolutely imperative. It's like taking a chord or a phrase of music- if you were to take one of the instruments or a couple of those notes out, or a piece of poetry, or in the script - you move two or three words and it just does make the same sense- it's the same with dance - if they are not all doing the same thing, if they are not all in unison when unison is required then you get a disjointed feeling and it just looks a mess.

Neither master ever accepted sub-standard work. A student recalled Zin's insistence on this:

And, of course, in every rehearsal for performance work she demanded everything to be danced full-out – saying to us 'if you can't do it now, it won't be there for you on stage!'

All students commented on the *masters' self-discipline and the strong work ethic* that they brought to rehearsals, and their *expectation of standards and behaviours*. They reported very little need for any kind of disciplinary action - despite the studio or theatre often being overcrowded as performances drew near. However, on the rare occasion when it was needed, the masters knew how to make a suitably strong impact upon their dancers:

I remember being on stage in dress rehearsal for a white ballet, due to open the next day. Our lines were out and we were all over the place - after we had it *perfect* back in the studio. To get the audiences perspective she would sit in the auditorium, and using a microphone she worked and worked us. Until at one point she said, 'right, I'm coming up there', and came up on stage. Her eyes flashed black and using a stick she pounded out the correct musical timing for us. I don't know how we made it work, but her impact and determination made the difference. We understood from her manner that this work was deadly serious, and that it was important for us, for Zin, for the ballet. No *way* would you step out of line.

And Zan's students reported how, if he was disappointed with the dancers' effort, he would become quiet:

One time Zan was sitting in front of us in the studio, intensely watching a major run-through of a piece. We [dancers] knew it wasn't as good as it could have been. When we finished, he just continued to sit in silence. Then he, very quietly, said 'I'm disappointed, what else can I say', and we all just wanted to dive into the ground. It was a horrible feeling; you just *didn't* want to let him down.

That said, the students typically described the masters' *teaching demeanours* as being calm, kind, warm, happy, focused, and dynamic. Students felt that Zan and Zin enjoyed their work, and controlled the whole environment by motivating everybody:

Zin was like a ball of fire in there, unstoppable energy. I have very rarely seen that energy before or since.

And:

Zan had a huge energy, he was so bubbly – he made you *feel* like working hard, made you *want* to have that amount of energy as well.

The students recalled their enjoyment from rehearsals with the masters:

We had a lot of fun, it was just wonderful, and I looked forward to it.

I personally have noted the masters' respect when working with professional dancers (see *Curtain Calls – DVD: # 7 Working with Professional Dancers*). For example Zan often put his instructions in the form of an invitation, using such phrases as:

Would you like to give it a go? Would you like to try it? Can we pick it up from the scatter? Can we go from the same place?

He felt it important to teach without being dictatorial:

It's no good standing in front of a group of students or dancers and behaving in such a manner that suggests you know everything, that you have been there and done that, and that just by them looking at you they have to realize how great you are! That doesn't work, they have to *value* what you communicate to them, each one accepting it in a different way.

However, when the masters worked with students or pre-professionals, still in training, they were more direct in their instructions and approach (see *Curtain Calls – DVD: # 8 Working with Students and Pre-Professional Dancers*).

When a ballet has a story-line with characters, the dancers need to *embody the essence of the character they portray*, a skill known as *characterization*. Zan explained that this is something most students struggle with, as it is a dramatic change from their training in classical ballet – largely taking exams which emphasize and reward technique performed with a pure classical quality. For example, in performance work, dancers may be required to portray a hedgehog, frog, or duck such as in the 'Tales of Beatrix Potter', an evil swan in 'Swan Lake', or Giselle, who travels the tortuous path from euphoric love to dementia and death. Zan discussed some of the difficulties in teaching dancers to make a character their own:

Characterization is always very tricky at its introduction because you are turning the dancer into someone that is different. It's the most difficult aspect for them – to get into the character. What you hope for is that, eventually, the dancer is going to take over the characterization – adding something to what you had first envisioned - so, right from the first rehearsals you have to look carefully at the natural mannerisms that that dancer may express as you try out various movements and let her, or him, to a certain extent, lead you into the type of movement that you are going to finish up with. I am perfectly happy to go along with and encourage this.

He continued:

Students have to be taught how to do this. You have got to get them out of themselves, you have got to get them to forget themselves, as such, and start to become this other character - to think in the way of this character, looking at other dancers and not seeing their friends who they have worked in class with for a very long time, but instead seeing the characters. That is an important part of their learning process... to be able to look at another student and *see* another character is something they find very difficult.

Zan's students recalled how he took the time to explain the story and what their character should be thinking, feeling, behaving and moving. This was also observed in his practice (see *Curtain Calls – DVD: # 9 Explanation of Choreographic Intent and Characterization*). They appreciated, too, his teaching of the stagecraft associated with characterization, such as how to have a stage conversation, or how to sit on the side of the stage and maintain interest in the

action going on around them. Students recalled his constant encouragement to develop their own interpretation of their character:

He used to say ‘give me more, more, more! I will tell you when it’s too much!’ And when I learned how to do this, I loved acting my character out. When dancing in rehearsals I would quickly look over to see his reaction, and would be thrilled if I saw him smiling at what I was doing.

And,

And one time we got to take our costume home to decorate however we wished, which is kind of his philosophy –“well, you are the one making this character, so stitch into it what you want.”

Zan explained that once a dancer has established a character, his/her next job is to sustain it:

It’s very easy to fall out of character. For example even in a professional company production where you have a scene with peasants sitting around while the principals dance - you look around that stage, look at those peasants and you find that the majority of them look bored out of their skulls - they cannot carry their character. I have always found it very hard to stop myself from jumping up in the theatre saying “You! Third from the back there! Get back into character!”

Zan felt that students’ difficulty in this area was due to the lack of teaching in the specific skills of characterization. He is concerned that this knowledge will be lost because most teachers give their attention primarily to technique. He credited his understanding of characterization to international experiences early in his career, gained by dancing with some outstanding and skilful practitioners:

This opportunity to look and see how these artists worked, to see what their artistry was! Watching them get into the very depths of the characterization, this was absolutely extraordinary; there were no bounds to this. I learnt that your job was getting into the characterization and giving it to the audience so that the audience understood every movement that you made.

Experiences like such as this added to his ability to teach and impart his knowledge:

I think that’s an important part of being a master, it does come out in the way one teaches.

Zan explained how he has often been asked to give master classes in characterization. He enjoyed doing so, and considered it vital that its tradition continue:

Characterization helps students to understand where they come from in terms of ballet as a historical art form, rather than just one that started the day they did their first plié.

Students found Zan’s emphasis on characterization inspiring:

It’s this feeling of a total giving to what you are doing, and *believing* it, believing you are the character, not acting, acting is so fake in that respect, you *are* the character, thinking about how your character would move if you were that person – thinking that they would walk like that because that’s what they felt. As soon as you try and act something, it’s like, no, no, that’s wrong! You have to *be* it.

Performance

Both masters agreed that having a *strong stage presence* can often compensate for shortcomings in technique. Sometimes the dancer who does not stand out in terms of class work will be the one to bring that special factor to a performance. Zan explained:

The audience doesn't know whether you have a tight fifth position or if your knees are slightly relaxed, but they *do* know whether your heart and soul is coming their way.

Zan considered it important not to impose himself onto the artistry of his dancers. Instead, once the ballet is choreographed, he steps back to give them the opportunity to take it over and make it their own, allowing them to contribute their own artistic expression and interpretation:

As a teacher or director you can only guide dancers towards the type of performance that they are capable of giving. That even applies to a corps de ballet, each one is an individual and even though you are going to get them looking all the same, hopefully, while they are doing that each one is still an individual and each one will feel it slightly differently from the next one.

Zin made a similar comment:

Firstly I work hard to help them to see how I want them to interpret the role, especially if it's a role choreographed for a particular student, then my goal is to try to get them to interpret.

Both masters discussed the dancers' *need to communicate with their audience*. They emphatically stated that it was the dancer's responsibility to convey the artistic quality of the ballet to *every* member of the audience. Students concurred with this emphasis. The level of engagement would differ as to whether the ballet was abstract, classical, or character, but at all times a link must remain:

Zan was about the whole ballet performance giving a really satisfying experience for the audience, rather than fantastic technique or a particular dancer. He wanted to get a performance out of you. There are only a few dancers that get out on stage and 'own' it, drawing the audience into them, and then you - as the dancer - get something out of that as well - because the audience loves it!

For both Zin and Zan, from the moment a dancer enters the stage to the final exit or curtain fall, communication with the audience is a continuum. The connection must not be broken. Even in the quieter moments, a feeling of communication and connection needs to exist. Zan explained,

It is *quite* possible for a dancer to actually come to a complete standstill and still be communicating... *feeling* a suspension of movement while still maintaining an emotional movement - there is something that flows on and maintains the attention of the audience and the integrity of the role they are dancing.

A student recalls an occasion when Zan was on stage in a character role and gave an incredible example of how to engage with the audience:

He had the audience in fits with his actions and expressions. One time a dancer was performing a solo and her stage prop broke – he successfully pulled the focus completely away from the problem, and I swear, you would have thought it was all choreographed. You couldn't help but watch this professional in action – it was a valuable learning experience in itself, and obviously I never forgot it! Seeing what he could bring, in terms of both his character and how the audience responded to him - it helped me to reach more deeply within myself for more.

A student recalled how Zan expected his dancers to perform with:

...a whole lot of artistry - quality, and how if you don't do a movement technically right it doesn't matter if you just give it conviction! From him, I learned to be myself when I danced, to express your whole inner self.

An objective for Zan when producing a new ballet is to get it to the final stage of readiness for performance, and then *release it*:

In fact the most pleasing result for me is when after the third or fourth performance I sit out in the audience and say "My goodness me, yes, I see, that's what it was all about".

In doing this, he demonstrates a level of trust for his dancers, leaving them with the work, to possess it and make it their own. Zin had a similar philosophy, stepping back from her work and allowing the dancer to take 'ownership'.

Curtain Calls and Reviews

Zin and Zan did not consider the final curtain to be the end point. Curtain calls, they considered, are part of the performance. And as such, should always be *professionally choreographed and practiced* until perfect. There is etiquette here, the masters explained, in needing to show respect and appreciation for the audience. One of Zin's students recalled:

She would say that this was the last moment the audience would see us, and technically it must still be perfect. Although we were no longer in our ballet characters, she explained the expected artistry of a dancer and the need to stay connected with your audience, giving them thanks. This was an important part of stage-craft and even our eye line during reverence was important – done properly, reverence had the most wonderful feeling.

The masters always hoped that, from the audience's perspective, the ballet was a success. Zin explained:

I just hope that they will all enjoy it, that's all you can hope, that it is artistic, that it's artistically presented, and that they will sit up and think "my word, I would love to see that again", or "that was wonderful". It won't please everybody, and if you try to do so, sometimes you ruin what you would like to do in the effort.

Press reviews, Zin felt, were often written by people with little training, depth of knowledge, or experience in the art form. Acknowledgement from peers, she believed, carried a much greater personal and professional significance:

I was really thrilled when this past teacher called me, I hadn't heard from in years and years. She said that my concerto was one of the most beautiful pieces of works she had ever seen. And that meant a lot to me.

Similarly, Zan did not take too much notice of press reviews:

After all the effort, you don't take too much notice of the critics. The magic is formed and it comes together. The dancers take it over and feel they are dancing for that particular audience and the audience feels it is just for them.

Interpreting and Making Connections with the Literature

Table 8 summarizes the masters' 'expertise-in-action' when producing a ballet performance. A discussion, focusing on particular areas of their practice, with further interpretative comments, follows.

**Table 8:
Performance Production - The Masters' Key Elements of Practice**

In producing a ballet work or performance, ballet masters -

- are highly **creative and original choreographers**, giving consideration to the audience for which it is intended, and to dancers' abilities
- demonstrate a vast knowledge of repertoire
- are **thoughtful and thorough planners**, putting much thought into the works' conceptual and musical elements, then making comprehensive plans to ensure success
- firmly direct **rehearsals**, and create a working environment with an uncompromising expectation of best practice
- strive to ensure their dancers:
 - develop **musical appreciation**;
 - give best effort in **technique and artistry**;
 - establish a **strong stage presence**;
 - understand **characterization**;
 - engage with the audience**, and;
 - take 'ownership'** of the ballet
- **share their vision** for the work with their dancers, and providing them with the knowledge needed to understand its meaning for them and for the audience.

Choreography

Both Zin and Zan took great care with choreography. This follows the example of Balanchine, the famous 20th century choreographer and dance master. Dance writer and critic Edwin Denby (1965) noted how Balanchine started his preparations for a new ballet by intently studying the musical score - far in advance of rehearsals beginning. However, he also notes that Balanchine did not begin his detailed choreography until the first rehearsal. This allowed him to adapt it to his dancers' abilities. Zan and Zin reported that, although they prepare their choreography beforehand, they were prepared to make alterations if, and when, they were needed. Zan and

Zin, as masters, were conscious however, that some of their students might not be capable of successfully learning and perfecting significant choreographic changes within the time allotted. For that reason they started their rehearsals fully prepared, and had already considered their dancers' abilities within their choreographic structures. Students could see that there was a carefully thought-through plan which gave them confidence that the standards expected were achievable, and the final result highly likely to be successful. Zan and Zin's students also noted how their teachers crafted choreography that showcased them in the best light – this is comparable to Pushkin's work, in that he “determined the strongest points of every student and tried to show him to best advantage in every role”(Albert, 2001, p. 121). To provide an exemplar of this, Albert relates how Pushkin varied the choreography of the variation of the White Slave in *Le Pavillon d'Armide*. Originally staged by Fokine for Nijinsky, the first section showcased Nijinsky's phenomenal ability to “fly over half the stage, reaching an enormous height, in one jump” (p. 120), performing a simply grand changement de pieds. However, the student selected for the role lacked this amazing skill and struggled with its execution. Pushkin noted the student's difficulty and replaced the leap with a moving sequence of entrechat-six. This, states Albert, preserved the outline of the dance and “allowed the student to overcome his worry and even to some degree to reveal his abilities” (p. 121).

Choreography is a complex technical and creative endeavour, involving conceptualization, organization, and structure (Alter, 1996; McCutchen, 2006). Achieving mastery requires years of conscientious and perceptive study (Smith-Autard, 1996). Recently, performance creativity - such as that found within the work of original choreography - has been acknowledged as an important example of human innovation (Sawyer, 2006). Zan and Zin clearly meet Sawyer's definition of ‘creative practitioners’.

Zan and Zin had each developed their own distinctive choreographic style. Horton Fraleigh (1999) asserts that “style emerges from intention” (p. 8). Students of both masters explained how, when viewing a performance, they recognized their master's personal style. One student of Zan's described his choreographic style as “quite classical but with a twist, quirky”. Students also reported that they are able to identify dancers who have trained with their particular master - seeing this reflected in the dancers' techniques and artistic presentations. On the issue of style, Zan stated:

Past students and dancers have told me I have a style, and say that they can recognize it. It's not something that you do consciously; it's something that comes from within...developed over many years, and it's very hard to describe.

Vaganova stated it was possible to recognize a school, and therefore a teacher, by the port de bras. Pushkin's students, however, were known for their jumping ability and the manner in which this was achieved. He instructed them to be "Lighter, calmer. No effort"(in Albert, 2001, p. 146).

Many people think that ballet has a classical repertoire that is constantly produced. Dance enthusiasts, however, are very aware of the differences that each choreographer brings to their ballets, whether new or old. On this point, Jackson (1989) provides a useful analogy to illuminate the individuality of Balanchine's and other masters' choreographic styles: "Walk into a museum gallery and before you can look at any of the art properly, chances are that you'll become aware of style. ...By style I mean the things that advertise authorship as well as a point of view" (p. 8), and: "Once one has looked, it may be simple to see but not at all easy to say" (p. 8).

Developing an individual style of practice is considered to be imperative by one of the founders of modern dance, Mary Wigman (in McCutchen, 2006). She asks ballet teachers:

Do you want to resign yourself to being an imitator? Speak your own language and try to convey to your students something of what drove you once to the dance: your enthusiasm, your obsessions, your faith, and your relentless endurance with which you worked as a student. Have the courage to be yourself and also to help your students find the way to be themselves (p. 107).

Zan and Zin met Wigman's challenge. They have developed their own focus and style, and share it with their dancers. It is recognized in the ballet world as both exemplary and accomplished.

Musicality

A central element of the masters' practices was their constant engagement with music. Both studied music as young people and this gave them a deep appreciation for the important role which music plays in ballet. Music provided both masters with inspiration for choreography and artistic interpretation. According to Chujoy and Manchester (1967), the essence of ballet lies within the music, with ballet being danced "not *to* music but *with* music"(their emphasis, p. 86). In ballet, they assert, music and dance should become a single harmonious unit. This ideal was clearly expressed in Zan and Zin's work.

Other past dancers and teachers (Dolin, 1966; Fay, 1997; Inglesby & Hunter, 2008; Roseman, 2001; Schlaich & DuPont, 1993; Vaughan, 1999; Warren, 1996) stress the importance, for

ballet, of a strong knowledge and appreciation of music. For example, Inglesby was an accomplished pianist, and this, she reports, assisted her greatly when selecting music for company repertoire, and when dancing, provided her with an intuitive feeling for music. Isadora Duncan's (1927) explanation of how she described music to her students is highly relevant to Zan and Zin's practice:

Listen to the music with your soul. Now, while listening, do you not feel an inner self awakening deep within you – that it is by its strength that your head is lifted, that your arms are raised, that you are walking slowly toward the light? (in Anderson, 1974, p. 157).

Rehearsals

McCutchen (2006) uses one word to cover three important dance adjectives: kinetic (moving), kinesthetic (feeling of movement in one's body), and aesthetic (beauty), forming the word 'kin-aesthetic' to describe the "artistic quality of dance" (p. 97). She urges teachers to encourage students to be more 'kin-aesthetic' in their work, which she feels will "ensure that all students get the intrinsic satisfaction of achieving their best" (p. 130). In rehearsals Zan and Zin never depart from their emphasis on technique and artistry, demanding equal attention to both while learning and practicing performance work.

In rehearsals, Zan and Zin work extremely hard, engaging their students and demanding full commitment. Denby (in Anderson, 1974) reported that, to an outsider, the process of making a ballet is arduous, repetitive, and requires much patience from all concerned. He describes watching a two and a half hour rehearsal: "listening to the same few bars pounded again and again on the piano, watching the same movements started at top speed and broken off, again and again, the fascinated outsider...finds himself going stir crazy" (p. 170). The masters understand, however, that this repetition is necessary if the goal is high quality. Martha Graham (1991) describes the relentless and repetitive practice as "a means of inviting the perfection desired" (p. 103).

Denby describes the dancers at rehearsal as looking like "exhausted champions attempting Mt. Everest, knowing how limited the time is, step by step, hold by hold, roped together by the music, with the peak nowhere in sight" (Anderson, 1974, p. 170). The anecdote aptly describes the enormous effort involved in creating exemplary dance performances.

Developing the 'Dance Artist'

Both masters were very effective in helping their students to develop a *stage presence*, and portray the *artistic intent* of the dance work. Zan and Zin's views resonate with those of Keri Kaa (1999), a Maori Arts educator from New Zealand, who asserts "everything is intertwined. The tinana (body), the hinengaro (mind), and the wairua (spirit), are joined as one. If you don't understand what you are singing and dancing about, your performance has no integrity. The ihi (energy force) or the wana (quality of performance) are missing" (p. 8). Inglesby (2008) notes that past renowned Russian ballet masters, including Karsavina, Kchessinskaya, Egorova, and Legat, taught their dancers "not only the full development of technique but of the whole personality. They encouraged every last ounce of individual expression to blossom, because, they insisted, however marvellous that dancer may be in the technical field, without a strong presence that dancer is utterly useless in a theatre" (p. 36). This key element is also discussed by Albert (2001) on Pushkin: "...he was always working towards the stage image" (p. 28), "[he] helped his students fall in love with dance, feel an emotional uplift that led to artistry...[giving] the students great aesthetic pleasure" (p. 133).

Regardless of whether the dancers were performing a contemporary abstract piece, a classic white ballet, or a full narrative ballet, Zan and Zin encouraged them to search within themselves to find the motivation to play the particular part with conviction. A dancer's ability to *transform* into a role is highly valued, not only by Zan and Zin, but by the entire ballet milieu. As Austin (1982) states, "The performer and her role should not be two separate entities; they should coalesce into one. What the choreographer designs for her is only the basic, formal structure; this she absorbs within herself, so that it is expressed as a personal vision she had discovered within the secrecy of her own heart" (p. 9). Both Zan and Zin were very successful in developing this ability in their dancers. Dancers from their studios regularly go on to reach international status.

Zan's skill in characterization has already been mentioned. Balanchine was particularly noted for this ability; during rehearsals he would 'transform' into each role, showing his dancers what he wanted (Denby, 1965). Similarly, Zan was acknowledged for this ability. His students explained that when he demonstrated a role before them, this effectively removed much of the reticence that they had felt. Gelsey Kirkland (1990), herself a famous ballerina of the late 20th century, who trained with many different masters, claims that while actors in a play regularly receive guidance in rehearsal as to character and motivation, "only rarely these days does a

choreographer or répétiteur guide the acting process. Rather than a breakdown of the plot, the dancer is more likely to hear an ongoing string of physical cues” (p. 51). This was not found with Zan or Zin. They worked extremely hard to ensure their dancers understood the character or the artistic intent of their role, and then worked closely with them to assist and support this understanding.

This connects to Inglesby (2008), recalling her working under the Russian maestro Serguéeff. Restaging authentic Russian classics for the International Ballet, he insisted that the dancers “never consider mime as separate, rather old-fashioned, or slightly inferior to their dancing skills. However high the arabesque or brilliant the tours, they signified nothing at all without the dramatic content of the story” (in Inglesby & Hunter, 2008, p. 7). From the very first rehearsals Serguéeff “went to the heart of their content. After that, and only then, would he concentrate on the technical purity of line and skill” (p. 7). A strong parallel to Zan’s practice is evident here.

Connecting with the Audience

Alter (1996) reminds practitioners that dance, being a performing art, relies on the interdependency of audience and artist. Communication is central to any performance (Sawyer, 2006). Zan and Zin understand this vital relationship. They impress on their dancers the responsibility communicating the work’s intent, and creating a memorable, emotional, experience. This concurs with the artistic aims of many past and present ballet masters, including Merc Cunningham, who asserts that while “dance is an art in space and time”, it is the dancer’s objective - through their performance - to obliterate that fact (in Vartoogian & Vartoogian, 1997, p. 6).

Achieving the ultimate connection with the audience, at the level seen in the work of ballet legends Nureyev, Fonteyn, and Baryshnikov, where the audience is ‘entranced’ the moment the dancer enters the stage, is an objective only a few attain. Rambert (in Anderson, 1974) recalls the artistry of Nijinsky, “Who would watch the floor when he danced? He transported you at once into higher spheres with the sheer ecstasy of his flight” (p. 161). And in Fonteyn’s latter years, she was described as being able to give one of dance’s deepest gifts in this regard: of standing entirely still, in a moment of quiet and utter calm, she projected forth an immense power and life force (Daneman, 2004).

Zan and Zin have shown the ability to produce dancers who have attained such skill.

Coda

In this Act, through the process of description and discussion, I have explored the masters' 'expertise-in-action' within the private world of the ballet class, and performance production. Within these two areas of practice, I hope to have illuminated some of the key elements of a master's practice.

Ballet Class

Examination of Zan and Zin's class teaching found them to be proficient and skilful technicians - from the fundamental basics of technique to sophisticated advanced work. They gave equal attention to the development of technique and the required classical ballet aesthetic. Both masters were excellent communicators, verbally and non-verbally. They gave clear and concise corrections, demonstrating and modelling proper form, and using a student-centred hands-on approach to learning. They were able to detect the smallest of errors in their dancers' work.

Their students feel that Zan and Zin are responding to them individually, in an intuitive or insightful way. This is described by Leinhardt (1990) as having a 'wisdom of practice'. This impression, of having an 'intuitiveness' or 'wisdom of practice', is attributable to their broad knowledge base and wealth of experience, which has created a vast 'tool box' of instructional strategies from which to draw when teaching. This provides a master, notes Zan, with:

...an instinctive way of approaching any problems in dancer difficulties.

In their class work, both masters created a positive and dynamic learning environment, and provided visions of future success as motivation.

Performance

As already noted, both Zin and Zan gave much attention to their pre-production planning, focusing on the key elements of design, music, and choreography. They have an extensive knowledge of repertoire, and are creative and original in their choreography. Both shared their vision of new work with their students, and accommodated their students' abilities within their choreography.

In rehearsals they were in complete control, demanding and encouraging perfection. In addition to their teaching of exacting technique, they worked to develop their students' artistic and characterization abilities. They emphasized the importance of conveying a strong stage presence and creating an emotional connection with the audience. Each had developed a unique and individual style of practice and choreography.

A Completeness of Practice

Comparisons of Zan and Zin's practices with that of other well-known masters revealed that they fitted within the 'master teacher' frame with ease. To describe the all-encompassing proficiency of a master, I use the term, a 'completeness of practice'.

Theorists Chi, Glaser and Farr (1988) postulate that experts create, through many years of effort, a domain-specific "organized body of conceptual and procedural knowledge that can be readily accessed and used with superior monitoring and self-regulation skills" (p. xxii). Tan (1997), from a cognitive viewpoint, claims that an expert has an immense wealth of domain-specific knowledge, contained within a sophisticated and complex hierarchical structure. Organized as structured patterns, a kind of 'mental map', the knowledge is therefore easily accessible for recall and application. "Experts can use small bits of information to trigger a larger network of concepts, ideas, skills, and subskills. This ability allows them to assess instructional events and to make decisions leading to exemplary performance" (Tan, p. 31). Tan's theories are exemplified in Zan and Zin's practice, and provide a theoretical basis for their 'ability to act instinctively' in their teaching.

Kimmerle and Cote-Laurence (2003) consider that a good dance teacher must have a solid 'foundation knowledge' of the dance material, the learning process and the learner's capabilities. However, this is not enough to make a *successful* teacher; 'application knowledge' is also needed. They describe this as the ability to transform foundation knowledge into practice by making intelligent and effective decisions about "what to teach and how to teach it to a specific group of learners" (p. 3). Sound foundation knowledge and successful application knowledge is clearly a vital part of Zan and Zin's practice.

The Student View

The students were forthright when reflecting on their particular master's expertise-in-action. Often I found that they discussed areas of Zin and Zan's practice that the masters themselves had not mentioned. Berliner (2001) and Tan (1997) note that over years of practice, many skills of an expert become routine and unconscious, which they call 'automaticity'. In this case, while Zan and Zin did not identify important parts of their practice, their students were able to do so. Students' comments added significantly to the value and strength of my findings.

As the Curtain Falls...

A synthesis of Act Three shows a number of important, and overarching, elements of the ballet master's studio teaching practice, adding a final set of key dimensions to those already discussed:

Table 9:

Act Three - Key Dimensions of a Master's Practice

Whether working on class or performance work, a ballet master believes that technique and artistry are the cornerstones of practice, intertwined and inseparable, and therefore needing to be taught in constant relationship to each other.

When teaching, the master draws from an expansive, and in-depth, knowledge and experiential base in the art form's subject matter, and a vast 'tool box' of instructional strategies, demonstrated through their ability to effectively communicate with their students.

A ballet master views music, and the development of musicality, as an essential component to his/her practice and that of their students.

The ballet master brings originality and creativity to his/her studio teaching, performance design and choreography.

With a welcoming and positive manner, and a strong and commanding 'presence', a ballet master creates a inspirational working environment where learning is enjoyed, valued, and achieved, and discipline is rarely needed.

In all areas of practice, the master shows self-discipline and an unremitting work ethic with a clear sense of purpose, intent on the goal of providing and producing the best possible outcome for the dancers.

Through a personal journey in dance, a ballet master develops a uniquely individual emphasis to his/her practice, resulting in an identifiable, distinguishing style.

GRAND FINALE

Summary, Considerations, and Reflections

With the story complete, the grand finale gives the choreographer an opportunity to bring to the stage all of the characters, with the leading dancers to the fore - showcasing a final dramatic display of their talents. As the music ends, the curtain typically falls on one of two finishes - either a picturesque tableau or; with the dancers in motion,, as though the festivities continue ...

The Grand Finale completes this study. It provides: a summary of the research, with a presentation of the prototypical view that emerged; a consideration of the possible limitations, dilemmas and solutions; its contribution to knowledge and to the emerging dance literature – specifically, that of classical ballet; ideas for future study directions, and an opportunity to add my final reflections on the research.

Toward a Prototypical View of a Classical Ballet Master

The aim of this research has been to explore the practice of highly accomplished expert teachers of classical ballet, focusing on two exemplary practitioners who are acknowledged, within the ballet world as ‘ballet masters’. Reviewing the literature, I found that attributes of expert practice, in many fields, including education, had been well examined. However, while dance studies have increased in recent years, the domain covers an extensive field, with ballet just one of the many in which scholars have actively called for exploration. Only a small amount of work has been done in the classical ballet genre, and examination into its best practice is lacking. To remedy this deficiency, the study set out to answer the question:

What is the professional practice of the classical ballet master?

To find the answers, my qualitative case study of two ballet masters explored the key dimensions of their knowledge acquisition and teaching practice, with the hope of creating a prototypical view of a classical ballet master. This approach, an in-depth case study with prototypical discovery, is advocated by many scholars as a valid and enlightening research

endeavour (Berliner, 2001; Smith & Strahan, 2004; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995). Its benefit is a richer, more descriptive, and inclusive domain-specific understanding of teacher expertise.

The methodology allowed me the freedom, and the reflective opportunity, to present my work as a metaphor of a three-act ballet performance. I looked at the masters' practices from three perspectives: 'Exploring the Masters' Paths to Excellence'; 'Exploring the Masters' Professional Orientation', and 'Exploring the Masters' 'Expertise-in-Action'. These perspectives compose Acts One, Two, and Three, respectively.

Within each Act, I took an 'emic' approach to analysing the data and writing the discussions, allowing the ballet masters' voices, and those of their students, to take 'centre-stage'. My philosophical perspective on learning most closely aligns with the understandings of social constructivism. Therefore I focused on providing 'rich description'. I believe my findings to be a respectful reflection of the key informants' understandings and knowledge, and that they provide the reader with an insight into the "essential character of the case" (Stake, 1995, p. 29).

In each Act, key themes emerged within each 'scene'. These were described and discussed with reference to literature. At the end of each Act, I presented a synthesis of the overarching central elements that were discovered. So, to provide an answer to my question -

What is the professional practice of the classical ballet master?

I amalgamated all three syntheses to create a précis of a classical ballet master's practice, which I now present on the following page as Table 10: A Prototypical View of a Classical Ballet Master's Professional Practice.

Table 10:**A Prototypical View of a Classical Ballet Master's Professional Practice****A Classical Ballet Master -**

- Has a life-long, unremitting passion and devotion for the art form, considering his/her emotional connection to teaching as an innate ability, 'gift', or 'calling'
- Is a continual seeker of knowledge, accumulating an immense reservoir through personal learning and experiences informed by others significant to the field
- Believes that correct technique and artistry are inseparable cornerstones of a dancer's training, and musical appreciation (and its interpretation) is essential to the art form, and that a dancer must intertwine all three in order to understand and portray the true ballet aesthetic
- Strives for "best practice" in teaching, and is committed to the goal of providing and producing the highest achievable outcome for his/her dancers
- Teaches with originality and conscious reflection, and draws from a vast 'tool box' of strategies, and when doing so is an exemplary and effective communicator, technical practitioner, and creative choreographer
- Has a strong autonomy of practice, with a commanding teaching 'presence' which creates a positive, motivational, and inspirational working environment conducive to learning
- Approaches his/her practice with a student-orientated perspective, sharing his/her visions and aspirations for the dancer and/or the performance, and encouraging each individual to reach this/her potential
- Teaches his/her dancers a professional orientation (i.e. self-discipline and work ethic) that reflects an understanding of the values and dispositions necessary for success in the art form
- Considers performance experience to be crucial for a dancer's preparation and training, and strives to provide quality opportunities for this
- Encourages his/her dancers to understand the importance of developing a strong stage presence through which to convey a work's spirit and engage with the audience.
- Over a life-time of practice, effectively transfers a professional legacy of practice and an original professional style, thus contributing to the perpetuation and growth of the art form.

There are commonalities in my findings with the established literature's understandings and theories of expertise and expert practice. Galton and Darlington (1972), for example, assert that excellence is a combination of three factors: innate ability, eagerness to work, and; "an adequate power of doing a great deal of laborious work" (p. 37). Gardner (1993) notes that the achievement of great innovators is the result of long, intensive preparation in association with a favourable environment. He also adds that a determining factor in reaching exemplary status may well be a 'talent based' component. More recently, Shulman and Shulman (2004) re-examined Shulman's (1986, 1987) original propositions on teaching expertise, finding it, with its "strictly cognitive and individual" emphasis (2004, p. 258) to be too constrained. They put forward a new conceptual framework which presented excellence in teaching as having five attributes: cognitive; dispositional; motivational; performance, and reflective. Their hope was that this new framework would be useful for examining the work of teachers within a "theory-rich, open-ended, content intensive classroom" (p. 259), an environment equally applicable to that in which a ballet master is actively engaged. They consider that an accomplished teacher is "a member of a professional community who is ready, willing, and able to teach and to learn from his or her teaching experiences" (p. 259). I found my prototypical view of a ballet master fitted well within their new theoretical frame.

However, while this study supports theories on expertise and teaching excellence, it extends what is already posited. It adds, I believe, another 'layer' of knowledge, through both its method of investigation and the discipline explored. In-depth descriptive accounts of two exemplary ballet teachers' professional knowledge, philosophies, beliefs, orientations, and practice, and the culminating identification of the key features of their practice provide this layer.

In summary, then, through descriptive accounts of the key areas of the masters' practices, I have attempted to provide a deeper understanding of what it is to be an exemplary teacher of classical ballet. Shulman (1986) advocates that research should collect, collate and interpret the knowledge of teachers with the goal of establishing a 'case literature'. My quest, I hope, achieves Shulman's goal. The findings are presented as a new and revealing prototype of best practice, a research venture recommended by Sternberg and Horvath (1995). I have endeavoured to make the masters' implicit knowledge explicit, to add new ideas to the expertise literature's "long-standing conversation" (Sosniak, 1999, p. 185), and contribute to the emerging field of dance scholarship.

Dilemmas and Solutions

The Tacit Dimension

Expertise is all too often difficult to illuminate because of the tacit knowledge that exemplary practitioners possess (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Polanyi, 1967; Schön, 1987). I found that the two ballet masters had a pervasive ‘invisibility of practice’. They did an immense amount of work outside their studios: continual reading, listening, planning, and preparation. This work is not seen or shared with their dancers. Second, within the studio, while they establish a professional relationship with their dancers, they do not share any personal information and keep their thoughts and reflections to themselves. Finally, it is evident in their teaching that they are drawing from a vast accumulation of knowledge and experience that is so embedded in their practice that using it appears to be intuitive or instinctual. So much so, that even the masters themselves have difficulty in identifying and describing some of their teaching skills and methods. I attempted to address the issue of tacit knowledge by exploring their practice from three perspectives: through interviews with the masters, their students, and through observations of their work.

The New Zealand Context

An additional and potentially limiting problem was the research’s contextual environment. Without intending to type-cast a nation, it is commonly accepted that New Zealanders have modest and unpretentious natures. They are brought up to take a self-effacing attitude to success and achievement. Neither Zan nor Zin showed any propensity to engage in any discussion that focused more than fleetingly on their accomplishments. Their modesty had the potential at least to ‘hide’ elements of their practice from discovery. It was my hope that my being one of their past students would overcome this, our ‘shared history’ providing a level of comfort that would allow them to speak freely. In spite of this, I found them very reserved when speaking of their achievements.

The Ephemeral Nature of Ballet Teaching

Dance teaching is ephemeral. With no lasting record, the knowledge must either be transferred to the students or will be lost. This is one of the most problematic issues in ballet (Adshead-Landsdale, 1999; Alter, 1996; Preston-Dunlop, 1995). Performance work is equally vulnerable; once the evening or production season comes to an end, it disappears except from the memories of those performing or watching it. Ballet historian and critic, Clement Crisp (in Preston-Dunlop, 1995) notes that: “a ballet dies every night as every performance ends” (p. 6). Even if recorded, a revival or restaging is a different experience, performed by different dancers, who bring to it their own interpretation. I hope that by making a written, descriptive, record of exemplary practice, I have addressed, in some small way, this issue of non-permanence.

My own ballet and teaching background equipped me to ‘peer into’ the masters’ practices in a way that would be difficult for an ‘outsider’. Nevertheless, the question still lingers: are there still aspects of their practice yet to be made visible?

Methodological Issues - List Formation, Generalizability, and Context

Identifying and listing key teaching qualities, in an attempt to describe a norm, is, according to Korthagen (2004), too ambitious a project. While he concedes there is value in offering a framework from which serious discussion can begin, “perhaps it is even impossible or pedagogically undesirable to formulate a definitive description of ‘the good teacher’” (p. 78). My findings cannot be considered definitive, prescriptive, or a ‘norm’ generalizable within the domain or across it into other dance genres. Rather, they should be considered as a presentation of the key dimensions of two masters’ practices.

Sternberg and Horvath (1995) suggest that the goal of research should be the eventual construction of a prototypical view for each domain. Finding a central commonality of expert practice, they assert, will allow for more natural categories to be established, with the acknowledgement that within each prototype there will be a wide diversity of expert teacher practice. Indeed, while Zan and Zin shared many similarities, their individual philosophies and practices are distinct. Each of them has created a unique legacy in the art of teaching dance. Their unique practices, first seen in the Prologue and Act One, developed from their personal journeys towards becoming master teachers. For Zan, his European exposure to exemplary

performance was hugely significant. Whereas for Zin, her self-study focused on improving her advanced practices of ballet's technical training. As they established their own individual philosophies of practice, they each developed a particular teaching emphasis, seen in Acts Two and Three. For Zan, this was his focus on performance, especially his ability to teach the expressive skills of characterization. For Zin, this was her passion for strong technique, her striving to produce the highest quality of classically artistic dancer. Tan (1997) notes the difficulty in reconciling expertise across practitioners:

Experts are individuals, their thoughts and actions may take on an idiosyncratic, at times eccentric, quality. Therefore, in reading and considering the elements of expertise, understand that they represent fibres in the fabric of human activity. Like any fabric, the fibres of expertise can be woven together in an endless variety of patterns and styles (pp. 30-31).

From a social constructivist perspective, to assert that my findings are applicable to ballet masters in general would be dangerous. There clearly exists a New Zealand context to Zan and Zin's learning, experience, and practice. Their practices are unique to that context. Scholars acknowledge that this strong contextual component in the development of a teacher's dispositions and competencies of practice (Berliner, 2001, 2004; Dottin, 2009; Hong, 2003; Korthagen, 2004). Parker-Katz's and Bay's work (2008) examining mentoring relationships - highly relevant to the ballet dancers' knowledge acquisition - suggests that learning within a context is an example of 'situated learning', and learning from mentors is "quintessentially a socially collaborative learning experience" (p. 109). Contextually-situated qualitative studies, such as this, should make no pretence of generalizability (Leglar & Collay, 2002).

The research may be considered by some to be limited, because of the small number of participants. However, the literature on qualitative research methods supports small case studies. The intention is to make the cases understandable. This is both worthy and significant for the discovery of new understandings (Stake, 1995). Stake adds that while the researcher may not claim the findings to be generalizable, the reader has the freedom to generalize from them. A possible use, or potential benefit, of my prototypical discovery may be its application in identifying prospective ballet masters at an early stage in their careers.

Directions for Further Study

Hanstein (1999) notes “the production of new knowledge is always generative – questions lead to answers and answers always beget more questions” (p. 24). Indeed, that has been the case with this project.

A major question that arose when making my methodological decisions was to find a way in which expertise could be examined, especially in an area in which little work has been done. Narrowing the task, in order to limit the scope and complexity of a project, naturally invites the question of what other directions could have been taken, and might profitably be taken in the future.

There are several which I consider would further expand our knowledge of exemplary ballet teaching. For example, looking in more depth at any one of the dimensions of the ballet master’s practice would be useful. So indeed, would be that of taking a more focused view of their particular instructional skills or strategies, such as: role-modelling; relationships with students over time (i.e. disciplinarian; friend; confidant; authoritarian), and motivational techniques.

A study that looked at the complexity of communication would also be of interest. I have in mind here the many different ways in which language is used in the studio: English, French, ballet’s particular mix of metaphor, imagery, and symbolism; non-verbal language in correcting students and in particular teaching strategies and the use of tactile communication.

A similar study, constructing prototypes of teaching expertise, could be completed in any one of the many dance genres. Then, comparisons between genres could be made.

There are two projects in particular that I hope may be attempted. The first would be a more thorough examination of the process of creating a new dance work. Perhaps this could be achieved by closely following the thought processes and work of a master choreographer as he/she moves from the moment of a new ballet’s conception to its completion. And finally, I would suggest an action-based research project - taking the findings from this study and sharing them with ballet teachers who are emerging in the field, and doing so in such a way that benefits their practice and helps them develop a deeper understanding of the key dimensions of exemplary practice.

Final Reflections

On the Ballet Master

Having established a prototype view of a ballet master, I felt the need to leave a final message about what I found to be at the heart of a ballet master's practice, the principal factor that drove them to achieve this level of accomplishment.

Two key quotes from the literature are particularly relevant. The first, by Berliner (1994) is this: "the lesson for us all is that when people have reasons to learn some domain and the opportunity to pursue that learning, they can reach levels of competency, proficiency, and expertise not ordinarily achieved by others" (p. 184). The second, by Webster and Schempp (2008) is that expertise in practice emerges "from a driven and directed pursuit of excellence" (p. 23).

Both Zan and Zin are driven by their love for ballet and their passion for teaching. These provide them with the motivation and dedication to succeed. They both feel, rightly, that they have a significant part to play in the development of ballet, and have something worthwhile to contribute to its continuance. They do not consider their teaching to be a career, rather a 'mission' or a 'calling'. They see their life in dance as a gift in which they have found great personal and professional enjoyment, and that they wish to share and pass this on to others through their teaching, as long as they are physically able. They both actively engaged, in what I see as being, an *all-encompassing and never-ending quest for excellence*.

On the Dissertation Process

Returning, one last time, to a dance metaphor, I found that the process of conducting this research and writing the thesis had strong parallels to my experiences in choreography. A choreographer typically uses music as the inspiration to create the work; in this thesis the data took that place. Like a choreographer I spent much time intently 'listening' to the entire 'score', seeking to find the inspiration from within it to direct my writing; in a way that was empathetic with the 'music'. And like a dancer learning the choreography under the watchful eye of a master, this project has similarly been overseen by my supervisors.

Furthermore, in the same way that a choreographer needs constantly to reflect on content and delivery, this has been a major consideration when planning and writing - I often wondered, for example, whether another direction could just as well have been followed. However, there comes a point when a choreographer - or in this instance, the researcher - needs to make the final decisions, and turn to the task of 'fine-tuning' and 'polishing': finding the best way to display the 'work' in its best light.

Finally, with the work completed, the 'choreographer' hopes that the finished piece engages the 'audience' and conveys the intended performance aesthetic. And, on the closing night the 'show' will 'pack-out' of the theatre, leaving the struggle, the joy, and the ephemeral nature of the experience, behind.

The Grand Finale Tableau

This research has described the professional practice of two expert ballet teachers, providing insight and understanding into the essential character and comprehensive nature of their practice, including the many traits and attributes found to be highly desirable and effective. With these findings I have presented a revealing prototypical view of a classical ballet master. As ballet practice is generally not recorded, providing an in-depth descriptive account and illuminating its key dimensions makes a useful contribution to knowledge. It adds to the literature on expertise, it supplements the emerging dance knowledge base, and it may, I hope, guide the development of exemplary practice within classical ballet teaching.

CURTAIN CALLS

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PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I started learning to dance young. For most of my youth I attended a private ballet academy, taking advancing international syllabus examinations. I also learnt Highland dancing, national, and modern. I entered competitions and won awards and scholarships. From my early teens I was involved with ballet company work, and almost every holidays performed on stage. I was very fortunate to have such opportunities, and to have performed a great variety of roles.

I wanted to make a career in ballet, and despite some obstacles, worked diligently to that goal. When I was fifteen I attended a national dance summer school and won a scholarship giving me the opportunity to train with the New Zealand School of Dance for two weeks. I loved the experience and wanted more. One year later, again attending the summer school, I sustained my first major injury, a torn Achilles tendon. I returned to ballet after eight weeks recuperation, but fighting to get my condition back, I overstrained my other Achilles tendon. With my two weakened tendons and time off during a pivotal year, my hope of a career in ballet evaporated. I made the decision to keep dance as my 'love' and concentrate on academic pursuits.

At my ballet school, senior students were invited to take juniors for private lessons to help prepare them for exams. I jumped at the chance to teach. During this same period, at my high school I was asked to do remedial tutoring with students struggling with mathematics. I discovered that I thoroughly enjoyed both experiences, and decided to make teaching my career.

At the end of high school I applied for and was accepted into Christchurch Teachers College. However, I delayed my entry to complete a science degree first. I attended the University of Otago to study medical sciences, and after completing my Bachelors degree in Biochemistry, entered Otago Medical School. I continued in this direction endeavour after moving to Sydney, Australia. Following an illness, I took time out to reflect on my life's direction and decided to return to my initial career goal of becoming a teacher. A post-graduate diploma in education in science teaching from Sydney University and a master's degree in special education from Gallaudet University in Washington D.C., followed, with teaching positions (high school and university) between degrees and on completion. While in Washington, D.C., I taught ballet classes for a university dance company. I also started an after-school tutoring agency, enjoying the challenge of working one-on-one with students to help them discover and reach their

potential. Later I also had the opportunity of writing curricula and text material for an US company that specialized in distance education. Following a move to San Diego, I was offered the role of headmistress of a small private school for children with learning disabilities. This experience called on all my skills and resources, and tested me to the limits.

After more than a decade overseas, I returned home to New Zealand. Since then I have been actively involved in the dance community: teaching, theatre management, critiquing, grant application writing, and leadership opportunities. My return also led to university opportunities, and the chance to fulfil a life goal of completing a doctorate.

ETHICS

Invitation - Dance Teacher

You are invited to take part in a research project that I am undertaking as a requirement of study towards a PhD at the University of Canterbury. My study is focused on gaining an understanding of expert teacher practice in dance.

Your involvement in this project will include informal interviews focusing on your professional practice and, where possible, teaching observations of you while engaged in your normal teaching practice. The interviews will be audio-taped or videotaped so I can analyse the information at a later date. The observations will also be videotaped for the same reason.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of this investigation. Unless you specifically agree to be identified, your identity will not be made public. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality my notes will not include your name or any identifying feature unless you consent to this.

If you have any questions regarding my work, or would like to see a copy of any notes made about you, please contact me at:

Carolyn Cairns
Department of Education
University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch

(Note: telephone and email contact details were provided in original documents, but removed for thesis publication)

Thank you for your cooperation.

*This project has been reviewed by the
University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee*

Consent - Dance Teacher

I have read and understood the description of the project and I agree to participate in this project. I agree to the audio-taping and videotaping of the interviews and observations. I understand that additional information from previously published media, such as newspaper reviews and articles may be researched and included in the results. I understand that past and present students of mine may be asked for their perceptions and perspectives on their time training with me.

I consent to the publication of the results of the project that will include information from the above-mentioned interviews, observations, and additional media information.

I understand that I may withdraw from the project at any time and withdraw any information provided.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Tick here if you give your approval to be identified and indicate how you would like to be identified in the written results e.g.: full name, nickname, etc. _____.

Tick here if you give your approval to allow the taped materials to be stored beyond the completion of the research project with the expectation that they will be archived and may be used in a publication at a later date.

Thank you for your assistance in this project.

Please return this form to Carolyn Cairns.

*This project has been reviewed by the
University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee*

Invitation - Dancer Interview

You are invited to take part in a research project that I am undertaking as a requirement of study towards a PhD at the University of Canterbury. My study is focused on gaining an understanding of expert teacher practice in dance.

Your involvement in this project will include an informal interview focusing on your perceptions and perspective of your teacher's professional practice. The interview will be audio-taped so I can analyse the information at a later date. It is expected that the interview will take 30 to 60 minutes of your time.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of this investigation. Unless you specifically agree to be identified, your identity will not be made public. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality my notes will not include your name or any identifying features unless you consent to this.

If you have any questions regarding my work, or would like to see a copy of any notes made about you, please contact me at:

Carolyn Cairns
Department of Education
University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch

(Note: telephone and email contact details were provided in original documents, but removed for thesis publication)

Thank you for your cooperation.

*This project has been reviewed by the
University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee*

Consent - Dancer Interview

I have read and understood the description of the project. I agree to be interviewed and agree to the audio-taping of the interview. I consent to the publication of the results of the project which will include information from the above mentioned interviews, with the understanding that my name will not be identified unless I specifically indicate below. I understand that I may withdraw from the project at any time, including the withdrawal of any information provided.

Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

_____ Tick and initial here if you give your approval to be identified and indicate how you would like to be identified in the written results eg: full name, nick-name, etc. _____

_____ Tick and initial here if you give your approval for the taped materials to be stored beyond the completion of the research project with the expectation that they will be archived and may be used in a publication at a later date.

*This project has been reviewed by the
University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee*

Invitation - Dance Students/Company Members Videotaping of Teaching Observations

You are invited to take part in a research project that I am undertaking as a requirement of study towards a PhD at the University of Canterbury. My study is focused on gaining an understanding of expert teacher practice in dance. Your teacher (-----) has allowed me to observe and record his teaching style and technique, and permission has been granted from the (-----) to conduct these observations of ----- while he/she conducts a class or rehearsal. I am a past student of (-----) and look forward to working closely with him/her again.

I would like to videotape some classes so that I can analyse the material at a later time, and I request your permission to do so. While the object of the videotaping is to record your teacher in action, there is a possibility that due to the nature of dance classes and rehearsals you may also be recorded on tape.

Attached is a form for you to complete to give your consent. The video material will be kept secure and will only be used in a publication if you specifically give your consent. Unless you specifically agree to be identified, your identity will not be made public.

If you have any questions regarding my work, or would like to see a copy of any notes made about you, please contact me at:

Carolyn Cairns
Department of Education
University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch

(Note: telephone and email contact details were provided in original documents, but removed for thesis publication)

If you are younger than sixteen years of age, a parent or guardian will need to give their consent for you to participate in the project.

Thank you for your cooperation.

*This project has been reviewed by the
University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee*

Consent - Dance Students/Company Members Videotaping of Teaching Observations

I have read and understood the description of the project and understand that during my class or rehearsal I may be recorded on videotape. I agree and consent to being videotaped and to the publication of the results of the project with the understanding that I will not be identified unless I give permission as specifically indicated below. I understand that I may withdraw from the project at any time.

Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

_____ **Tick** and **initial** here if you give your approval to be identified and indicate how you would like to be identified in the written results e.g.: full name, nickname, etc _____

_____ **Tick** and **initial** here if you give your approval for the taped materials to be stored beyond the completion of the research project with the expectation that they will be archived and may be used in a publication at a later date.

Please complete if applicable (for dance students under sixteen years of age):

Dear Parent/Guardian, If you or your child feel that you do not want to take part in this study, then please return this form indicating your decision below. Otherwise I would appreciate it if you could sign the consent form and return it to me as soon as possible.

If you have any questions regarding my work, or would like to see a copy of any notes made about your child, please feel free to contact me.

I **agree** to let (child's name) _____ participate in this project. I agree to the publication of the results of the project, and I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that my child's name will not be identified unless I indicate otherwise (see above). I understand that my child may withdraw from the project at any time, and withdraw any information provided.

Name: _____

Signed _____ Date _____

I **do not** agree to let my child participate in this project. _____

Signed _____ Date _____

*This project has been reviewed by the
University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee*

THE MASTERS' MUTUAL PEDAGOGICAL 'LINEAGE'

The following is an illustration to illuminate the masters' mutual pedagogical influences (see Figure 1, page 243). While not an initial aim of the research, revealing their shared learning was an interesting finding of the research – especially considering the individual nature of their learning experiences. This illustration also provides an enlightening glimpse into the importance of a master acquiring their knowledge, or being influenced, from others significant in the art form. While some of the connections are indirect – via an intermediary – nonetheless, each has contributed to the resulting practice of Zan and Zin. It also shows the international nature of the historical lineage of ballet, with the nationalities of each person indicated. However, it is important to note that many travelled extensively between countries to fulfil their career aspirations in ballet, some defected from Russia, and a significant number spent time with many different companies across Europe and the USA.

This illustration does not attest, *in any way*, to be an inclusive representation of each master's significant influences. As this was never an intention of my original research project I did not direct my data collection towards that end. Such a work would be a massive undertaking as it would have an enormous complexity. Tracing and formatting anything resembling a complete lineage would be very difficult as many of the dancers, teachers, and choreographers worked with many of the major companies of the time. Therefore, I present this view – not as an attempt at a 'family tree', but as a way to display the commonalities that were evident.

In addition, in my attempt to keep this illustration manageable, and presentable, I clearly attest to having simplified the illustration. Many of the included individuals can be linked back through their personal teaching lineage to some of ballet's most significant and influential pioneers. For example, Fokine (1880-1942) links back through Cecchetti (1850-1928), and in turn, via the great masters Giovanni Lepri (1830-1890), Carlos Blasis (1797-1878), Pierre Gardel (1758-1840), Maximilien Gardel (1741-1787), Louis Dupré (1697-1774), and finally to the originating source of ballet, the L'Académie Royale de Musique et de Danse (1661) (Warren, 1996). Obviously, to make these linkages for each individual would be incredibly complex, if not impossible, task, and make the illustration unreadable.

The connections are taken from comments made by the masters and from my research of available literature. All of the individuals have already been mentioned within the discussions

or footnotes in the Prologue and Act One, therefore, again for simplicity, I have refrained from including more information on each.

In my methodology, I stated that I would reveal the identities of Zan and Zin. They are, respectively, Mr. Russell Kerr, and Miss. Lorraine Peters.

The illustration uses the following nationality codes:

B: British

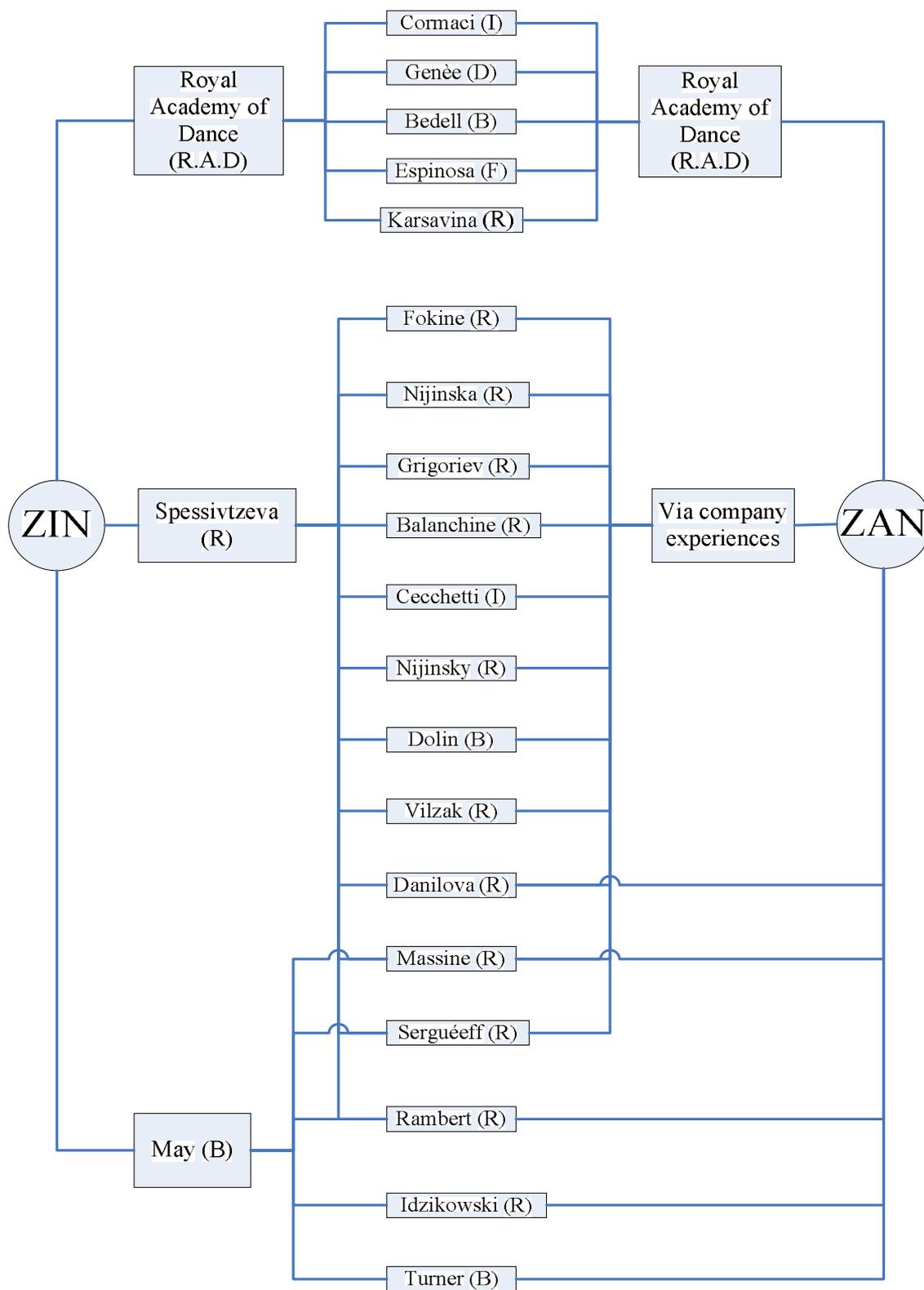
D: Danish

F: France

I: Italian

R: Russian

Figure 1: The Masters' Mutual Pedagogical 'Lineage'



DVD - Information

The DVD was submitted with the thesis for examination. However, the issue of its inclusion with the library copy was discussed at the oral examination where it was decided that the DVD should be removed in order to protect the participants' ethical consents.

The DVD had a total running time is 73 minutes, and was split into the nine chapters (which are referenced in the dissertation).

CHAPTER ONE: Exhibiting "Flow" (15.05 min)

CHAPTER TWO: Inspirational Teaching (7.37 min)

CHAPTER THREE: Intensity of Practice (14.37 min)

CHAPTER FOUR: Developing Self-Discipline (3.55 min)

CHAPTER FIVE: "Conductor" (7.48 min)

CHAPTER SIX: Choreography with Challenge (3.50 min)

CHAPTER SEVEN: Working with Professional Dancers (2.45 min)

CHAPTER EIGHT: Working with Students and Pre-Professional Dancers (9.11 min)

CHAPTER NINE: Explanation of Choreographic Intent and Characterization (9.53 min)