“Just with you”: Professional integrated dancers’ practices of access and access intimacy in timing

by

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Abstract

Integrated dance brings together disabled and non-disabled people to train, rehearse, and perform (Cooper Albright, 1997). In integrated dance, like normative Western concert dance, practices of timing are tacit knowledge and rarely examined. Using participatory performance creation, which brings together participatory action research (PAR) (McIntyre, 2008) and performance ethnography (Denzin, 2003), eight dancers/researchers from CRIPSiE, Edmonton's integrated dance company, investigated the accessibility and inaccessibility of their practices of timing. The dancers/researchers who came together for this project wanted to examine their practices of timing (specifically pace, unison movement, improvisation scores, and partnering) because these practices had the potential to allow them to experience what Mia Mingus (2011b) names access intimacy. Access intimacy is an emotion, a good feeling of connection, ease, and embodiment that people can experience when their access needs are met. For the dancers/researchers good dance was dance in which there was the possibility of experiencing access intimacy. Creating access intimacy depended on creating access to practices of timing that enabled the dancers/researcher to coordinate their movements. We discovered, however, that creating access to practices of timing was complicated. The capacity to control our pace – to move faster or slower than our bodies ordinarily did – was key to many practices of timing. Controlling our pace placed varying mental demands on the dancers/researchers – changed the cognitive load – depending on the practice of timing. The cognitive load demanded of the dancers/researchers in our practices of timing often influenced the possibility the dancers/researchers would

experience access intimacy. We also discovered that determining if a practice of timing was difficult or inaccessible, particularly under the time constraints of a rehearsal process was very complicated but had high stakes. Making the practices of timing easier could remove pleasurable challenge and replicate the contempt of the ableist world for disabled people but if we asked too much of ourselves we risked pushing past our limits in a way that replicates how ableism expects disabled people to push past their limits (Mingus, 2011a). Creating more accessible practices of timing and the possibility of access intimacy was a complex, ever-evolving task.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Kelsie Acton. The research project, of which this thesis is a part received ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, project name: Integrated dancers' practices of timing, Pro00063821, approved February 16th, 2017, amendment approved July 20th, 2017.

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My sister has provided every kind of support possible, from pep talks, workouts, pastry and copyediting. This work would not exist without her.

Finally, this is for my parents, who taught me to be curious.

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Introduction

The dancers/researchers are seated. The sound of an inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale, breath frictioning across hard palates to create a hiss. Inhale. Exhale. We breath together. We move together in the lift and fall of our chests, the expansion and contraction of our lungs.

I love dance.

I love integrated dance in particular.

The name, *integrated dance*, is a contested one. Integrated dance can be understood as an art form that brings people with a wide range of embodiment and mental differences together to train, rehearse, improvise, and perform (Cooper Albright, 1997). It can be understood as part of the international disability arts movement that resists dominant disability narratives of tragedy and inspiration by celebrating diversity and difference (Descottignes, 2015). It is also understood as a contemporary dance form that happens to include disabled dancers (Benjamin, 2002; Østern, 2009).

The breadth of these definitions of integrated dance reflects the complexities of my own engagement with both normative Western concert dance, which is often assumed not to involve disabled people, and integrated dance. When I found integrated dance in my mid-twenties, I had spent almost ten years training in ballet, jazz and modern dance. I loved dance because it was one of the few modes of physical activity that did not leave me feeling overwhelmed and experiencing (what I now know is) sensory overload. Dancing gave me a sense of connection to my body and others in ways that suited me. I craved the way I became more aware of my body, able to feel and control muscles that I had not known existed. I also connected with other people – there was enormous pleasure for me in jumping across the floor in groups, all managing space so we could soar together. I also knew I was not well suited to normative Western concert dance. I began

training relatively late, at sixteen, my body type was not traditionally ideal and I struggled intensely with the timing and the musicality of my movement. I think of timing in dance as coordinating movement and managing bodies in motion on a second-to-second level. Timing is about relationship, the relationship between the dancers' moving body and the movement of other dancers, or the music, or an idealized tempo that the dancer is aiming for.

Integrated dance redefined my relationship with dance. I entered into the dance community that would eventually become the Collaborative Radically Integrated Performers Society in Edmonton (CRIPSiE), a community comprised of people with many different impairments[1], and differing political understandings of disability and intersectionality. When this group of people finally incorporated under the name CRIPSiE, becoming a professional dance company as well as a dance community, this shift signified a growing interest in questions of labour and aesthetics of accessibility. Previous to incorporation, CRIPSiE dancers were paid occasionally and inconsistently for their labour. This shift signalled a commitment to working towards paying dancers consistently, at rates comparable to other non-disabled dance artists. Aesthetics of accessibility are fundamental to the Canadian disability arts movement (Jacobson & McMurchy, 2010) and occur when access is considered and incorporated

[1] While CRIPSiE artists have multiple understandings of disability, throughout this dissertation I use the disability language that CRIPSiE often uses, which reflects the social model of disability (Shakespeare, 2006). This includes using *disabled* to acknowledge the ways that people are disabled by architecture, policies, and attitudes that exclude them from full participation in society, *normative* to indicate the dominant, taken-for-granted practices and assumptions of the world that are often underpinned by ableism, and *impairment* to describe bodily and mental difference from what society deems normal.

into every stage of the artistic process and the artistic product (Equity Office, 2012). This might look like visual description being incorporated into the script of a musical, as in the case of Graeae's *Reasons to Be Cheerful* (Kendrick, 2011) or having an ASL interpreter and a Deaf consultant in the room for every rehearsal in the case of Concrete Theatre's American Sign Language/English opera *Songs My Mother Never Sung Me* (Acton, Howarth & Ouchi, forthcoming).

Aesthetics of accessibility brought everything I had ever known about dance into question. Suddenly everything and anything could be experimented with, changed to make it more accessible. There was a joy and a wonder to this. Ahmed (2014) writes, "wonder is an encounter with an object that one does not recognize; or, wonder works to transform the ordinary which is already recognized into the extraordinary. As such, wonder expands our field of vision and touch" (p. 179). Integrated dance transformed normative Western concert dance for me. It expanded the way I related to normative Western concert dance and enabled me to see all dance in new ways. This research is an extension of that initial moment of questioning everything I knew.

I now locate my work as a choreographer and dancer within the disability arts movement, and my research is informed by the Canadian disability arts movement's interest in aesthetics of accessibility. I have also come to see overlap between how integrated dance and normative Western concert dance engage with timing, particularly in rehearsals. In both settings I have found practices of timing difficult, inaccessible to my body and mind. This research happened in no small part because I could not understand how I could love both normative Western concert dance and integrated dance so much and have them not love me back. That despite the years of practice, often up to

eighteen hours a week, I could still struggle with timing. I wanted to better understand the inaccessibility that I felt, but struggled to articulate, so that I could shift my artistic practice, making integrated dance more accessible to me and other dancers who struggled with timing.

Rogoff (2003) writes about a shift from criticism (a form of judgment) to critique (revealing the underlying assumptions that allow something to appear to be natural) to criticality (where we are enmeshed and embodied in the thing we are examining and thus operate on uncertain, shifting ground). For Rogoff (2003) the point of theory and knowledge creation is not to find answers, but to "find a different mode of inhabitation" (p. 2). I cannot be apart from the things I critique. I understand normative Western concert dance as deeply flawed, barely tolerant (if not openly hostile at times) to my ongoing engagement with it. Perhaps integrated dance is less flawed? I am not sure. But I can also feel that the ways my body manifests timing in integrated dance are also (sometimes grudgingly) tolerated, even if tolerance is antithetical to aesthetics of accessibility, which would suggest that points of difference are points of potential innovation and creativity.

And still.

I love dance, both normative Western concert dance and integrated dance.

My difficulties with practices of timing may be the result of the unique way my mind processes information. When I wrote my research proposal in 2016, I identified as a cis-gender, white woman with an upper middle class upbringing that emphasized artistic literacy, and an able-bodied member of CRIPSiE's community. I was culturally fluent in disability culture, I was Co-Artistic Director of CRIPSiE, but I had no experiences of

disability. And while I was deeply invested in my integrated dance community, I was also equally invested in the independent dance and theatre ecology of Edmonton, an ecology to which many of the other members of CRIPSiE had no access. I was aware of multiple barriers to my professional dance involvement - from body size and late training to a recent, major injury - but that I still possessed tremendous privilege in the context of CRIPSiE. During the course of the artistic/research process, I discovered that as a child I had been diagnosed with non-verbal learning disorder (NVLD). As people with NVLD are supposed to have difficulties with "the concept of time" (Molenaar-Klumper, 2002, p. 31) and often have significant auditory processing difference (Spreen, 2011), I was drawn to research timing because of the ways my impairment played out in relation to dance. My stakes in this research, and the stories I tell about myself, my relationship to integrated dance and my disability communities have changed dramatically. In this writing, however, I have tried to center the knowledges and experiences of the dancers/researchers[2] who participated, in no small part because it will take me years to unpack the complexities of impairment, disability, compulsory able-bodiedness and passing[3] in my life.

I am a living example of the way disability is constructed and how the line between disabled and nondisabled is unclear (McRuer, 2006). Despite my integrated dance community's disavowal of diagnosis, access to diagnosis was the only thing that allowed

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[2] I use dancers/researchers to reflect the ways the artists who contributed to this research drew and reflected upon their artistic knowledge and skills to create new knowledge. It also reflects their agency as co-researchers and artistic collaborators.

[3] Passing, first used by critical race scholars (Piper, 1995) and now used in relation to gender, sexuality, and disability (Schlossberg, 2001) describes the performance of an identity not one's own. To 'pass' that performance must be successful in the eyes of others.

me to be read as disabled. I exist in the world much as I did before diagnosis. I make the same art, hold the same politics, relate to other members of my community much the same way. But without diagnosis, there was no way to celebrate what I did as non-normative, as crip, because without diagnosis I *was (and still am?)* normative.

Because of the difficulties defining disabled and nondisabled, I have deliberately tried to write this dissertation from what Shotwell (2016) terms a *critical disability praxis*. A critical disability praxis does not depend on stable identities or shared experiences. Creating a critical disability praxis involves seeking out practical, concrete ways of engaging in the world that contribute to self-determination and co-created freedoms (Shotwell, 2016). When I use the words disabled, nondisabled, and integrated dance (which implies a binary distinction between disabled and nondisabled people), I do it with the understanding that these categories are unstable and that access to disability identity can be a marker of racial and economic privilege (Gorman, 2013). Indeed, I found that a critical disability praxis was called for, not just by my own experiences, but by the experiences of the dancers/researchers who participated in this project. Often, we found that the determining factor in dancers/researchers' access to a particular skill or practice of timing was experience or training rather than impairment (although disabled people can experience significant barriers to training).

I also write in ways that mirror both the rehearsal/research process and the way my brain prefers to function. Like many people with NVLD, I find linear thinking challenging (Molenaar-Klumper, 2002). I can easily see patterns and connections between disparate elements, and sometimes patterns and connections that others will struggle to grasp. This is useful when choreographing, since dance, especially

contemporary and postmodern dance, often does not follow a linear narrative. It is less useful when writing a dissertation. So instead of starting at the beginning of our rehearsal/research process and proceeding from there to the end, in the pages that follow I move freely through time. I focus on moments in the research/rehearsal process that caused me to reflect deeply, often drawing together moments across the rehearsal/research process that shifted my thinking about timing in the integrated dance rehearsal process.

The research process constantly surprised me. Over the course of the research I abandoned my original research question, my original theoretical orientation, and my assumptions about why we were doing this research. I realized I held the assumption that access meant making things either possible or easier for the dancer/researchers and discovered through the course of the research that access was far more than that. I came to understand that excluding performance from my data collection was a mistake because of the importance the dancers/researchers placed on it.

The only part of my initial research plan that I did not abandon was my commitment to an arts-based methodology of participatory performance creation. As an artist, in a community of artists, creating and rehearsing has always been my way of making sense of the world (Conrad & Beck, 2016). Given universities' and researchers' often horrific histories of research on, but not with, disabled people (Dolmage, 2017), I believed it necessary to give my integrated dance community as much control as possible over the research process, necessitating my drawing on the principles of participatory action research (PAR). After consulting with members of the CRIPSiE community, I entered the research process primarily concerned with access to the skills of timing that I found

so difficult. What were we doing in integrated dance spaces that was different than what I'd experienced in normative dance spaces? What was the same? Was I alone in finding our practices of timing so difficult? Could we find ways to make our practices of timing more accessible for more dancers?

We investigated these questions once or twice a week between April 2nd and June 24th, 2017 and found some answers. But as we created and researched, I began to realize that while my fellow dancers/researchers cared deeply about the questions I've raised above, they cared about this for very different reasons than I thought. I assumed they cared about access to these skills because of internalized ableism[4], because of a desire to dance in normative ways. I care about normative dance – despite years in the integrated dance community, I still find joy in training in normative spaces and still find myself wanting to embody many of the ideals of normative dance. What this research taught me was that the dancers/researchers did care about normative ways of practicing timing, but they cared because those normative ways of practicing timing *made them feel good*. The normative skills of timing put us in embodied relationships with each other that made us feel good, made us feel close.

I understand this form of connection as what Mingus calls access intimacy. "Access intimacy is that elusive, hard to describe feeling when someone else "gets" your access needs" (Mingus, 2011b, para. 4), an embodied easiness when your access needs are met, or you are with someone who understands your access needs. Access intimacy is also the

[4] Internalized ableism is when disabled people incorporate the dominant understanding of disability as tragic and something to be avoided into their world-view (Kumari Campbell, 2009). Kumari Campbell (2009) suggested that internalized ableism takes two forms, the distancing of disabled people from each other (which CRIPSiE actively resisted through its cultivated diversity of artists), and the emulation of ableist norms.

feeling of closeness created through striving against inaccessibility (Mingus, 2011b). I grew interested in how practices of timing in the integrated dance rehearsal could possibly create these feelings of access intimacy. Access intimacy is a good feeling. The dancers/researchers clearly wanted to experience it and I wanted the dancers/researchers to feel good. To move together seemed to require a very particular 'getting' of each others' access needs. I began this research asking, how do professional integrated dancers practice timing in the rehearsal process? I realized instead the question we were asking was, how can professional integrated dancers create access and the conditions for access intimacy in their practices of timing in rehearsal?

I begin with a review of literature, then discuss my methodology and methods. I discuss access intimacy and Ahmed's (2016) theorization of wonder and then discuss the relationship between access to pace, precise counts, unison movement, structured improvisation, partnering, and access intimacy. I narrate our final improvisation score, illustrating how our investigations informed the final improvisation score. I discuss the ways of valuing this research both specific to performance ethnography (Alexander, 2005) and more generally (Leavy, 2018b). Finally, I conclude by returning to the complexity and difficulty that I gesture to here, but also to the reasons to continue to practice dance and access.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Integrated dance, bringing together disabled and non-disabled people, exists in relationship with normative Western concert dance (Cooper Albright, 1997). Integrated dance is not, however, a derivative of normative Western concert dance (Benjamin, 2010). I use normative Western concert dance to refer to the variety of Western dance forms performed for audiences such as ballet, modern and contemporary dance. Because of the similarities I have observed between the ways integrated dancers practice timing and the way normative Western concert dancers practice timing, I compare the literature on Western concert dance and on integrated dance. I divide the literature review among four major contexts in which dance artists engage – training, rehearsal, improvisation, and performance.

In addition, I reflect on the literature through my own embodied experiences of both normative Western concert dance and integrated dance. In doing so, I draw attention to the assumptions that researchers and practitioners make about dance, particularly the ways that practices of timing are taken for granted both in normative and integrated contexts. Pickard (2013) suggests that the purpose of dance training is to "make the unnatural natural" (p. 3), but that the role of the dance researcher is to draw attention to what is natural in the world of dance. Here, I draw attention to the aspects of timing that are natural within dance, particularly the use of extremes of fast and slow, precise counting, managing one's location within a score (the plan of movement, which can

encompass tightly choreographed steps or a relatively open improvisation score), and the temporal relationships created by partnering.

Training – Normative Western Concert Dance

Western concert dance assumes an ideal dancing body, which includes mastery of particular timing skills, such as the capacity to move very fast, very slow and in coordination with music and other bodies. Pickard (2013) describes what is desirable in the ballet body (and the dancing body in normative Western concert dance), listing "the ability to demonstrate technical competence, to be able to learn and embody movement quickly and eventually habitually, strength, flexibility, speed and stamina" (p. 4). Researchers of dance training using quantitative methods often focus on cross-training with the intention of improving some of these aspects of dancers' performance. Interventions intended to increase dancer's aerobic capacity (Angioi, Metsios, Twitchett, Koutedakis, & Wyon, 2012; Rafferty, Redding, Irvine, & Quinn, 2007; Wilcosky, 2011) and strength (Angioi, Metsios, Twitchett, Koutedakis, & Wyon, 2012; Brown et al., 2007) implicitly aim to improve dancers' ability to produce precise timing and embody extremes of fast and slow.

Researchers conducting qualitative studies of dance training are interested, like researchers using quantitative methods, in improving dancers' performance (Hutt, 2011), but are also interested in what training could reveal about the social world of dance (Aalten, 2005; Wainwright & Turner, 2004, 2006). Hutt (2011) advocates for the use of somatic training, which emphasizes the dancers' perception and experiences of their internal sensations while moving. Researchers also investigate dancers' relationships to

pain and injury in training (Aalten, 2005; McEwen & Young, 2011; Wainwright & Turner, 2004, 2006; Wainwright, William & Turner, 2006). Only two of the researchers who examine dance training from a qualitative perspective mentioned timing. Both conducted ethnographies of ballet training (Clark, 2013; Pickard, 2012). Pickard (2012) examines the formation of adolescent dancers' identities as ballet dancers at a pre-professional ballet school. Pickard (2012) makes particular note of the rigid temporal structure of ballet class. Ballet class took place at specific times in the week and followed a strict progression from barre work (movement performed holding a barre at the edge of the room) to adagio (slow movement without the barre) to allegro (quick movement without the barre). While Pickard investigates pre-professional adolescent dancers, Clark (2013) conducts a case study of a recreational ballet class to understand the role of ballet in adolescent girls' lives. Approaching ballet class through Foucault's theory of discipline, Clark finds that while dancing, "Being out of time was constructed as making a significant mistake and an act of non-compliance" (p. 127). These researchers (Clark, 2013; Pickard, 2012) find timing is one of the ways ballet dancers' bodies are disciplined by ballet. Clark, like Pickard, examines temporal discipline primarily through the structure of the ballet class, rather than the movement content of the class.

The most in depth discussion of timing in normative Western concert dance training that I have been able to locate is within the field of dance history. Foster (1998) traces the emergence of the narrative action ballet at the Paris Opera from the 1770s to the 1840s. Discussing ballet training in the 1770s, Foster notes that, at that time, ballet masters usually played music to accompany their own lessons and that developing musicality, or the fit the dancer created between the movement and the music through time, was

considered a major goal for ballet training. Throughout the development of the narrative action ballet music was always the external regulation of the dancer's timing, and over this time period tempos increased as the virtuosic quality of ballet dancing became more and more important. This practice of regulating dancers' movement through music has persisted, as reflected in Clark's (2013) research findings. Timing is significant to normative Western concert dance training.

Training – Integrated Dance

Researchers of normative Western concert dance generally study professional or vocational level dancers (Angioi, Metsios, Twitchett, Koutedakis & Wyon, 2012; Redding, Irvine & Quinn, 2007; Wilcosky, 2011). In contrast, researchers (Argzolou et. al., 2013; Cone & Cone, 2011) of integrated dance generally engage with therapeutic or recreational contexts. The literature on integrated dance is generally located in the disciplines of adapted physical activity (APA) (Argzolou et. al., 2013; Moraru, Hodorca & Vasilescu, 2014), education (Cone & Cone, 2001; Østern & Øyen, 2015; Zitomer, 2013), and dance studies (Cooper Albright, 1997; Kuppers, 2015). Much of the research on dance in APA focuses on dance as an intervention to improve cardiovascular fitness (Argzolou et al., 2013; Tsimaris et al., 2010), strength (Moraru, Hodorca & Vasilescu, 2014), or mental health (Murrock & Graor, 2014). There is no mention of timing in any of these studies, although interventions intended to improve cardiovascular fitness (Argzolou et al., 2013; Tsimaris et al., 2010) likely involve participants moving at speeds faster than their everyday tempo.

Qualitative researchers in APA use dance programs to investigate lived experiences of disability. Goodwin, Krohn, and Kuhnle (2004) investigate the lived experiences of dancers and their parents in a wheelchair dance program. They find the program provided both the children and their parents with a strong sense of community, acceptance and pride. The accepting space of the wheelchair dance program is contrasted with the students and parents' experiences of ableism outside the program. Similarly, Bjorkbaekmo and Engelsrud (2011) conduct participant observation with a group of children exploring improvisation as an alternative to benchmarked motor skill development in a rehabilitation setting. Using phenomenology, the researchers analyze the children's experiences, revealing the tensions between the practice of improvisation and the children's previous movement experience and how *saying yes* created a space of ethical responsibility, mutual trust, and freedom. In both studies, the dance space enables alternate ways of moving, and is opposed to the ableism and difficulties of the outside world. The specifics of the alternative ways of moving, whether the shape, flow, quality or timing of the movement are not discussed by either Goodwin et al. or Bjorkbaekmo and Engelsgrud since their focus is on experiences of ableism rather than the specifics of dance movement.

Much of the research on integrated dance from education is concerned with how to successfully teach an integrated dance class (Bisson, 2005; Block & Johnson, 2011; Cheesman, 2011; Cone & Cone, 2001; Dinold & Zitomer, 2015; Østern & Øyen, 2015; Stran & Hardin, 2002; Zitomer, 2013, 2017). Researchers propose a number of strategies such as challenging one's assumptions (Bisson, 2005), prioritizing upper body movement (Stran & Hardin, 2001), and establishing close relationships with students (Zitomer,

2017). Only Dinold and Zitomer (2015) explicitly address time. Dinold and Zitomer (2015) emphasize that, "like space, time needs to be carefully taught not only in terms of measuring movement speed, but also in terms of understanding that different students may need different amounts of time to execute varied movements" (p. 47). Integrated dance may require a certain variability, or flexibility of time.

Researchers who examine vocational integrated dance training programs (Aujla & Redding, 2013, 2014; Brand, Lindsay, Neelands & Freakley, 2011) find significant barriers to disabled students engaging with dance training at a level intended to prepare them for a professional career. Aujla and Redding (2013) identify training barriers (lack of technical training, movement content of the training that does exist, and teachers' lack of knowledge), logistic barriers (finances, care and support, and transportation), and attitudinal barriers (the belief that dance is not an appropriate or possible activity for disabled people). Having mapped the barriers to vocational training, Ajula and Redding (2014) then interview existing expert teachers, choreographers and former integrated dancers on how they identified and nurtured talented disabled dancers. They identify a number of strategies, including giving multiple auditions to enable dancers to demonstrate their learning ability, providing dancers with more time and repetition of materials in class, and setting high standards for technique and improving physical fitness. Providing dancers with more time and repetition suggests that disabled dancers may need more time to acquire skills than non-disabled dancers, but why this might be the case is not explored.

Brand, Lindsay, Neelands, and Freakley (2011) conduct ethnographies of two vocational acting and one vocational dance programs integrating disabled students. They

find that although all three programs develop useful pedagogical practices and tools, there is an ongoing tension between tolerance of mistakes, learning, and the standards of excellence demanded by vocational training in the performing arts. Brand et al. (2011) are not specific about the standards of excellence. From my own training in theatre and dance, it is my understanding that these standards of excellence (for both acting and dance) include sensitivity to, and control over, one's timing. In summary, of all the reviewed studies on integrated dance training, only two studies mention timing directly. Aujla and Redding (2014) suggest that educators should offer disabled students more time and repetition to allow them to master dance skills. Dinold and Zitomer (2015) indicate that timing in a recreational integrated dance may require flexibility and variability, suggesting that time and timing in integrated dance may be a fruitful avenue of study.

Rehearsal – Normative Western Concert Dance

In normative Western concert dance, rehearsal processes are distinct and separate from class. Class is for training and skill development. Rehearsal is the use of the skills developed in class in preparation for performance. In practice, I find that rehearsal is also a space of skill acquisition, but that skill acquisition is focused around the performance. For example, when choreographing and coaching dancers in a rehearsal context, I would not ask them to master a particularly difficult skill on both the left and right sides of the body, but only ask them to practice the skill on the side required by the performance. If I was teaching in a normative context, I would feel responsible for preventing injury

(Kimmerle, 2010) and promoting dancers' skill acquisition, leading me to teach the skill on both sides of the body.

The distinctions and overlap between rehearsal and training is an under-studied area, as I have only been able to locate two qualitative ethnographies of normative Western concert dance rehearsal processes (Hamera, 2007; Wulff, 1998). Hamera (2007) investigates technique, the shared understanding of how particular movements are performed, as a method of communication within a dance community through the rehearsal processes of a pre-professional ballet school and a contemporary dance company. Wulff (1998) researches power within the world of major national ballet companies. Neither Hamera nor Wulff make explicit mention of timing, although timing is inherent to both their studies. I know from experience that the techniques Hamera engages with all have expectations about timing built into the technique. Wulf finds that professional ballet dancers often exert agency by changing steps in performance. Changing steps would either require the dancer to fit new steps to the tempo of the old steps or to alter the timing of that section of movement. Both these options require significant timing skills. Hamera and Wulf offer insights into dancers' lives and take seriously the embodied knowledges that dancers possess. Timing within their studies, however, is tacit knowledge that neither Hamera, nor Wulf, nor their informants directly discuss.

Rehearsal – Integrated dance

Researchers examining the integrated dance rehearsal process come from a wide variety of perspectives including leisure (Eales & Goodwin, 2015; Eales, 2013; Irving &

Giles, 2011), disability studies (Quinlan & Bates, 2014), and dance studies (Quinlan & Harter, 2010). Most researchers utilize ethnography to explore disability (Irving & Giles, 2011; Quinlan & Harter, 2010; Quinlan & Bates, 2014; Hickey-Moody, 2008) and identity (Eales, 2013; Eales & Goodwin, 2015). Quinlan and Harter (2010) and Quinlan and Bates (2014) conduct ethnography with the Dancing Wheels of Cleveland. For dancers with the Dancing Wheels, 'successful' choreography means prioritizing the movement of dancers who use wheelchairs. In doing so, choreographers create works that celebrated disability as a source of creativity (Quinlan & Harter, 2010). Quinlan and Bates (2014) employ the Deleuzian concept of assemblage to describe the dancers using wheelchairs. Assemblage emphasizes shifting, changing relationship among heterogeneous elements (Deleuze & Guttari, 1987). They argue that dancers using wheelchairs are a cyborg mixture of mechanical, human and animal and suggest that when there is an "over-intensification" (para 15), the cyborg breaks down, and the capacities of the cyborg dancer are diminished. For Deleuze and Guttari (1987), drawing attention to the capacities of an assemblage is a way to move away from individualized, essentialized understandings of identity . While the use of assemblage to analyze dance offers intriguing possibilities for thinking beyond an analysis of an individual dancer, Quinlan and Bates (2011) only consider individual dancers and their capacities to perform in normative ways in the rehearsal process by not disrupting the rehearsal and replicating their choreography. Neither Quinlan and Harter (2010) nor Quinlan and Bates (2011) mention timing in their research.

Strikingly, Hickey-Moody (2008), Eales (2013), and Irving & Giles (2011) all refer repeatedly to time and timing. Like Quinlan and Bates (2014), Hickey-Moody (2008)

also uses Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of becoming - movement within assemblages that create new relationships - to explore how integrated dance informs dancers' subjectivities and potentially shifts spectators' subjectivities. Hickey-Moody sees temporality in dance-theatre texts as contributing to the process of subjectivity reformation and negotiation. Intellectually disabled people bring their embodied histories, their lifetimes, to the rehearsal process and the stage, negotiating their subjectivities through dance. Hickey-Moody also details the rehearsal schedule and comments on the limitations of short rehearsal times in a new performance space. These reflections on the rehearsal schedule, which proceeded through three distinct periods are evocative, but under-considered details, of Hickey-Moody's time in the field. For Hickey-Moody, time in dance is practical scheduling (the details of the rehearsal schedule) and life narratives (the embodied histories and subjectivities created on stage).

In the Canadian context, Eales (2013) traces how twelve dancers with a wide range of embodied and neurological diversity explored social justice, using dance ethnography. For Eales' dancers, time was implicated in accessibility. Eales mentions dancers missing rehearsals because of illness or other commitments and the significant time required to take accessible transit. Time is also noted as a major barrier to higher education for three of the dancers involved in the study. The number of mentions of time in Eales' work, especially in connection to issues of accessibility suggests that time plays an important role in accessibility. Eales, however, does not explicitly discuss dance timing as an element of accessibility in the integrated dance rehearsal process.

Irving and Giles (2011) discuss competing discourses of dance in a Canadian integrated dance company. Timing emerges as a significant challenge to accessibility and

professionalization. At the time of Irving & Giles' study, the company was in the process of shifting to using set choreography, as opposed to improvisation. It was not clear who, or what, initiated this shift in practice, but Irving and Giles document that set choreography requires extensive rehearsal, repetition, and time-commitment from the dancers, perhaps because of the demands of memorizing movement. With the adoption of set choreography, dancers experience doubts about whether they could replicate the precise timing and speed required. Irving (2011) notes that as they trained in integrated dance, "I had a very difficult time abandoning my previous notions of what a dance piece should look like and I often found myself…asking my teachers for the counts" (p. 93). Speed and precise timing, achieved through counts (the practice of assigning numbers to both movements and musical beats), is what dance "should look like" (Irving, 2011, p. 93). Precise timing and speed are standards of excellence in Western concert dance, and these standards of excellence were relevant to the integrated dancers in Irving & Giles' study. For these artists, integrated dance exists in ongoing relationship to normative Western concert dance (Cooper Albright, 1997). The integrated dancers negotiate normative Western concert dance standards of professionalism and excellence, including standards of timing.

It is worth noting that all the companies discussed here are working with some elements of set choreography that must be memorized and this includes memorizing the timing of the movement. In contrast, improvisation, particularly contact improvisation, is often offered as an accessible alternative to normative Western concert dance technique (Benjamin, 2002; Novack, 1990).

Improvisation – Normative Western Concert Dance

Improvisation in normative Western concert dance is associated with the rise of postmodern dance (Gere, 2003) in the 1960s and 1970s. Post-modern dance used everyday movement, particularly walking, as the basis for dance and moved away from narrative choreography to abstract, procedure and task-based choreography (Banes, 1980). Untrained bodies performing dance were an important part of the egalitarian and democratizing values of post-modern dance (Banes, 1980). Alongside these developments, improvisation began to develop as a dance technique (Foster, 2002a). De Spain (2003) defines improvisation in the Western concert dance context as, "non-choreographed, spontaneous dancing as developed and practiced within the modern and post-modern dance traditions of the United States and Europe" (p. 37). Improvisation, as non-choreographed, spontaneous dancing, exists in many dance forms outside the traditions of Western concert dance including tap (Valis Hill, 2003), flamenco (Heffner Hayes, 2003) and bharatanatyam[5] (Meduri, 2003).

In the 1960s and 1970s, white dance artists appropriated African American aesthetics and practices along with Asian philosophies, particularly Zen Buddhism, to develop Western dance practices of improvisation (Foster, 2002). Western concert dance improvisation practitioners did not, however, incorporate the emphasis African American dancers placed on establishing a relationship with the music (Carlozzo, 2016), as Western concert dance improvisation was, and is, often practiced in silence. The broad genre of improvisation also contains contact improvisation, a form of improvisation developed by Steve Paxton, which brings two or more practitioners into physical contact to explore relationships through touch and weight (Novack, 1990). In addition to the above, many

[5] Bharatanatyam is a major style of Indian classical dance that originated in southern India.

researchers (e.g., Cooper Albright, 2003b; Foster, 2002, 2002b; Novack, 1990) focus on documenting the history of improvisation in North America and contextualizing it in relationship to performance art and visual art movements.

Other researchers document the reflections of major improvisation artists on the practice (De Spain, 2014), or their own experiential reflections on the practice of improvisation (Harrop, 2014; Hunter, 2011; Marchant, 2015; Pallant, 2006; Sacro-Thomas, 2013). Batson and Sentler (2017), improvisation practitioners and teachers, conduct a pilot study with vocational dance students on the effects of tactile-kinesthetic improvisation prompts and visual prompts in group improvisation. Biassutti (2013) interviews dance teachers to determine the value of improvisation in dance classes and finds that improvisation is used to teach expression, the personalization of technique and a wide range of motor, cognitive, and communication skills.

Working in psychology, Lucznik (2015) analyzes how psychological models of creativity apply to improvisation. Savrami (2017) uses the theory of enaction, which explores how individuals perceive and then match their actions to the situation, to explain dancers' decision making processes in improvisation. Also working within the discipline of psychology, Himberg, Laroche, Bigé, Buchowski and Bachrach (2018) document their research process for exploring kinesthetic togetherness in improvisation. From a socio-cultural perspective, Goldman (2010) analyzes multiple sites of dance improvisation, including salsa in 1950s New York and contact improvisation in the 1960s to consider class and race in improvisation. Midgelow (2012) conducts a post-structuralist examination of improvisation as nomadic ethics (Braidotti, 2011).

Within this body of research, there is an ongoing tension between the way researchers characterize improvisation as misunderstood and the 'truth' of improvisation, both by researcher/practitioners reflecting on the practice (Cooper Albright, 2003b) and researchers examining improvisation from a sociocultural perspective (Goldman, 2010). Improvisation is understood by some as being without technique (Foster, 2003), but actually requires rigorous practice and skill (Gere, 2003; Foster, 2003). Improvisation is thought to be free of constraints (Cooper Albright, 2003b; Goldman, 2010) but in reality, it means negotiating physical technique, social norms, aesthetic traditions, and power relations (Foster, 2002). These tensions within the literature also concern timing. Improvisation in forms such as tap and flamenco places value on the dancer being able to draw on an established movement vocabulary to play with the rhythm and structure of the musical accompaniment (Heffner Hayes, 2003; Hillis, 2003). In post-modern improvisation and contact improvisation practitioners can, like other forms of normative Western concert dance, embody extremes of fast and slow, but there is less emphasis on a relationship to the music, if there is any musical accompaniment (De Spain, 2014).

Improvisation also makes use of scores. Scores provide a series of constraints or movement prompts to which dancers create individualized responses (Keefe, 2003). Scores can change over the course of an improvisation or can remain in place for its entirety. For example, a score might specify that dancers begin by exploring rolling movement as they enter, travel through, and then exit the dancing space. Once every dancer has crossed the space at least once the dancers will re-enter and dance duets with a focus on exploring levels (high, medium, and low). Or the score could simply be to find a partner and dance a duet with attention to the use of space. Open improvisations,

improvisations with few constraints, are considered extremely challenging (Østern, 2009), because all elements of improvisation are being used and all options are open to dancers (Alessi, 2017).

Improvisation, particularly contact improvisation, is consistently cited as a dance technique that embraces disabled and nondisabled people (Banes, 2003; Cooper Albright, 2003a; Pallant, 2006). As improvisation is positioned as a particularly accessible dance technique, I turn now to the literature on improvisation and integrated dance.

Improvisation – Integrated Dance

Many of the researchers who celebrate the accessibility of improvisation, and in particular, contact improvisation, reference Alessi's (2017) DanceAbility method of teaching (Banes, 2003a; Cooper Albright, 2003a; Pallant, 2006). DanceAbility is a method of teaching improvisation that is intended to "allow anybody and everybody's movement to emerge" ('DanceAbility Teacher Trainings', n.d). Alessi contextualizes DanceAbility as emerging from postmodern dance's commitment to the idea that anybody can dance. He states, "The philosophy of contemporary dance at that time was that all people could dance, but not many were really practicing that"[6] (as cited in Weiderholt, 2015, para. 11). DanceAbility takes the commitment to all bodies and minds dancing seriously. Herman and Chatfield (2010) conduct a survey of DanceAbility teachers, finding that 75% of the teachers who trained in the DanceAbility method taught classes, 62% performed, and 54% choreographed in mixed ability settings. Teacher

[6] Alessi (2017) has noted that he began developing the DanceAbility methodology because he realized that contact improvisation was not inclusive enough to include everyone. Contact improvisation requires touch and weight and for some people touch and weight was impossible.

trainees come from around the world, although most teachers are from Europe or the United States. Alessi (2017) explicitly addresses timing in his DanceAbility syllabus. Time, along with sensation, relation, and design are the basic elements of improvisation in the DanceAbility system. Alessi (2017) often emphasizes ownership and decision making around one's own timing, particularly that dancers should learn to make clear, conscious decisions about their personal timing and not allow music to determine their timing in improvisation.

DanceAbility is not the only system for teaching improvisation to disabled and nondisabled people. Østern's (2009) doctoral research is concerned with meaning making in the Dance Laboratory, an improvisation (primarily contact improvisation) based dance class and company in Norway. Østern approaches the Dance Laboratory and the meaning the dancers create through a combination of Merleau-Ponty's (2012) phenomenology and Meirzow's (1991) transformative pedagogy. Østern concludes that because of the way dance improvisation asks dancers to encounter each other, especially in spaces with disabled and non-disabled dancers, it must be taught through transformative pedagogy. In the context of the Dance Laboratory transformative pedagogy means that dancers are encouraged to be their authentic selves and to be curious about their fellow dancers' unique experiences and points of view. This enables dancers to learn and create as individuals, not as people who are disabled or non-disabled.

Beyond references to integrated dance in surveys of improvisation (Cooper Albright 2003a; Banes, 2003a) and Herman and Chatfield's (2010) research on DanceAbility, the only publications on improvisation in integrated dance that I have been able to find are how-to manuals (Alessi, 2017; Benjamin, 2002; Kaufman, 2006). Across both academic

and practical publications, discussions of improvisation often emphasize the creative "problem-solving" (Østern, 2009, p. 197) elements of improvisation. Benjamin (2002) also frames improvisation as problem solving emphasizing dancers' creative responses to constraints or tasks in improvisation scores. While movement improvisation may be a more accessible form of Western concert dance than ballet, research on improvisation in integrated dance contexts, particularly the role of timing in improvisation, is a rich area of study waiting to be developed.

Performance – Normative Western Concert Dance

Researchers who analyze Western concert dance performance tend to focus on and explore the relationship between the movement and categories of identity, such as gender, race and sexuality (Barber, 2015; Foster, 2001; Mideglow, 2007; Morris, 2001; Mumford, 2004). In particular, researchers focus on exceptions to the white, slim, heteronormative ideal dancing body. Their analysis strategies cross genres of dance from ballet to contemporary and although the focus is on difference, timing is almost never mentioned. Dancing bodies that are not white, slim and heteronormative are still highly able and can therefore conform to the precise timing and extremes of fast and slow that Western concert dance demands of dancers.

Midgelow (2007) considers adaptations of canonical ballets, particularly *Giselle* and *Swan Lake*, as a means to engage with gender, sexuality and race. Foster (2001) also uses an analysis of Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake*, a contemporary adaptation notorious for recasting the swans, traditionally danced by women, with men, as a jumping off point to consider homosexuality and its disavowal in the history of modern dance and

contemporary ballet. Both Midgelow (2007) and Foster (2001) examine narratives and casting choices in their work.

Desmond Richardson's performances as the lead dancer of Complexions Contemporary Ballet and the intersections of virtuosity black masculinity and queerness are the subject of Osterweis' (2013) research. Richardson embodies a queer virtuosity through extreme flexibility, usually a marker of female virtuosity. Osterweis (2013) introduces the term, 'choreographic falsetto', drawing parallels between Richardson's dance and post-soul singers such as Prince. In both Richardson's and post-soul singers' technique, queerness is marked by embracing a virtuosity that is understood as feminine – for Richardson, extreme flexibility and for Prince, falsetto (Osterweis, 2013). Burt (1995) selects a number of significant choreographers in the twentieth century to examine the portrayal of masculinity, particularly in relation to homosexuality, in Western concert dance. Burt's case studies include Nijinsky, a ballet dancer and choreographer, widely considered the best male dance of the early twentieth century, Shawn, an early modern dancer who founded an all male company and Paxton, the originator of contact improvisation. Researchers (Burt, 1995; Midgelow, 2007; Osterweis, 2013) who examine ballet performances from the canonical to the contemporary were concerned with gender, sexuality, and race, particularly through examining exceptions to the slim, white, heteronormative hyper-able bodies usually dancing ballet.

In contemporary dance, Fernandes (2001) and Mumford (2004) scrutinize the layering of images in Pina Bausch's oeuvre for portrayals of gender and gender relations. Gonzales (2007) delves into the tight, close formations of the Urban Bush Women in *Shelter* and *Praise House* to understand the kinds of collective utopias that could be

imagined by women of colour working together. Also examining race, Barber (2015) analyzes *Ghostcatching,* a collaboration between Bill T. Jones and the OpenEndedGroup, a mixed-media visual arts collective in which Jones' movement was mapped into abstract projections through motion-capture technology. Barber (2015) argues that *Ghostcatching* is an attempt by Jones to escape the 'defining' characteristic of his work, his body, which had become a symbol of black male homosexuality even before Mapplethorpe's[7] iconic photographs. Morris (2001) suggests Jones' identity is the central concern of his choreography, contrasting Jones' early solos such as *Everybody Works* and *Io* to Jones' duets with Arnie Zane such as *Blauvelt Mountain* and *Valley Cottage*. Jones' larger works, *Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land*, *D-Man in the Waters*, *Still/Here* and *Chapel/Chapter* explore homosexuality, AIDS, and what Morris identifies as the choreographic rejection of passing for straight. The narrative structure, however abstracted, of all these works is an object of analysis (Barber, 2015; Fernandes, 2001; Morris, 2011; Mumford, 2004). For all these researchers (Barber, 2015; Fernandes, 2001; Foster, 1998; Gonzales, 2007; Mumford, 2004) the narrative structures, the bodies of the dancers and the movement or technique are ways of examining identity.

Even with this intense concern for the identities of bodies on stage, there is little reflection on timing as an element of choreography, as a reflection of the capacities of the ideal body, or as an element of the identities explored onstage. All the bodies analyzed are highly able bodies, whose ability to embody extremes of fast and slow, to reproduce exact timing and to remember choreography or the score as required by normative Western concert dance, are taken for granted. Aside from one example (Banes, 2003), I

[7] Mapplethorpe was an American photographer whose work attracted controversy in the 1980s for its homoeroticism and depiction of BDSM practices.

have not been able to locate research where the choreographer's choices around timing are an area of analysis. Banes (2003) determines that in Judith Dunn's *Acapulco* the device of slowing down pedestrian movement served to "make things strange" (p. 6), allowing for reflection on the unexamined every-day. Banes' (2003) analysis unreflectively assumes there is a normative pace for movement. This assumption is mirrored in my experiences of normative Western concert dance rehearsals and performance. Choreographers and dancers talk unreflectively about 'slow' and 'fast', sharing a common understanding of a normative pace from which slow or fast deviates.

The only other researcher who mentions timing in normative Western concert dance performance is Kleege's (2014) writing on visual description of dance performance for blind and visually impaired audiences. Kleege (2014) became blind during the course of her adolescent training at the Graham school. From this lived experience she advocates that dance describers embrace a subjective, aesthetic approach to dance description. Among the arguments she uses is her point that the bare description of the movement without added performance by the dance describer cannot adequately convey the tempo of the movements.

It appears that the tempos, speeds, and timings of Western concert dance are assumed and only rarely considered in Western concert dance studies, whether by researchers studying training (Koutedakis & Jamurtas, 2004; Pickard, 2012), rehearsal (Hamera, 2007; Wulf, 1998), or performance (Banes, 2003; Barber, 2015; Foster, 2001). In the case of Kleege (2014), impairment, and inadequate accommodation through dance description, enabled her to realize the importance of timing to creating meaning, feeling and experience in dance performance.

Performance – Integrated Dance

Like the literature on Western concert dance performance, researchers of integrated dance performance often focus on dancers' bodies and the relationship between body and identity. Kuppers (2015) analyzes Raimond Hoghe's *Meinwärts* for its intersections of queerness, disability and loss. Ames (2015) examines *Capel*, a site-specific dance performance, determining that *Capel* made visible and located in physical space the marginality of Welshness and learning disability. Analyzing the work of Cleveland Dancing Wheels, Candoco, Light Motion and DanceAbility for their relationship to classical ballet and contemporary dance, Cooper Albright (1997) considers the ideal body and its relation to gender and disability. Much like in Irving & Giles' (2011) study, Cooper Albright (1997) found that there is tension in integrated dance between the desire to reject normative Western concert dance, and the desire to embody the ideals of normative Western concert dance. Cooper Albright (1997) does not explicitly discuss practices of timing but the ideals of timing in normative Western concert dance might be among the ideals that integrated dancers seek to embody.

Researchers also examine integrated dance film (Cheesman, 2014; Kuppers, 2001; Quinlan & Bates, 2008; Whatley, 2010). Kuppers (2001) examines *Einblicke* by Bliderwerfer and *Outside In* by Candoco to explore public social performance, including the performance of disability. Both *Einblicke* and *Outside In* take place in public spaces, highlighting performances of the everyday, particularly the ways disabled people are expected to perform disability as tragedy. *Einblicke* and *Outside In* question this construction of disability as tragedy, instead portraying disability as whimsical, joyous, and complex (Kuppers, 2001). Whatley (2010) determines that in *The Cost of Living* and

Chris and Lucy, disability is naturalized through a fantastical removal from the day-to-day world, and there is a collapse between the performers and the characters they play in the film.

Cheesman (2014) researches audience reception of short video clips of integrated dance. The researcher concludes that although integrated dance works with a wide range of bodies, all the bodies shown were thin, flexible and muscular. In addition, the disabled dancers risk perpetuating the trope of the 'super-crip,' someone who achieves amazing, super human feats thereby overcoming disability (Withers, 2012), through their movement quality (Cheesman, 2014). Similarly, Quinlan & Bates' (2008) textual analysis of Heather Mills' performances on *Dancing With the Stars* finds that Mills was portrayed through the trope of the super-crip.

All of these researchers (Ames, 2015; Cheesman, 2014; Cooper Albright, 1997; Quinlan & Bates, 2008) respond to integrated dance as an opportunity to question how disability and dance are portrayed. Kuppers (2000) describes this as part of the work of accessibility, to provide a "conceptual space for a 'stepping back' to see our cultural framings" (p. 129). Aesthetics of accessibility suggest that accessibility should be built into the performance of integrated dance (Jacobson & McMurchy, 2010). Kuppers (2000) advocates that access can be a strategy that choreographers and dancers use to question and complicate dominant narratives of disability. None of the researchers (Ames, 2015; Cheesman, 2014; Cooper Albright, 1997; Kuppers, 2001, 2015; Quinlan & Bates, 2008; Whatley, 2010) examine how timing influenced the way disability is portrayed in dance performance or film.

In conclusion, although timing is embedded in the practices of dance, both integrated (Dinold & Zitomer, 2015; Eales, 2013; Irving & Giles, 2011) and normative (Banes, 2003; Clark, 2013), it is taken for granted. Even in my experiences in a highly reflexive integrated dance community, we have rarely asked what timing contributes to the meaning of a dance piece. We occasionally ask how we can adjust pacing to make the movement more accessible, but not how pacing contributes dramaturgically. This failure to consciously analyze or account for how timing is used in dance is fascinating. That this failure is reflected in my own experiences of dance training, rehearsal and performance suggests that this is not only a gap in the academic literature, but also in artistic practice. Timing is practiced in training, rehearsal and performance, but Irving & Giles (2011) suggest that rehearsal is the place where practicing timing is valued and acquires particular stakes with the pressure of future performance. When I had concluded my review of literature, I asked *what are some of the ways professional integrated dancers practice timing in the rehearsal process?* The affective potential of timing, particularly the potential for access intimacy, was not something that was evident from my review of literature.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framing

Sara runs in a circle, counter clockwise, orbiting the rehearsal space. Her dark hair shifts from side to side as her feet strike the floor, ball first. Sheena is opposite her, moving in the same counter clockwise direction, but closing the distance between her and Sara as she runs, arms pumping.

I began this research assuming that normative Western concert dance and compulsory able-bodiedness/able-mindedness framed the way we engaged with timing in integrated dance. Compulsory able-bodiedness/able-mindedness refers to the ways able-bodiedness/able-mindedness is naturalized and enforced (Kafer, 2003). This means that able-bodiedness/able-mindedness is always assumed unless there are visible markers, such as mobility tools or white canes that indicate disability, and that able-mindedness/able-bodiedness is something for which people must constantly strive. I assumed the dancers/researchers were seeking the capacity to perform extremes of fast and slow, to perform the precision of unison movement and partnering, and to keep track of where they were in the choreography or the score in order to emulate the hyper-ability of normative Western concert dance. As I examined the transcripts of our rehearsals and the concluding email interview I realized I was wrong. The dancers/researchers were interested in an emotional connection to their fellow dancers/researchers through movement, a connection that they could access through their practices of timing.

Accessibility is one of the key values shaping Canadian disability arts and integrated dance (Equity Office, 2012). CRIPSiE, and the dancers/researchers also shared this concern with access and accessibility. I drew on the framework of *access intimacy* to name and explore the emotion the dancers/researchers were seeking with each other because of the importance that access and accessibility hold in the context of CRIPSiE. Both arts-based research and theory are tools to make us aware of patterns and meanings

that we might otherwise miss because of the assumptions we hold (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Rolling, 2013). I abandoned the theoretical orientation of compulsory able-bodiedness/able-mindedness (Kafer, 2003) in favour of access intimacy to make sense of the moments I learned the most from in the rehearsal/research process. In what follows, I contextualize access intimacy through: a brief selection of thought on time and timing; critical disability scholars' work on time; disability justice; affect theory; and, Ahmed's writing on emotion, particularly wonder.

Time and Timing

Adams (2004) writes, "All social theorists whether they take an objectivist or relativist position agree that the human condition and social life cannot be understood without an inclusion of time" (p. 64). Our cultural assumptions of time are so ingrained that it is often difficult to imagine other ways of understanding and practicing time. In North America we assume "clock time" (Adams, 2004, p. 4), in which time is a quantified resource in the capitalist economy.

Time is inherent and fundamental to capitalism. Marx (1906) writes, "The quantity of labour, however, is measured by its duration" (p. 45). The basis of capitalism is that labourers exchange their time for money. Factories, and the assembly line, where Marx observed capitalism, require a specific timing or pace. Ideally, for the factory owner, this pace is a swift one because the quicker the pace of the assembly line, the more product can be created for the same amount of money. This understanding of time as a commodity and a preference for a swift pace is embedded in North American culture

(Adams, 2004). Hassan (2007) argues that this desire for speed has only been intensified by globalization and virtually networked lives.

Clock time requires measuring time, turning it into a commodity that workers exchange for currency. Clock time is also social – it is about coordinating and therefore enabling particular relationships. Bastian (2012) writes:

> Arguably, the primary use of time within social life is to provide methods of enabling and managing the timing of encounters, meetings, tasks and activities. This can be seen through the wide array of calendars, schedules, timetables, and so on, that arise from social institutions, logistical systems, personal life, and communications systems (p. 24).

Humans use time to bring us together. Bastian's (2012) observations on the social purpose of time are echoed by researchers such as Zerubavel (1981, 1982), Durkheim (2001) and Adams (2004). In dance, time is used (along with space) to coordinate people and manage relationships. Time coordinates dancers in precise, second to second ways. Coordinating movement and managing bodies in motion on a second to second level is what I refer to as *timing*. All the practices of timing that we explored – pace, counting, unison work, improvisation scores, partnering – are used to form relationships, often relationships between dancers.

Disabled people's bodies and minds often do not conform to the requirements of capitalism and clock time (McRuer, 2006). In response, critical disability scholars have begun to theorize *crip time*, time as it is experienced by disabled people because of ableist, capitalist structures that assume the pace and productivity of an idealized, perfectly able person (Kafer, 2013). Crip time is theorized as slow compared to

normative time (Kafer, 2013; Kuppers, 2014; St. Pierre, 2015) but can also be faster than normative time (Price, 2015). Even in a world that valorizes speed, it is possible to be too fast. Ultimately, the pace of crip time is always different, out of sync with the normative pace assumed by capitalism.

In many ways, normative Western concert dance's emphasis on precise timing, encompassing a wide range of pace may exemplify the ideal normative, capitalist relationship to time. The ideal normative Western concert dancer is always precisely on time, always at a pace that is appropriate to the situation. Theorists (Kafer, 2013; Kuppers, 2014; St. Pierre, 2015) who work on crip time are primarily concerned with the relationship of disabled people's pace to the pace of normative time. As the dancers/researchers were more concerned with the felt relationships among them than with normative Western concert dance timing, I looked elsewhere – to theorization by disabled activists – to find an appropriate theoretical framework.

Access Intimacy and Disability Justice

In addition to academic theorization about crip time, disability activists also theorize the relationship of capitalism to disability and how to create a better, more accessible world. Disability justice and access intimacy are two of the concepts that have arisen from disability activism. Proponents of disability justice seek to center the experience and knowledge of disabled queers of colour, providing an intersectional understanding of ableism (Lamm, 2015). Disability justice proponents acknowledge and critique the disability rights movement for its focus on white, mobility impaired disability experiences and for its focus on rights that can be achieved through a legal framework

(Berne, 2015). Activists seek to highlight our collective interdependency and reject the idea that human beings must be productive to be worthy (Mingus, 2011b).

Berne (2015) sets out ten principles of disability justice: (a) intersectionality, acknowledging that each person has multiple community identifications, meaning that people have multiple experiences of oppression and identity that also inform their experience of disability; (b) leadership of those most impacted, which requires disability leadership while acknowledging that ableism operates alongside and within systems of class, white supremacy, colonialism and gender-based violence; (c) anti-capitalist politics, so disability is understood as being constructed by the exploitation of bodies in a capitalist economy; (d) commitment to cross-movement organizing, that involves interventions and investments in other social justice communities that shift how social justice movements understand and contextualize ableism; (e) recognizing wholeness, meaning that we value people for their inherent worth outside of capitalism; (f) sustainability, that values lived and embodied experience as an important guide to justice and liberation and the ongoing work for justice and liberation; (g) commitment to cross disability solidarity, which values the insights and participation of all members of the disability community; (h) interdependence, that prioritizes the liberation of the land and all people and that looks for ways to meet each others' needs; (i) collective access, which values bringing creativity and nuance to engaging with each other, allowing people to state their access needs without shame and have them met; and (j) collective liberation, in which no one is left behind. Disability justice is both "a vision and practice of a yet-to-be" (Berne, 2015, para 24), a way of practicing for the future in the present.

Access is central to disability justice because access, "is concrete resistance to the isolation of disabled people" (Mingus, 2011c, para. 3). Mingus (2011c) prioritizes connection and emotional relation with people with different lives and experiences in her imagining of how to create a better future. In Mingus' (2012) writing, I read echoes of Lorde's (1984) commitment to the complexity of intersectional lives and the importance of emotion as a source of knowledge and power. Lorde (1984) writes, "There is no such thing as a single issue struggle because we do not lead single issue lives" (p. 138). Similarly, Mingus (2018) writes, "When I think about what it means to be queer and Korean, I cannot separate it from all of who I am" (para. 9). Both Lorde (1984) and Mingus (2018) believe that engaging with the complexity of peoples' experiences, the complexity of systems of oppression, and forging relationships across these differences, is the way to shaping a better future. For Mingus (2011a) access is ultimately about relationship, the interdependency of all people. Access intimacy is the feeling that occurs when these relationships of interdependency are mutual and affirming, rather than mired in power dynamics inherent to ableism.

Access intimacy is, "that elusive, hard to describe feeling when someone else "gets" your access needs" (Mingus, 2011c, para 4). This definition of access intimacy is not complete. Mingus (2011c) writes, "This is in no way a complete describing of it, instead, this is an initial naming and the beginning of giving it shape" (para. 2). Access intimacy is a shared, experiential understanding of access, inaccessibility and ableism, an emotion experienced in relationship, and a sense of closeness, ease, and connection to one's body only experienced with particular people. It cannot arise when disabled people are the only people taking on the labour of making the world accessible (Mingus, 2011c).

Mingus (2011b) highlights the distinction between the *logistics* of access – which are necessary – and access intimacy, which goes beyond the logistics to create and deepen relationships. Access intimacy is a way to challenge ableism and turn access into a tool for disability justice (Mingus, 2017). It is "interdependence in action" (Mingus, 2017, para. 18), acknowledging that all people are dependent on each other, and that all relationships hold the potential for care, but also vulnerability. Access intimacy, as a part of disability justice whose proponents value investments in other social justice movements beyond disability, is available to all people (Luna, 2018; Mingus, 2011c), regardless of diagnosis or impairment. Access intimacy is when access enables deep, meaningful relationships.

Access intimacy also facilitates connection with oneself, particularly one's body. Mingus' (2018, 2017, 2011a) writing is marked by references to disconnection from her body. She writes, "I never felt like my body was my own. It always felt like someone else's" (para 23). She connects this feeling to growing up disabled, experiencing assault in medical settings and ongoing expectations about how she would manage her impairment. This sense of disconnect is echoed when Mingus (2011a) writes about having to constantly push past her limits because of the expectations of ableism, until she no longer knows where her boundaries were. Mingus (2011b) only speaks about a sense of connection with her body when speaking about access intimacy, conveying a sense of connection and ease with her body. For Mingus, access intimacy allows a joyful, easy sense of embodiment.

The work, and the distribution of the labour, required to build access and access intimacy is crucial. Mingus (2011a) reflects that to get access she often has to do

tremendous amounts of work. For Mingus (2011a) there is so much labour involved in creating access that it prevents the good feelings of connection and access intimacy. So it may take time and effort to build access intimacy, but ultimately access intimacy has to be a mutual, shared labour of love. Fundamentally, access intimacy connects people. It exists when the work and logistics to create access are shared amongst people and not assumed to be the responsibility of disabled people. It also connects people to their bodies. It is a good feeling, a feeling of connectedness through access.

Affect, Feelings, Emotions

Access intimacy is a feeling, or more specifically an emotion. While Mingus (2011b) writes from outside the academy and the lineages of critical theory, I see parallels between access intimacy and Ahmed's (2014) theorization of wonder. To discuss these similarities, I contextualize Ahmed's (2014) work within the larger tradition of affect theory. Ticento Clough (2007) identifies the emergence of scholarly work in the mid-1990s concerned with emotion, affect, feeling and trauma as "the affective turn" (p. 2). For Hardt (2007) the affective turn means an attention to causality – affect allows us to attend to both our own power to affect the world and to how the world affects us. Seigworth and Gregg (2010) trace the beginnings of affect theory to Massumi (1995), and Segwick and Frank (1995). Seigworth and Gregg (2010) see in these two distinct approaches to affect theory a rejection or complication of the linguistic turn, the early twentieth century focus in philosophy and the humanities on language. Proponents (Massumi, 1995; Sedgewick & Frank, 1995) of affect theory are interested in what lies outside of and beyond language including bodily sensation and emotion. I trace three

strands of affect theory as exemplified by Manning (2016), Berlant (2011) and Ahmed (2014), concluding by situating access intimacy in relation to Ahmed's (2014) theorization of wonder.

Manning (2016). Manning (2016) is primarily interested in affect as defined by Massumi (1995). Massumi argues that an excess of affect, an intensity that exceeds or precedes language, characterizes the moment he was writing in and therefore demands theoretical attention. To craft this theoretical language Massumi turns to Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and Spinoza (2000). For Massumi, emotion is different from affect. Emotion is the personal, socio-linguistic fixing of affect – essentially by naming the emotion we close down affect and give it a function and socio-cultural meaning.

Manning (2016) is interested in thinking through research-creation, neurodiversity, and affect in relationship to what she calls *the minor gesture.* The minor gesture draws upon Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) theorization of the minor. For Deleuze and Guattari becoming minor is a phase in deterritorialization, the process in which boundaries and borders lose authority. Becoming minor is associated with tight, cramped minority experiences under the pressure of majority. Becoming minor is not minority identity as Deleuze and Guattari reject identity, preferring to focus on becoming, the shifting and changing of relationships. For Manning the minor gesture problematizes and destabilizes the major, or the dominant.

Manning gives the examples of current structures of learning, like the university (not unlike Western concert dance), which presume neurotypicality and predefine and determine what knowledge is. In the university, often solutions and answers are known when problems or questions are posed. Manning advocates for better questions and

problems, particularly through research-creation, which she claims foregrounds practice and process over product. In this example, research-creation is the minor gesture within the university, disrupting and destabilizing what the university values as good research. Manning is also interested in the ways that what she calls *autistic perception* offers new ways of understanding and perceiving. She writes, "Rather than seeing the parts abstracted from the whole, autistic perception is alive with tendings that create ecologies before they coalesce into form" (p. 14). I read this as the ways different rates and ways of processing sensory information can offer and create unique relationships between parts as the whole becomes perceivable. To give an example from my own experiences, I usually have to listen to music repeatedly before the whole song become perceivable to me. On the first listen through I might catch a drum line or parts of the chorus, since both are repeated through pop songs. On the second listen I might understand more of the lyrics or hear specific instruments such as the piano line or the strings. The fact that I cannot understand or hear all of the song the first time means that as I listen to the song over and over, new relationships between parts of the song emerge and gain significance in ways that may be unique to me. Like research-creation, this process is unpredictable and the end results are uncertain. My way of listening is a minor gesture, creating something new and unexpected, within neurotypical society that assumes particular ways of sensory processing. This way of listening, however, is not valuable in the context of normative or integrated dance rehearsals where I may be expected to learn and match music and movements quickly. Like affect, the minor gesture exceeds boundaries and borders and is a process, rather than an end result. Both affect and the minor gesture, because they are

"more-than" (p. 31) and cannot be contained in systems and defined forms, can contribute to unfolding knowledge.

Berlant (2011, 2019). In contrast, Berlant (2011) is interested in emotion and the way emotion, often thought of as private, emerges in relation to the political. Berlant's approach to affect theory draws upon Sedgewick and Frank (1995). Sedgewick and Frank argue for the psychologist Tompkin's work delineating nine basic affects – shame, interest, surprise, joy, anger, fear, distress, disgust, and contempt – and investigating the biological basis of differentiating among these affects as an important new theoretical avenue.

The distinction here, between Massumi (1995) and Sedgwick and Frank (1995), is around the definition of affect. For Massumi there is a clear distinction between *affect*, the intensity unformed by cognition or socio-cultural meaning and *emotion*, the social cultural understanding and experience of affect. For Sedgewick and Frank affect is emotion. Massumi, and Sedgewick and Frank share the desire to move from a focus on language, but when they use affect, they mean very different things. This difference reflects their critical lineages. Massumi locates his work within process philosophy, meaning that he views change as fundamental to reality and categories, such as Tompkin's nine basic affects, as always unstable. Sedgewick and Frank write from a branch of queer theory that emphasizes the ways the constructed binary between heterosexuality and homosexuality is essential to understanding cultural works, making categorization important to how they see the world.

Berlant's (1997, 2011) work on emotion and affect, following Sedgewick, is concerned with the political and the everyday. Berlant is concerned with the

public/private divide and how emotions mediate or undermine the distinction between the public and the private. For example, Berlant (2011) traces what she terms *cruel optimism* through aesthetic documents like films, poems, and novels. Cruel optimism, "exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing" (p. 3). It is an emotional relation particular to the contemporary neoliberal world and involves dreaming about or investing in a fantasy of the good life, that for many, is no longer obtainable. Cruel optimism is a survival mechanism in the neoliberal world because it allows people to keep going, keep hoping, through precarity.

Cruel optimism is a condition that describes many ordinary lives. Berlant (2011, 2019) has an ongoing interest in the ordinary or everyday. In *The Hundreds*, Berlant and Stewart (2019) seek affect in the everyday. *The Hundreds* is so named because Berlant and Stewart (2018) set themselves the challenge of writing each section using one hundred words or multiples of one hundred. The writing often captures ordinary moments, focusing in on quotidian details and thought. Berlant and Stewart (2018) write, "What's happening activates a noticing competency and maybe even an impulse to be in what you didn't even know existed until just now" (para 1). Affect for Berlant and Steward (2018) is about noticing the emotional, sensorial impact of the everyday.

Ahmed (2014, 2017). Ahmed (2014) is interested in asking, "What do emotions do?" (p. 4). Similar to Berlant (2011), Ahmed is interested in the how the broader political context is both emotional and personal. Ahmed (2014) also constructs her understanding of emotions from a very different, and diverse set of theorists than Manning (2016) and Berlant (2011, 2019), including psychoanalytic theory, queer theory, and phenomenology. Rather than seeing emotions as something that resides in subjects or

objects, or that are caused by subjects and objects, Ahmed (2014) emphasizes that emotions are relational. They exist between subjects, and between subjects and objects. Emotions shape and move objects and subjects, and are also shaped by contact with objects and by culture and histories.

To explain this, Ahmed (2014) gives the example of a child encountering a bear and running away with fear. The encounter between the child and the bear is shaped by culture and histories – even if this is the first time that the child has met a bear, she knows that the bear is something to fear. The child's understanding of the situation makes the bear the source of the fear she feels. Ahmed writes:

> The child becomes fearful, and the bear becomes fearsome: the attribution of feeling to an object (I feel afraid because you are fearsome) is an effect of the encounter, which moves the subject away from the object. (p. 8)

Or, take the example of someone going to their first ballet class. Their feelings and relationship to the space of the dance studio is shaped by the cultural understandings of ballet that includes gender, race, sexuality, and ability. All these things have prompted this person to come to the studio, to move towards a relationship with ballet. Emotions often reorient subjects and objects, moving them towards each other or away from each other. This reorientation is shaped by the cultures and histories that influence our understanding of situations and therefore how emotion orients us.

Anger and frustration with practices of timing in both normative Western concert dance and integrated dance could have oriented me away from dance altogether. I felt particular anger and frustration in relation to CRIPSiE's practices of timing. After all, this was a space where we constantly discussed access needs and where it felt like access was

a key value, except when it came to practices of timing. At the same time love of dance, and the wonder I experienced in integrated dance, kept me engaged and oriented toward dance.

Ahmed notes that we are always entangled with the things that we are angry about, that we are trying to move away from. Looking to Lorde (1981), Ahmed reads anger as an opening to a new world, one that is different from the way things are. Lorde urges us not to be afraid of anger, but to view it as a useful response to racism. Anger contains information (Lorde, 1981). Anger enables Lorde to recognize fundamental differences between ourselves, particularly between white women and black women. Anger at the differences between the experiences of white women and black women can translate into action that furthers the cause of liberation from white supremacy. My anger and frustration with our practices of timing in integrated dance provided me with information – there was something about them that was inaccessible. My anger and love and frustration with integrated dance allowed me to question - why does timing have to be practiced in the ways it is practiced if it is so difficult? Were there better ways to practice timing? Could we transform our practices of timing?

Ahmed (2014) sees *wonder* as essential to the transformative possibility of feminism. Like anger, wonder is a way to see the world anew, since wonder is a departure from ordinary experience that allows us to see the world as if for the first time. Because we see the world anew, we are able to see its constructedness, and the historicity of the world. Ahmed writes, "wonder is about learning to see the world as something that does not have to be, and as something that came to be, over time, and with work. As such, wonder involves learning" (p. 180). Wonder, for Ahmed, is an important part of feminist

pedagogy. Wonder is a passion that can be passed between the people learning and studying Women's Studies. Wonder is a good feeling. It brings people together. Ahmed (2014) writes:

> Wonder opens up a collective space, by allowing the surfaces of the world to make an impression, as they become see-able or feel-able as surfaces. It is not so much that the feeling of wonder passes (so that I feel wonder, in the face of your wonder). Rather, the very orientation of wonder, with its open faces and open bodies, involves a reorientation of one's relation to the world. Wonder keeps bodies and spaces open to the surprise of others. (p. 183)

The surprise of others can be a pleasurable surprise, a welcome one. It allows us to circulate passion, and as Ahmed (2014) suggests, to remain open to hope and oriented to a future that is different from the present. In Ahmed's (2014) description of wonder I see an emotion working in similar ways to access intimacy. Through access intimacy, we see the inaccessibility of the world as something historically determined (Hamraie, 2017). Like wonder, access intimacy opens us up to each other, and to our bodies, and allows us to connect. Wonder and access bring people together. They are collective and relational. And like wonder, access intimacy involves learning.

Access Intimacy and Wonder

To examine our practice of timing in the integrated dance rehearsal I focused on the understanding of access intimacy as the feeling "when someone else "gets" your access needs" (Mingus, 2011c, para. 4). As we were actively assessing the accessibility and inaccessibility of our practices of timing and valued creating access, in this thesis I do not

engage with the access intimacy built by being with someone against the inaccessibility of the world. I have become convinced that access intimacy, in the context of practices of timing in the integrated dance rehearsal, functions in very similar ways to Ahmed's (2014) understanding of wonder. These parallels are the relationship of the body to wonder and access intimacy, the necessity of collaboration, and the importance of learning to both.

Both wonder and access intimacy involve good bodily sensations. Mingus (2011b) speaks about access intimacy in relation to being connected to her body, about, "the way your body relaxes and opens up with someone when all your access needs are met" (para. 4). Ahmed (2014) too, spoke about opening. For Ahmed (2014) wonder is a kind of bodily expansion. She writes, "The body opens as the world opens before it, the body unfolds into the unfolding of the world" (p. 180). Wonder opens up the body to the world, creating new, embodied entanglements and relations to the world.

This opening up brings people into relationship and collaboration. Access intimacy is not an emotion that can be experienced alone. It must exist in relationship. Wonder could be experienced alone, but wonder is key to the way feminism and women's studies connect people (Ahmed, 2014). Ahmed (2014) emphasizes that feminism must involve listening to and learning from other feminists.

Learning, for Ahmed (2017) is central to being a feminist and to the feminist work of the remaking the world. Wonder can be part of the pleasurable experiences of learning. Ahmed (2014) focuses in particular on the necessity not to take for granted the world as it is, that when we can see the world as constructed and the result of particular histories, we can imagine a different world. This disruption of the taken-for-granted is wonderous.

Likewise, access intimacy requires that we not take the inaccessibility of the world for granted and that we do not take our knowledge of each other for granted. Mingus (2017) is clear that access intimacy often involves tremendous practice and learning as access for any one person is complex and often changes.

The knowledge required to create the conditions for access intimacy to arise is not something that comes easily. Mingus (2010) discusses coordinating access for the disability justice track at the Allied Media Conference. She writes about the complexities of balancing multiple people's needs, pooling resources, and the necessity of relying on people's existing access knowledge and networks. She notes, "Trying to move with a group of disabled people *with different disabilities* is very hard, takes enormous amounts of problem-solving, energy and creative solutions" (Mingus, 2010a, para 11, italics in original). She points out the difficulties of organizing access for people she had never met, who all had access to different resources and different needs. Addressing these difficulties required learning what people needed, what people could offer, and figuring out ways to put that knowledge to use so everyone involved could experience access to the conference, and perhaps access intimacy. Mingus (2011a) notes, "When it [access intimacy] doesn't happen magically or organically it has been hard to create. It requires a lot of trust and faith and practice" (para 24). We need to learn about each other and ourselves, to create the conditions for access intimacy.

Mingus (2010a) often uses moving together, both literally and metaphorically to talk about creating access and solidarity between people. Access intimacy in integrated dance requires learning how to move with each other. Moving together, however, is not an easy thing to do. To create the conditions in the integrated dance rehearsal process that might

make access intimacy possible we needed to learn about the access needs of the dancers/researchers and use that knowledge to create a more accessible rehearsal process where all the dancers/researchers could move together.

When Mingus (2011b) writes about access intimacy she is writing about an emotion that exists in relationship, that brings people closer together. Bringing people together can be a political act. For Ahmed (2017), connection to other people is a way of surviving. Mingus (2011b) identifies access that brings people together and access intimacy as a way to resist the isolation that disabled people experience because of ableism. Access intimacy is a good feeling, a sensation of ease and connection to one's body and other people that can arise when one's access needs are met. To strive to create the conditions in which access intimacy might arise is a way of practicing disability justice, imagining and practicing for a better future in the present.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Circles, swirls of limbs, bodies in motion fill the space of our little rehearsal hall. I throw my voice out into the room, "Start to come back to something you want to hang on to". I see the energy drop, interrupted and diverted by my direction. Movements become smaller, less full. There are stops, pauses as the dancers/researchers try to set a phrase or remember something they did earlier in the improvisation. "Find an ending". We come into a little circle. I fish my phone out of my pocket and slide it into the center of the circle.

To answer the question, *what are some of the ways professional integrated dancers practice timing in the rehearsal process,* and to ultimately arrive at the question*, how can professional integrated dancers create access and the conditions for access intimacy in their practices of timing in rehearsal,* I needed to engage with my integrated dance community, CRIPSiE. My engagement with my community shaped the methodological decisions and the design of this research project, as my commitment to the values and practices of CRIPSiE were an important part of gaining access to this community as a researcher. In what follows I describe CRIPSiE, the arts-based research paradigm, and how participatory action research and performance ethnography informed my methodology of participatory performance creation.

Description of the Field: CRIPSiE

To understand the ways professional integrated dancers practiced timing in rehearsal, I engaged in a co-researcher relationship with dancers from CRIPSiE. CRIPSiE is a disability and integrated arts company focusing on dance and video in Edmonton. CRIPSiE was founded by Lindsay Eales and Roxanne Ulanicki in 2005 as iDance Edmonton and incorporated as CRIPSiE in 2013. CRIPSiE works with a diversity of

bodies and minds, aiming to "challenge dominant stories of disability and oppression through high-quality crip and mad art" ('CRIPSiE', n.d.)[8]. CRIPSiE positions itself as a "professionalizing" (Acton & Eales, 2015, p. 27) arts company to granting agencies and presenting organizations. It performs in professional and pre-professional festivals, collaborates with arts professionals, and is supported by municipal, provincial and federal funding intended both for professional and community arts organizations. These performance opportunities are part of what makes CRIPSiE a professionalizing arts company as the performances present CRIPSiE's work to the general paying public rather than friends and family.

Depending on the year, CRIPSiE works with 25 – 30 dancers, the majority of whom experience barriers to engagement with professional dance because of disability, queerness, race and body size (Acton, 2017). Most of CRIPSiE's artists have not had access to professional arts training, however, one of CRIPSiE's guiding values is that commitment to an artistic practice defines an artist, not ability or access to mainstream training. CRIPSiE is a community that has a history of creating knowledge through moving together and values the embodied processes of knowledge creation (Eales, 2013). CRIPSiE also includes people who may prefer to create knowledge through movement as opposed to spoken language, further contributing to making performance ethnography an appropriate research approach for this study (Eales & Peers, 2016). This is a community organized around art, specifically dance, leading me to locate this research in the arts-based research paradigm.

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[8] I use 'diversity of bodies and minds' to reflect the constructed nature of disability and that the diversity of CRIPSiE extended beyond disability to race, gender and sexuality (McRuer, 2006; Shotwell, 2016).

Arts-based Research Paradigm and Participatory Performance Creation

I was drawn to the arts-based paradigm because it resonated with me. I've always made art and art making has always been the way I've made sense of the world. Arts-based research is a way of making sense of the world through art. Researchers (Conrad & Beck, 2016) working in the arts-based research paradigm prioritize aesthetic creativity, meaningful research relationships, and the potential for transformative change to result from the research. The arts-based research paradigm is "grounded ontologically in a belief that we are all, at a fundamental level, creative and aesthetic beings in intersubjective relation with each other and our environment" (Conrad & Beck, 2016, p. 7). Arts-based researchers value multiple ways of knowing including linguistic, aesthetic, sensory and emotional knowledge (Conrad & Beck, 2016). Rollings (2010) describes this commitment to multiple ways of knowing as akin to poststructuralism in that arts-based research works to destabilize predetermined categories and allows us to recognize the discourses, language, institutions and power relations that shape us. A commitment and comfort with multiple ways of knowing was evident in the research/rehearsal process, for example, when the dancers/researchers drew movement inspiration from astrophysics, in the moment they pointed me to psychological research on the benefits of choral singing, and in the way one of the dancers/researchers reflected on her improvisation in relation to Csikszentmihalyi's (2014) theory of flow which describes an optimal creative state where an individual is fully immersed in their activity, leading to energized focus and heightened enjoyment.

Arts-based research is also based in "aesthetic knowing" (Leavy, 2018, p. 4). Conrad & Beck (2016) suggests that aesthetics is a sensory, perceptual and emotional knowing. While multiple approaches to aesthetics exists, this approach locates the value of art in the contributions it makes to human understanding (Graham, 2000). Since this study is based in an established integrated dance community, the aesthetic knowing is based in CRIPSiE and Canada's disability and integrated dance culture. Canadian disability and integrated arts draw on "aesthetics of access" (Jacobson & McMurphy, 2010, p. 8) where access is, "an integral part of the creative content and the artistic process from inception to presentation" (p. 8). As an arts-based research process with a focus on access, this research is based in aesthetic knowing recognized and valued by the CRIPSiE community.

Multiple ways of knowing also create space for relational knowledge to emerge. Relationality, an ongoing dialogic relationship among those involved in the creation of arts-based inquiry, is an important element of the axiology of the arts-based research paradigm (Conrad & Beck, 2016; Finley, 2011). This relationship is not always one of agreement, but it brings people together so they can learn about other ways of learning, understanding, creating and being in the world. These relationships then enable people to work collectively to imagine better, more socially just worlds (Conrad & Beck, 2016).

A Note on Terminology: Arts-Based Research and Research-Creation

The relationship between arts-based research and research-creation is still being established. Leavy (2018) notes that she adopts 'arts-based research' as "an umbrella category that encompasses all artistic approaches to research" (p. 4). This approach

would allow the term arts-based research to encompass research-creation. Chapman & Sawchuk (2012) identify "arts-based research" as one of a number of words used to describe research processes that integrate artistic creation, but also note that the two major bodies that use the term research-creation in Canada, the Social Studies and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Canada Council for the Arts, use the term in very different ways. Loveless (2015) locates the utility and pleasure of research-creation in its capacity to challenge disciplinary boundaries and what kinds of research are valuable or legible to the university. Loveless (2015) also notes, "As most readers will know, research-creation is the main term used in Canada to speak about arts-based research" (p. 52). Clearly there is a slipperiness between the terms arts-based research and research-creation. My choice to situate this research in arts-based research was deliberate. Arts-based research literature has clear affinities with participatory action research. Additionally, locating this research in arts-based research acknowledges CRIPSiE's previous experiences with arts-based research and more generally with creating dance as a way of learning about the world and ourselves.

Participatory Performance Creation

To enable relational, collaborative and transformative arts-based research, I developed a methodology that I call 'participatory performance creation'. 'Participatory' draws from participatory action research (PAR). 'Performance' acknowledges performance ethnography, and 'creation' reflects the valuing of the creation process (in this case the rehearsal process) as a site of knowledge generation. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe the arts-based researcher as a bricoleur, who "uses the aesthetic and material tools of his

or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand. If new tools or techniques have to be invented, or pieced together, then the researcher will do this" (p. 4). To conduct this study, I drew upon my knowledge as an integrated dancer and choreographer, informed by the tools of PAR and performance ethnography, piecing together the tools needed to conduct this research.

Participatory Action Research

In this participatory performance creation process, I drew on PAR for its use of overlapping and multiple stages of inquiry and action, and its axiological commitment to ethical community relations through every part of the research process. In PAR, research and action are not clearly separated and multiple stages of inquiry and action may be intertwined (McIntyre, 2008). Using a research process informed by PAR means the community members involved might wish to simultaneously map, critique and change their practices of dance timing. Ideally, community members are involved in determining the research question, determining the methods, collecting data, as well as analyzing and representing the research. McIntyre (2008), however, emphasizes the difficulty of maintaining community interest and involvement through every stage of research.

I discovered that in practice, this meant a research process that mirrored my experiences of rehearsal processes – messy, full of abandoned ideas, moments that never came to fruition, and answers to questions that we did not know we had. Sometimes all of us in the room were addressing different research/artistic questions. This multiplicity is typical of PAR (McIntyre, 2008). Mapping, critiquing, and changing our practices of dance timing involved examining multiple practices of timing. Individual

dancers/researchers negotiated the structure of each rehearsal with me and each other, but this left space for them to follow their individual interests and desires.

Like the arts-based research paradigm, PAR values ethical community relations (Conrad & Beck, 2016), suggesting that the community be centered in the research. Given that researchers using PAR desire to work with communities that are invested in research on issues of practical significance to the community, it is important that the research issue or question come from within the community (Heron & Reason, 1997; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Before embarking on this research, I informally consulted with members of CRIPSiE to determine if there was interest in examining practices of timing within the community. I had conversations with five different community members - two of whom joined the research project - who agreed to that practices of timing were an area that CRIPSiE had not thought critically about and that it was therefore a rich area of research. One community member, who did not ultimately take part in the research project, suggested to me that our practices of timing assumed able-bodiedness and that this research was urgently needed to transform our current practices. This project also passed CRIPSiE's own ethical review process in which CRIPSiE's artistic associates approved the research question and the research process. Additionally, the dancers/researchers were involved in data collection and initial data analysis. While I offered them the opportunity to be involved in the second round of data analysis and research representation, no interest was expressed. They were happy to be informed about my activities.

PAR is deeply concerned with changing the unequal power dynamics inherent in normative research processes (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). I attempted to mitigate the

power dynamics of my position as choreographer and CRIPSiE's Co-Artistic Director. I made it clear in recruitment and at the first rehearsal that dancer/researcher's participation or non-participation would have no impact on their involvement with future CRIPSiE projects. In addition, we collectively built a conflict resolution agreement for the rehearsal/research process. While we did not end up using the conflict resolution process that we developed, my intent with this was to normalize the possibility of conflict and disagreement in the research/rehearsal process and to give us an agreed upon way of handling conflict, should it arise.

I also encountered difficulties navigating the power dynamics of friendship. While in retrospect, I should have anticipated this, I had not taken into account the degree to which the dancers/researchers were invested in my success as a graduate student researcher. They often asked, especially in earlier rehearsals, if I was getting the kind of data I needed. I worried that they were prioritizing the data they thought I needed rather than making the research/rehearsal process fit their needs and desires. To manage this, I reminded the dancers/researchers that in arts-based participatory research, the community must shape the research according to their needs (McIntyre, 2008). Their needs and desires were more important in determining where our research/rehearsal process went than mine. The research design also meant that I was able to reassure them that the research question I had started with -- "*how do professional integrated dancers practice timing in rehearsal?* -- would be answered. Although we were actively reflecting and experimenting with timing, my original research question could have been answered by participant observation in any integrated dance rehearsal process. I believe this allowed the dancers/researchers to stop worrying that they would inadvertently affect the success

of my graduate program. After a few rehearsals they stopped asking if I had what I needed and started to follow their curiosity, including exploring topics - such as the relativity of time near black holes - that were deeply important to the dancers/researchers but did not directly address my original research question.

Each rehearsal I worked to mitigate my power by negotiating both the rehearsal structure and the artistic content with the dancers/researchers. Practically, this involved me identifying questions, areas of interest or suggestions for movement exercises, remembering them and offering these options to the dancers/researchers at the start of each rehearsal. The dancers/researchers would then discuss and decide what they wanted to prioritize that day. While this approach meant that I often curated the options they chose from, the dancers/researchers did at one point entirely reject my suggested possibilities for the rehearsal structure. About half-way through the research/rehearsal process they pointed out that we had a performance approaching and that they would prefer to begin to develop a structure for the final piece and rehearse that instead of continuing to generate new material. Despite their initial concern about supporting my success as a researcher, they had developed a sense of ownership and agency over shaping the rehearsal/research process. They considered their own needs and desires equal to my own.

In terms of artistic content, we discussed how best to determine the content and order of the final piece. The dancers/researchers proposed that I bring them several possible combinations of the sections of movement that we had developed. I brought three possible orders forward and the dancers/researchers discussed the options, settled on one and then made a few changes to it to create a tentative order for the final

improvisation score. We then refined this tentative order into the final improvisation score by experimenting with adding and subtracting other tasks and movements to the score and critically reflecting on the pace of each section and the overall score. I also explicitly invited dancers/researchers to ask me about the choreographic feedback I gave them and I tried to always describe what I saw and felt when I was watching the dance. Several of the dancers/researchers often asked me about my choreographic process and articulated that having my choreographic process made explicit to them was an important part of their learning. While none of these actions could truly destabilize the power I held in CRIPSiE, these actions seemed somewhat successful in shifting the usual dynamics of choreographer and dancer to something much more collaborative.

Arts-Based Research and Performance Ethnography

To engage with the accessibility and inaccessibility of our practices of timing in the integrated dance rehearsal, I drew upon performance ethnography, a form of arts-based research, to shape the research/rehearsal process. Performance ethnography is, "a method of investigation, a way of doing ethnography and a method of understanding, a way of collaboratively engaging the meanings of experience" (Denzin, 2003, p. 31). Researchers (Conquergood, 2013; Denzin, 2003) use the creation of performance and performance itself to collaboratively create knowledge. Denzin and Conquergood imagine performance in performance ethnography as a research translation tool that would present the results of the research, including the way the new knowledge was created. The performance would also be a space of encounter between audience and performers/researchers where they would come together to reflect on the performance,

exchange ideas and create knowledge. Like PAR, performance ethnography does not have a set procedure for research, but emphasizes particular values when designing the research process. The emphasis on rehearsal over performance (which I will discuss in depth in Chapter 12) and the desires of the dancers/researchers meant that the final improvisation score is not an explicit piece of knowledge translation. The practices of timing that we explored were used throughout the final improvisation score and the performance sometimes created a sense of access intimacy between many of the dancers/researchers, but the final improvisation score did not present our findings in any easily recognizable way. In this research process rehearsal was the site of knowledge generation.

Performance ethnography scholars (Conquergood, 2013; Denzin, 2003; Hamera, 2011) often emphasize the embodied nature of their work. This emphasis is intended to disrupt the assumption that language is the default medium of knowledge generation and transmission, and to value knowledge generated and communicated through physical embodiment (Denzin, 2003). The CRIPSiE community, which articulates each dancer as expert in their own bodies and own ways of moving, is an ideal place to explore embodied knowledge generation.

To study integrated dancers' practices of timing in the rehearsal process I brought together PAR and arts-based research methodology into a process of participatory performance creation. The research process reflected PAR in that I involved the community in selecting a topic and the way that multiple stages of inquiry and action (or in this case, creation), were intertwined. Giving the dancers/researchers collaborative decision-making authority over how we spent each rehearsal and the artistic content of

the final piece was intended to challenge the unequal power dynamics of research and my position in the CRIPSiE community. I also modelled much of the structure of the research process on performance ethnography, in its use of the rehearsal process, particularly an embodied rehearsal process to create knowledge (Denzin, 2003).

Chapter Four: Method

Having established my method of participatory performance creation, I now discuss participant selection and data collection. I conclude by discussing my data analysis process.

Selecting Participants

I drew upon my connections in CRIPSiE, utilizing a convenience sampling strategy (Patton, 2002). CRIPSiE's artists are diverse, with some identifying variously as seniors, queer, racialized, mad, hard of hearing, and disabled (Acton, Chodan & Peers, 2016). The sole criterion for this study was experience in integrated dance, meaning that dancers/researchers would have some experience with timing in the rehearsal process. I recruited seven dancers/researchers: Brooke, Chris, Sara, Robert, Sheena, Iris, and Alexis. These dancers/researchers reflected the diversity of CRIPSiE, as all of the facets of identity mentioned above were reflected in this group. There was also a diversity of experience in integrated dance. Robert and Iris had been dancing with CRIPSiE since 2008, Sara had joined CRIPSiE in 2014, Sheena, Brooke, Alexis and Chris had all joined CRIPSiE more recently, but all of them had previously danced in other CRIPSiE pieces, except for Chris, who had been attending classes for a year before joining this project and had previous exposure to integrated dance in Calgary.

Creation (Rehearsal) Process

We met between April 2nd and June 24th, 2017 either once or twice a week, for fifteen rehearsals, two hours each, for a total of thirty hours. Not every dancer was at every rehearsal, and each negotiated their schedule with me personally. Brooke and Chris, in particular, contributed to the early rehearsals and then other commitments took them out of town. I facilitated the co-creation process, but participants determined the topics and movement content on which they wished to concentrate. We spent the first two rehearsals going over the informed consent form, discussing the scope of the project and building a conflict resolution plan. After those two rehearsals I involved the dancers/researchers in building the rehearsal plan for each rehearsal. At the end of each rehearsal, I would review with the dancers/researchers what I thought we needed to work on at the next rehearsal. I would then build the rehearsal plan, bring it to rehearsal and review it with the dancers/researchers at the start of the rehearsal, discussing, and changing the rehearsal plan as the group determined.

The structure of our rehearsals varied, but early in the rehearsal process it often included a variety of improvisation exercises, some of which I brought to the group, some of which were proposed by individual dancers/researchers. We also developed a unison movement sequence that we reviewed almost every rehearsal. Ultimately, we developed a final improvisation score that contained some, but not all of the movement material that we had explored. Usually after each exercise we would discuss what we experienced and what we learned from the exercise. We would focus on timing, but not exclusively, in these discussions. Later in the rehearsal process we would review the movement sequences we had generated already and experiment with changing that movement and

adding to it to create the final improvisation score. During these rehearsals, we still discussed what we experienced when we reviewed the movement but often, we would also discuss the various choreographic choices available to us and what this would mean for the dance piece.

Initially, when I submitted ethics and recruited dancers/researchers there was no performance planned. The week before we started the research/rehearsal process CRIPSiE was offered a performance slot in Nextfest, the local emerging artists' festival. I made the dancers/researchers aware of the opportunity at the first rehearsal. They decided to accept, knowing that performances in early June would shape our explorations and the artistic decisions we made. Data collection took place through rehearsals, which included informal conversations, videotaped movement, field notes, and, following the conclusion of rehearsals, an emailed interview.

Rehearsals. In performing arts-based research, rehearsals are an important site of data collection and a method of co-creating knowledge with participants. Barbour (2011) explicitly parallels the creative process, the choreographic process and the academic research process, establishing all three as parallel means of knowledge generation. The choreographic process interwove data collection and analysis, as we created, considered, refined and adjusted throughout the rehearsal process (Barbour, 2011). Involving dancers/researchers in the process of movement creation and in the selection of movement to be included in the final piece involved them in data collection and analysis, fulfilling one of the values of PAR (McIntyre, 2008). This research focused on the rehearsals, excluding performance from data collection. I have included the dancers/researchers debrief of their performances in this data because it took place at a

rehearsal following the performance and because it became obvious through that debrief that performance should have been included in the data collection.

Informal conversations. At the start of each rehearsal, and after each improvisational exercise or run through the choreography, we would hold discussions. We discussed what we were going to work on that day or what we felt, observed, and learned from the exercises or run-throughs. These observations and learnings were wide-ranging, but always included a discussion of timing. For the most part, I only audio-recorded large group discussions although I recorded some one-on-one discussions that took place while dancers/researchers were individually practicing movement. These discussions at the start of rehearsal were consistent with PAR principles as they were a mechanism for dancers/researchers to determine the focus of the rehearsal and the research for that day. The discussions following the movement exercises or run-throughs were also consistent with PAR in that they involved the dancers/researchers in a first round of analysis.

Field notes. I locate performance ethnography within both arts-based research and ethnography. In ethnography, knowledge is generated through participant observation with the goal of producing "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p. 2). Participant observation involves close, detailed attention to the people, objects, locations, and practices being studied (Angrosino, 2007). Ethnography and participant observation were tools of colonialism and imperialism (Clair, 2003). Scholars developed performance ethnography, among other research methods, as a response to the crisis of representation and questions of researcher privilege and positionality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A common strategy called for by researchers (Denzin, 2003; McIntyre, 2008) using

methodologies like arts-based research and PAR is to ask researchers to engage in reflexivity about their social position and the power dynamics inherent to research.

To encourage reflexivity about the rehearsal/research process and my role in it, particularly the power dynamics, I wrote field notes on my computer as soon as I returned home after rehearsals. Ultimately, these field notes were not as useful as I'd hoped. Most of the field notes contained only one or two reflections that acted as reminders about what needed to happen at the next rehearsal. Halfway through the rehearsal/research process I began to write notes in my rehearsal notebook about moments that I should discuss in my field notes. This improved my ability to recall specific moments in rehearsal, but ultimately, I found the practice of transcribing the audio-recording of rehearsal far more useful to my reflexivity. Often, as I transcribed, I found moments that because of my auditory processing I had not heard accurately or I had not thought were significant in the moment but that became rich and important points of reflection for me. These field notes were made available to the dancers/researchers to review along with the transcripts of our rehearsals.

Video-recording. I video recorded movement phrases as a means of data collection to capture movement content and the choreographic evolution of the piece. I recorded some improvisation exercises and as we began to build the dance piece, movement sequences and the evolving final improvisation score. Consistent with CRIPSiE's current process, these recordings were available to the dancers/researchers and served as the primary tool for them to remember movement from rehearsal to rehearsal. Dancers/researchers always knew when they were being video or audio recorded and always had the opportunity to

opt not to be recorded. The photographs that accompany this text are screen captured from the video recordings.

Email interview. Initially I had suggested that the research/rehearsal process would conclude with a focus group. However, during the course of the rehearsal on June 17th, the rehearsal that followed our performances at Nextfest, we found ourselves debriefing the performances and the research/rehearsal process. When I brought up reconvening the group in early September for a focus group, the dancers/researchers pointed out that this rehearsal had functioned effectively as a focus group. I had not, however, asked any of my focus group prompts, nor had we discussed timing in depth. The dancers/researchers proposed that I send my focus group question over email and that this could function as a final interview. I applied to, and received permission from the Research Ethics Office on July 20th to make this change to my research plan. I sent the same seventeen questions I had proposed for the focus group, without the focus group preamble[9]. Out of seven dancers/researchers, five responded. While the answers I received to each question were short, usually one or two sentences long, they were rich and provided important additional insight, ultimately leading to me changing my research question.

Meaning Making

An initial analysis took place in the rehearsal hall. After almost every exercise and run-through of the piece we sat together and reflected on the experience. Often the discussion focussed on what we experienced in relation to timing. This is one of the strengths of arts-based work. As McIntyre (2008) notes, co-researchers in participatory

[9] See Appendix A

research often have little to no interest in analysis. The dancers/researchers in this project had no interest in traditional social science analysis. But when I came to analyze the transcripts, the dancers/researchers had already completed an initial analysis for me by reflecting deeply on their art and what they learned in the artistic research process.

Beyond the collaborative, artistic analysis inherent to rehearsals, where we would discuss the exercise or run-through that had just happened, analysis of the transcribed audio recordings, video recordings, field notes and email interview took place through the process outlined by Johnson (2004). I completed transcription and then began with an initial read-through of the transcripts. I took time to recall the rehearsals, comparing what I thought was significant at the time to my impressions of reading the transcripts. In this initial read-through, I kept a list of things that struck me, ideas or concerns that were repeated and differences or exceptions to repeated concerns or ideas. In the second read-through I highlighted and colour-coded the text, including making notes in the margins, allowing me to see patterns on the page. As I read through the second time, I watched the recorded video, thinking about how the recorded movement related to what I was noticing in the transcriptions. As Johnson (2004) suggests, I reflected on how these patterns and moments of significance related to the broader political and social world and how they related to each other.

I had recognized, before I began the analysis process, that my initial theoretical orientation of compulsory able-bodiedness/able-mindedness was not actually a good fit for the data. As I reflected on the data I was also comparing and contrasting the data with other possible theoretical frameworks for fit. In my data I found many, many significant moments and patterns. I focused on significant moments that dealt with practices of

timing in relation to pace, unison movement, improvisation, and partnering. I then made notes to myself about key moments in the transcripts, my field notes, and key videos of movement sequences. Throughout the writing process, I returned to the transcripts and video several times to re-read, re-watch and reflect.

Consistent with the values of PAR, I offered the dancers/researchers the opportunity to participate in the analysis (Morgan, 1997), giving them access to the transcripts, my field notes and my rough analysis notes on the transcripts. They had access to the video recorded throughout the rehearsal/research process. I also provided them with a proposed outline of my dissertation. I asked for feedback, either by email or by meeting in person. No one offered feedback at this point, although Sara emailed me to clarify her thoughts and intentions in a particular section of the transcripts. Three dancers/researchers reached out to express support and interest in where my research would go.

I have also shared drafts of every conference presentation, including slides, two journal article drafts, and a scholarship application that involved aspects of this research. Dancers/researchers have variously offered support and sometimes feedback, particularly on conference presentations when I have left out something that they consider particularly meaningful. In these cases, I included the information I left out. In one case, where the point the dancer/researcher wanted to make would have added substantially to the presentation, sending me over the time limit, I explained and assured them that their point was discussed at length in the dissertation. I sought feedback from the dancers/researchers on which photographs they wanted used in this text by sending them a number of photos and asking them if there were any they did not want used. I also asked the dancers/researchers how they wanted to be described in the sections of this

writing that describe them dancing and in the visual descriptions of the photographs that accompany this text.

I began the research process by recruiting dancers/researchers from CRIPSiE, Edmonton's disability and integrated dance company. Together, we embarked on a research/rehearsal process in which video-taped movement, audio-recorded informal conversations, field notes and an email interview were our means of data collection. We also performed a first level of analysis in rehearsals as we reflected on our experiences exploring timing. I continued this analysis by following Johnson's (2004) process for analysis that seeks to make connections between the data and the world. Throughout the analysis process I sought feedback from the dancers/researchers to ensure that my analysis reflected their understanding of what we learned in our research/rehearsal process.

Chapter Five: Discoveries

I entered the research/rehearsal process asking *what are some of the ways professional integrated dancers practice timing in the rehearsal process*? I ended my analysis asking *how can professional integrated dancers create access and the conditions for access intimacy in their practices of timing in rehearsal?* As I conducted the analysis, three things became clear. First, the research question and theoretical framework I had entered into data collection with did not fit the data. Second, while there were common patterns - themes - that we came back to several times, some of the most important things we learned were not repeated. They occurred in a single conversation or in a particular exercise. Unlike forms of analysis like thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) that ask researchers to look for patterns that repeat in the data set, Johnson (2004) rather describes analysis as a series of dialogues between text, researcher, theory, and broader cultural patterns. While searching for patterns is important, Johnson also asks that researchers, "be alive to oddities, contradictions, marginalia, unexpected remarks, anything that might alter our preconceptions about the material" (p. 236). So, following Johnston and the data, I discuss moments that shifted my understandings of access, access intimacy and timing. I have titled these shifts as follows: (a) Feeling together in time (b) Pace and unison movement, (c) Improvisation and pace, (d) Improvisation and memory, and (e) Partnering. Each is described briefly, then elaborated on in subsequent chapters.

a) Feeling Together in Time

Here, I chart how I came to change my research question. Over the course of this research, I learned that the dancers/researchers were interested in investigating their practices of timing because they were interested in the way these practices of timing could enable them to experience access intimacy. I realized this because of the dancers/researchers' insistence that it was important to examine unison movement, the way they described their performance experiences, and their responses to the email interview. The dancers/researchers were adamant that we investigate moving in unison because of the "magical" feelings of "togetherness" that it evoked. They used similar language to describe why performance was important to them. It was the feeling of being "just with" each other, of being "in it together". When I read the responses to the email interview the dancers/researchers also highlighted the sense of embodied ease and connection that could come through our practices of timing. For them, this embodied emotional connection was what defined good dance. The importance of connection and relationship, both between the dancers/researchers and to their bodies made me realize that the dancers/researchers were seeking a sense of access intimacy through our practices of timing.

b) Pace and Unison Movement

The dancers/researchers' capacity to control their pace was fundamental to the kinds of practices of timing they were interested in, but controlling their pace was influenced by a number of factors including their past, their present, their future, cognitive load, and movement quality. The influence of the past might include past experiences of ableism,

and what the dancers/researchers had done in the past few days. How their bodies felt in the present also affected the dancers/researchers' pace. The dancer/researcher's anticipation of what they needed to do in the future, whether in rehearsal or later also determined their pace. Counts, the practice of assigning numbers to beats in music, is a common way of coordinating dancer's pace. The dancers/researchers, however, rejected using counts because it created anxiety and meant they did not feel connected to their bodies. Only Sara and Iris were interested in exploring counting which led us to discover that changing the quality of movement could allow the dancers/researchers to access a wider range of fast and slow movement.

c) Improvisation and Pace

The dancers/researchers found it very difficult to coordinate their pace and in particular, find a collective ending in the final improvisation score. This was because of the cognitive load the final improvisation score demanded of the dancers/researchers. To find a collective ending the dancers/researchers had to pay attention to the choices of all the other dancers/researchers, keeping track of their own sense of the pace of the score, which was informed by the overall length of the piece and tacit aesthetic guidelines. Determining if this practice of timing was inaccessible or merely difficult proved impossible, but it alerted me to the necessity of distinguishing between difficult and inaccessible. If I asked the dancers/researchers to do things that were inaccessible, we risked injury or replicating the way the ableist world asks disabled people to push past their limits, but if I equated accessible with easy, I replicated the condescension of the ableist world.

d) Improvisation and Memory

When we began to develop the final improvisation score, I realized that improvisation demanded similar memory capacities to set movement sequences. Working with improvisation scores demanded that the dancers/researchers memorize a series of prompts or tasks, something that was inaccessible to Robert, particularly since we constantly changed the score as we developed it. Both Robert and I had thought that improvisation would be a more accessible way for him to dance compared to set movement. I clung to my assumptions throughout the rehearsal/research process, but in analysis realized that if I had been able to release my assumptions I would have been able to acknowledge that the other dancers/researchers were creating access for Robert by continuing to improvise even when Robert made choices that were outside the improvisation score. I would have also been able to recognize that Robert consistently made choices that supported the other dancers/researchers' improvisation choices in ways that were consistent with what we understood as good improvisation. Had I been able to recognize this in rehearsal I might have been able to make other choices and perhaps create the conditions for access intimacy.

e) Partnering

When dancing in duets the dancers/researchers needed to check in and constantly recalibrate their pace to each other. This was easier for them to do through visual cuing than it was through touch. The division of labour required to create access could have implications for the possibility of creating access intimacy. It also became clear that just as it was sometimes hard to tell if a practice of timing was difficult or inaccessible,

sometimes it was hard to tell if a practice of timing was inaccessible because of the time constraints of rehearsal time. This meant that just as the dancers/researchers needed to recalibrate their pace to each other in the duets, sometimes in rehearsal we needed to make decisions about what practices of timing we would continue to work on and what practices of timing we would give up working on.

Chapter Six: Feeling Together in Time

The dancers/researchers congregate at the side of the rehearsal hall. They shuffle themselves into order, preparing for a run. Alexis is closest to me. I'm sitting with my back pressed against curtain-covered mirrors, representing the audience. On the downstage left side of our 'stage', the side closest to the dancers/researchers, is a looper pedal, a small dark rectangle with buttons and knobs, and an ancient black amp. Both the amp and the looper pedal are connected to each other and to the power outlet in the wall by a tangle of cords. The dancers/researchers fall quiet and still, their eyes and attention directed at the looper pedal. Alexis walks forward and picks up the mic…

I entered the research/rehearsal process asking, *what are some of the ways professional integrated dancers practice timing in the rehearsal process*? I ended my analysis asking, *how can professional integrated dancers create access and the conditions for access intimacy through their practices of timing in rehearsal?* In this dissertation I focus on moments that taught me about access and access intimacy in pace, unison movement, improvisation scores, and partnering. I would not have been able to reflect critically on these moments had I not been able to let go of my assumption that the dancers/researchers were invested in timing in order to replicate the standards of normative Western concert dance, and that, therefore, the appropriate theoretical framework for this research was compulsory able-bodiedness/able-mindedness (Kafer, 2003). The dancers/researchers' investment in unison movement, the way they talked about the experience of performance, and their responses to the email interview all alerted me that they were invested in examining practices of timing in order to feel something I came to understand as access intimacy.

To be fair to my past self, there were several things that led me to believe that we were invested in replicating the standards of normative Western concert dance. There were my

own struggles with timing in normative dance spaces, struggles that were almost identical to my struggles with timing in integrated dance spaces. There was the conversation I had with a member of CRIPSiE who told me that they believed that the way we practiced timing in CRIPSiE made ableist assumptions about the capacities of people's bodies to respond "in time." There was also the moment that first made me realize that timing might be an important area of study.

This moment is recorded in the documentary, *A New Constellation: A Dance-umentary*, which follows iDance (the community dance organization that preceded CRIPSiE) through rehearsal to performance. In the documentary Iris talks about her experiences joining iDance. She says:

> So for fifteen years I did without dance and then I walked in and I heard the words, five, six, seven, eight, and it's like a shot of adrenaline, and I thought: I'm home, I'm home, I'm home. I love it.

For Iris, normative dance counts – the five, six, seven, eight – gave her back something she thought she had lost, her joy of recreational dance training. The very normativity of counting music was what drew her to join iDance. Given all this, I entered data collection assuming that the dancers/researchers were invested in practicing timing in normative ways, working toward resembling normative Western dance's hyper-able ideal.

I had a sense that something was different than what I expected early in the rehearsal/research process. The dancers/researchers were deeply invested in unison movement, but not because unison movement was something that professional normative Western concert dance companies did. Instead they were interested in the pleasure of moving together.

Unison Movement

Before this research I was deeply sceptical of the value of unison movement in integrated dance. The precision and coordination required for dancers to perform unison movement seemed so virtuosic and demanded so much of dancers' capacities that it often did not seem worth it to me. The dancers/researchers, however, insisted early in the rehearsal/research process that unison movement was important and they wanted to explore how to make it accessible. Unison movement was valued by the dancers/researchers because of the way it made them feel. Chris said, talking about unison movement and breathing in yoga classes, "There's that community togetherness and that kind of oneness when you get to the point where there's a kind of flow and there's a forward momentum to it." Unison movement built a connection to the people Chris was moving with that supported his own movement. Sheena described the feeling of unison movement as "magical", saying, "It's not that five pulses are magical, it was the moment of movement at the same time." Unison was important because it created a relationship, a togetherness, between the dancers/researchers.

Dancers/researchers also spoke to the pleasures of moving in unison in other contexts. Sara articulated this as, "Doing things in sync with other human beings, like on a brain level, releases pleasure, like singing or like dancing in time. It's a pleasurable thing to sync." In addition, the dancers/researchers pointed me to the literature on the benefits of choral singing. Both Sara and Alexis are accomplished musicians and singers, Sara as a solo artist and vocalist with bands and Alexis in the context of choral singing. There are multiple studies suggesting that choral singing increases general wellbeing (Clifts, 2010; Judd & Pooley, 2014; Livesey, Morrison, Clift, & Camic, 2012). Among the reasons

given for this increase in wellbeing are increasing positive affect, the requirement of focused attention that promotes relaxation, and the requirement of deep controlled breathing (Clifts, 2010). Singing together may also facilitate the release of oxytocin and endorphins, both of which are theorized to increase social bonding (Keeler et al., 2015; Tarr, Launey & Dunbar, 2014).

Finally, singing, as a synchronized movement, like dancing in unison, may create a blending of the self and other through the activation of action-perception neural pathways that are both self and other directed, otherwise known as *mirror neurons* (Tarr, Launey & Dunbar, 2014). Mirror neurons are neurons that are activated both when watching movement and when performing the same movement. Researchers (Berrol, 2006; Ribeiro & Fonesca, 2011) speculate that mirror neurons may play a key role in empathy and feeling connected to other people. Foster (2011) uses the theory of mirror neurons to explore the distinction between sympathy and empathy created by the kinesthesia of an audience watching choreography. The theory of mirror neurons, however, has also been described as inconsistent and unsupported by experimental data (Hickok, 2014).

Regardless of the possibilities and limitations of the research on mirror neurons and empathy, the dancers/researchers were adamant that moving together in unison was a pleasurable, desirable experience. Moving together in unison was a good feeling, a feeling that connected the dancers/researchers to each other. Therefore, it was important for us to explore how to make unison movement accessible. Mingus (2010a) uses moving together in a metaphorical sense to describe creating access and access intimacy. While Mingus (2010a) is not describing unison dance movement, unison movement does exemplify moving together. Unison movement created the same feelings of togetherness,

pleasure and magic for the dancers/researchers that Mingus (2010a) metaphorically describes. It was important to the dancers/researchers to make moving in unison accessible because moving together made them feel connected.

Performance

The second moment that suggested to me that the dancers/researchers were invested in investigating practices of timing because of how those practices made them feel was when we debriefed the performances at Nextfest. The way the dancers/researchers talked about why the performance was important to them was full of the language of feeling, particularly emotion connecting them and drawing them closer to other dancers/researchers. Alexis said:

> I think it was the second [performance] on Saturday night, there was a moment where we were doing the orbiting and I was in the black hole and you were all coming around and there was like maybe thirty second of just absolute bliss where it was, it just felt so good. Like one of you went by, and another one went by and another one and each of you… I had a different sound effect and each person I had a different connection or emotion with, like I loved making contact with you as you came around. It just, it felt like we were floating in space, it was fucking rad…I was literally just with you and I was present.

The depth of connection that Alexis found with her fellow dancers/researchers in that performance escaped concrete words. Alexis was "just with" them and "present", but to convey the intensity of this, she reaches for the metaphor of floating in space. Floating in space is significant because Alexis and other dancers/researchers had identified space and

the physics of celestial bodies as something they found deeply wondrous and spiritual. Dancing together, when Alexis could feel the connection to the other dancers/researchers, was an experience of intense, almost spiritual, bliss.

Sara also spoke of the feeling of connection with her fellow dancers/researchers:

> And I know, to echo what everyone else said, it was… it's cool to be in it, because there's a feeling that we are in it together – it's not just banging out choreo over and over, we have to have some kind of movement together and share a moment together. I really like that.

Sara also highlighted the importance of being connected through movement, particularly improvised movement, of sharing "a moment." There were good feelings of wonder and connectedness between the dancers/researchers in the good performances. These good feelings were what made the performance good. In contrast, when they discussed the first performance, they talked about feeling less comfortable, less "grounded" and less connected to each other. Sara said, "On Thursday we didn't have a great performance. I just felt like shit." The dancers/researchers made it clear that a good performance was one where they felt connected to each other and "grounded," connected and at ease in their bodies.

Reflecting Back on What We Learned

The dancers/researchers were seeking an emotional experience when they danced, an experience that made them feel connected to each other and their bodies, just as access intimacy connects people and makes them feel at ease in their bodies (Mingus, 2011b). When I read the responses to the email interview that five of the seven

dancers/researchers answered following the conclusion of rehearsals, I understood that the dancers/researchers defined good dance in terms of how it made them feel, not in relation to the standards of normative Western concert dance. They had entered the rehearsal/research process because our practices of timing allowed them to feel the embodied emotion of access intimacy. Dance that could lead to access intimacy was good dance.

I had asked a series of questions about how the dancers/researchers thought other dance companies practiced elements of timing. Chris and Iris did not answer the questions, "Is how we dance fast different from other dance companies?" and "Is how we dance slow different from other dance companies?" Brooke and Alexis wrote, "I don't know" in response to both these questions. Both of these responses were a refusal of the basic premise of my questions – that what other dance companies, normative dance companies, do is important. Of all the dancers/researchers only Sheena answered these questions. In response to the question about if how we dance fast is different from other companies, she wrote about how for us, fast was a relative term and that for other companies she thought that fast was "likely more connected to moving with quick tempos in the music." She qualified this by stating, "I haven't danced with other companies though, so I'm not sure." For all of the dancers/researchers who answered the email interview, my questions about how normative Western concert dance companies practice pace was not something that was important enough to know about.

My clue to why timing was important to the dancers/researchers was also in the email interviews. I had asked, "What is dance?", "What makes dance or a dancer good?" and "Has your understanding of timing in dance changed? If so, how"? The responses to

these questions all highlighted feeling, expression and emotion. Iris wrote, “a dance is good if it creates emotion in its audience and/or sends a message.” Chris wrote that, “Dance is expression. An eruption of creative molten lava that explodes from the body.” Alexis wrote that what made dance good was “commitment to the integrity of the emotion/story/theme.” Sheena thought, “A good dance moves people somehow – perhaps to feel something or to wonder” and that, “Dance for me is a form of being present and embodied.” Chris wrote that what made a good dancer was “pure self-expression.” Sheena talked about learning through this project of “Time as a living entity, time as a stretchy, relative concept, timing as innately relational.” Both good dance *and* timing were relational and emotional. The dancers/researchers wanted to be moved emotionally (as well as physically) and in turn move the audience. They wanted to feel, not to emulate normative Western concert dance. They wanted to feel in connection, in relation, to each other. Since practices of timing were relational they were a way to create the possibility that the dancers/researchers could feel and relate to each other.

Alexis’ comment that good dance involved commitment and the dancers/researchers’ critique of their first performance suggested to me that this emotional connection they were seeking was something that the dancers/researchers believed they could develop and practice for. Or that at least, they could practice to make the emotional experience they were seeking more likely. As Mingus (2011b) suggests, access intimacy often needs significant practice and effort. There would be no point in the dancers/researchers spending significant time debriefing and critiquing a performance to figure out why it didn’t feel good if how a performance felt was out of their control.

Not only were the dancers/researchers seeking an emotional experience, one that connected them to each other, but this emotional experience through timing was also related to their connection to and sense of their body. Chris wrote, "Timing is about how we experience the passage of event. Timing is the progression of our bodies through space and time." His words, particularly his emphasis on the body's movement, echoed Sheena's statement that good dancers are embodied. Alexis spoke of learning that she, "hadn't realized how embodied timing is." The emphasis placed by the dancers/researchers on feeling embodied reflected Mingus' (2011a) emphasis on feeling connected to her body and ease in her body when she experiences access intimacy.

There were two exceptions to this emphasis on embodied relational timing. Brooke said that her understanding of timing had changed over the project "in a subtle way." Iris said her understanding of timing had changed "a little." Neither qualified or expanded on how their understanding had shifted. The dancers/researchers that did respond, however, spoke about what they learned about timing in ways that highlighted the relational, embodied, good feelings that timing was connected to. Good dance and good timing was dance and timing that made most of the dancers/researchers feel connected and at ease with their body and emotionally connected to the other dancers/researchers.

Access and Accessibility

Good dance, good timing and connecting to other dancers/researchers was also about access. For CRIPSiE, access is a deeply held value and a way of doing things. CRIPSiE rehearsals, including this research/rehearsal process, were held at the Fringe Theatre Adventures building because the space is physically accessible and has gender-neutral

washrooms. CRIPSiE often mobilizes the language of access to granting bodies (Acton, Chodan & Peers, 2016), highlighting the importance of access and accessibility to the organization and the accessibility challenges unique to an integrated and disability arts organization.

Access was also a value that shaped the rehearsal/research process. When we drew up the rehearsal schedule we talked about rehearsing on weekends to create "access" to this process for people working day jobs. We discussed that building "more accessible rehearsal processes" was always a goal. During our discussion around conflict resolution I reflected on past experiences with conflict around artistic decisions and asked if there were any values we wanted to guide any contentious artistic decisions. Access was one of the three values we decided on, the others being "integrity" or the aesthetic cohesiveness of the piece, and "politics," or our commitment to disability justice politics such as rejecting tragedy narratives (Mitchell & Snyder, 2000). This reflects CRIPSiE's context within the broader Canadian disability arts movement's focus on aesthetics of accessibility.

I should note here, that despite frequently discussing it, we never defined access or accessibility. Additionally, while I was up front with the dancers/researchers about how inaccessible I found timing and music, I did not define inaccessibility either. Access, accessibility and inaccessibility were, within the context of this rehearsal/research process and the broader CRIPSiE context, tacit knowledge. This may be because these concepts are so caught up in sensation, feeling, emotion and past experience (Mingus, 2011b) that they are difficult to articulate for all of us.

My understanding of access and inaccessibility has shifted significantly over the course of this research. Looking back, I assumed access in the context of our practices of timing was about ease. Was the practice of timing easy to do or easy to learn? Could the dancers/researchers move fast or slow, perform unison movement or coordinate their movements in duets with ease and without stress? If they could, then I thought I would have succeeded in critiquing and altering our practices of timing to make them more accessible. I thought inaccessibility was when the practice of timing was impossible to do, or the cost of doing or learning the practice was too high in terms of pain, or time, or energy.

Among the many things that this research has taught me is that access is far more complicated than I thought. Access and accessibility were values, but they were also *felt* (Mingus, 2011b). They were connected to past experiences of ableism and the joy the dancers/researchers found in challenging themselves through dance. They were emotional relations that could bring people together or push them apart. The emotional relations of access and accessibility were nuanced, and required me to carefully look at each unique situation and, often, to question my assumptions about accessibility and the situation. The tacit understandings of access that I held and that circulated in the rehearsal/research process were insufficient to capture the complexity of access in practices of timing. Access intimacy was a vocabulary that let me engage with that complexity by describing our practices of timing in terms of accessibility and inaccessibility but also in terms of the relationships and emotions that arose in the context of these practices of timing.

All this is not to suggest that the singular goal, or the point of integrated dance is to create access intimacy. In the context of wonder and feminist pedagogy, Ahmed (2014)

suggests that making emotions the preferred outcome of feminist pedagogy is dangerous. If emotions are the preferred outcome of teaching, then the job of the teacher becomes to fill students with the desired emotion, making teaching instrumental. If the role of the teacher is to fill the students with emotion, this leads to passive students rather than students who are engaged and active co-creators of knowledge (hooks, 1994; Freire, 2005a, 2005b). Similarly, if access intimacy is the point of integrated dance, this could impose a requirement upon dancers, and possibly on audiences, to feel a particular way. The dancers/researchers however, did see access intimacy as a goal of dancing together. The dangers of access intimacy becoming a requirement of the rehearsal process rather than a possible outcome was mitigated by the fact that the dancers/researchers had multiple, and often changing, goals and desires in the rehearsal process. I am also careful, in writing this, to use language that reflects the capricious quality of emotion and access intimacy in particular. Access intimacy, like other emotions, is not an automatic outcome of a situation or of a series of actions. Even if the dancers/researchers wanted to experience it they could only practice in a way that *might* lead to access intimacy.

From all of this I learned that timing was related to feeling present, feeling embodied and feeling connected with one's fellow dancers/researchers. Good dance felt embodied and connected. And good dance was accessible. Access intimacy is embodied, feels good and is about connection. I began to ask myself, what if timing was about access intimacy? What if training the skills of timing, or altering our practices of timing to make them more accessible was about the possibility of creating these moments of connection? And what if making these elements of timing accessible might sometimes lead to access intimacy?

I remain convinced that the way normative Western concert dance practices timing assumes particular hyper-able capacities of dancers' bodies and minds. I still believe we often replicate these ways of working in integrated dance rehearsal processes. I still believe that one of the reasons we might try to map, reflect on and critique our practices of timing is to make them more accessible. The reason, however, we wanted to make our practices of timing more accessible was because practicing timing in integrated dance rehearsals, including practices of timing that assume hyper-able capacities, could create moments where we feel connected, embodied and good. These are the same reasons that I dance in both normative Western concert dance spaces and in integrated dance spaces. The moments of good connected feelings, of access intimacy, were more likely to come when we had managed to change our practices and/or acquire the skills that would allow us to access practices of timing. Access intimacy requires access, a nuanced, situated and felt access. So I began to ask, *how can professional integrated dancers create access and the conditions for access intimacy in their practices of timing in rehearsal?*

Chapter Seven: Pace and Unison Movement

The dancers/researchers spread out through the space of the rehearsal hall, distributing themselves so they are equidistant from each other. I press myself into a corner, trying to make myself as small as possible. "Three" I call out and the dancers/researchers begin to move. Their pathways through space are efficient, directed, except that each time another dancer/researcher fills the empty space that they were aimed at, they swerve and find another space to direct themselves to. "Five" I call and the tempo picks up. "One". They slow and I watch the shifting muscles and tight faces as each of them works to move as slowly as they can…

The dancers/researchers' insistence we engage with unison material shifted my understanding of why we were doing this research. I began this research thinking that access to extremes of fast and slow – pace – and unison movement, especially unison movement established through counting music and movements were separate and distinct issues. I discovered that access to control over one's pace was particularly important to creating unison movement. Indeed, pace was actually fundamental to all the facets of timing we examined. No matter what element of timing – unison movement, improvisation scores, partnering – we were always asking how we could coordinate our bodies to move at an agreed upon speed. This chapter discusses how we explored pace over a number of different rehearsals, including our explorations of counting music and movement. In doing so, I learned about the complexity and labour involved in controlling pace. While these moments were spread throughout the rehearsal/research process they all contained important lessons about how to make control over a wide range of pace accessible to the dancers/researchers and therefore make unison movement accessible to the dancers/researchers.

Pace: Fast, Slow, Others, Self

From the start of the rehearsal/research process the dancers/researchers were very interested in figuring out how to move in unison, so it was necessary for them to all move at a similar pace. This meant the dancers/researchers needed to have the capacity to move faster or slower than they might ordinarily do. Our explorations of moving at the extremes of fast and slow revealed how pace influenced a number of different relationships for the dancers/researchers. We discovered extremes of fast and slow changed the dancers/researchers' relationships to themselves, to each other, and to the space they were moving in. These explorations also made clear the mental labour demanded of the dancers/researchers when they tried to access a wide range of fast and slow movement. We also discovered that our own personal paces were very different from each other's. In addition, our personal pace changed depending on our relationship to the past and the future – what we had already done in that rehearsal or in the previous days and what we anticipated doing.

On April 16th, we ran a warm-up improvisation that I had learned from integrated dancer and choreographer Alice Sheppard. The dancers/researchers moved through the space, trying to 'fill the space'. This cue meant that one of the goals of the warm-up was to maintain a relatively equal distance between everyone moving, keeping the space balanced. As the dancers/researchers moved, I called out numbers from zero to ten. Zero was stillness, one was as slow as possible and ten was as fast as possible. Dancers/researchers would move at the speed that they felt corresponded to this number for their body.

Moving through the space at different speeds required different types of awareness from the dancers/researchers. Chris observed, “One in particular, I was very aware of how my feet were moving. Moving up to an eight, I became more aware of the space, of the people around me.” Dancers/researchers reflected that slower movements encouraged them to feel their body, to bring an awareness to the sensation and mechanics of how they were moving.

In contrast, moving fast meant that dancers/researchers were paying more attention to the space and the other people moving through the space. This was a practical consideration to keep everyone safe. Iris said, “Going up, on the higher end, had to be more aware of where I’m going, kind of double, having to maintain your speed, and, and, and being aware of people.” The mental labour of both concentrating on one’s speed and managing space was something that all dancers/researchers experienced, but that Iris felt in particular as the only power chair user in the room. For Iris, this feeling of responsibility came from many experiences where she was held solely responsible for the space around her. We gently argued with Iris about where the responsibility for managing the space lay. I reflected however, transcribing this rehearsal, that Iris’ past experiences with inaccessibility and ableism are not erased by being in an integrated dance space. It was important to acknowledge that in addition to the mental labour of moving fast and managing space, Iris’ past experiences created stress and worry for her when she was moving fast.

In addition to the mental labour of moving quickly and managing one’s relationship to space and other people, Sara also remarked that she had been taught by dance training to conceal that she was managing time and space. Sara didn’t want her face or body

language to reveal that she was concentrating on avoiding collisions with other dancers/researchers. Sara and the other dancers/researchers wanted to conceal their labour, meaning they were not only managing their relationship to the space, the people in space, concentrating on moving fast, but they were also working to conceal this labour. Moving faster than one's usual pace is mentally challenging. Moving faster required the dancers/researchers to concentrate on moving their body faster, the space, the people moving in the space and concealing all this mental labour from the audience. Another word for mental labour is *cognitive load*. In psychology cognitive load refers to the mental work demanded by a task or by learning (Kalyuga, 2009). Cognitive load is broadly divided into intrinsic mental load (the mental load inherent to the task), germane mental load (the load required to develop schemas that allow what is learned to transfer into long-term memory), and extraneous mental load (mental load that is not necessary to learning) (Sweller, Ayes & Kalyuga, 2011). Based on the dancers/researchers' experiences in this warm-up improvisation, it seems that dance may have a particularly high intrinsic cognitive load. Moving fast had an inherent mental load, the concentration required just to move faster. The work of avoiding the other dancers/researchers and, in Iris' case, managing the emotional impact of past experiences, was an extraneous mental load that complicated the task of moving fast.

In a notation in my field notes, I recorded:

> In future integrated dance classes and rehearsals, I will be careful to limit the number of people in the space. Asking some people to sit out and observe others exploring fast movement and then swapping groups so those who were moving could observe, would free up space. Having more space and fewer people moving would allow dancers to

direct more mental energy to exploring and playing with speed instead of to managing space and keeping each other safe.

While these observations are concerned with the practicalities of safety, they are also fundamentally about relationships. The dancers/researchers were creating access for each other when they paid careful attention to avoiding crashing into each other. Limiting the number of people in the space would have allowed dancers/researchers to keep track of each other – effectively to continue to do access work for each other, so we could all keep dancing. If I had run the dance exercise again and limited the number of people moving in the space this might have also limited the amount of mental labour the dancers/researchers were doing to create access, creating the possibility that they might eventually experience access intimacy.

The other discovery we made through playing Alice Shepard's warm-up improvisation was the extent to which the dancers/researchers' individual paces varied. It was clear both to the dancers/researchers moving through the room, and to me as I observed, that every dancer/researcher had a personal interpretation of the zero to ten scale. This is, of course, the point. This warm-up is designed for integrated and disability dance spaces, to accommodate a wide variety of bodies that move in very different ways with very different ranges of pace. When we debriefed the warm-up, however, we discovered that the variation in range of pace was attributable to a number of factors beyond impairment. Brooke observed that she was managing her energy that day because she was worn out and this affected what her "eight" was and what her "three" was. This also affected the personal pace she moved at when she was not dancing and therefore not paying attention to her pace. Similarly, Sheena remarked, "Oh, it's interesting what my three feels like

today, and on another day a three might have felt different." So pace, whether fast, slow, or one's default personal pace was determined by the dancers/researchers' experiences on that particular day, whether people were tired, or energetic. The group was also clear that they needed to go to an "eight" or "nine" to figure out what their "three" was - they needed experiential knowledge of their bodies on that particular day to calibrate their relative pace. Iris' past experiences of being held responsible for her movement through space as a power chair user influenced her pace. Sheena and Brooke's present experiences of their bodies influenced their pace.

Brooke also noted that what she chose as her "three" and what she chose as her "eight" was influenced by anticipating the future. If she thought the warm-up was going to go on for a long time or didn't know how much moving was going to be required by the rest of rehearsal, she might choose a slower overall pace as she moved between speeds. The personal pace that each dancer/researcher moved at each day, and their range of pace, was affected by a wide variety of factors including how they felt that day and what they anticipated they needed to do in the future.

Moving at a quicker pace was dependent on the dancers/researchers' relationship to the past – what they had done recently, its effects on their bodies and the way the world, including ableism shaped their bodies and minds. Moving at a quicker pace was also dependent on the present – how the dancers/researchers felt at that moment – and the future – what they anticipated having to do, both in rehearsal and outside. Our discovery that our individual paces were different, and dependent on past experience, present sensation, and possible futures, resonated with Mingus' (2011c) discussion of learning to feel and honour personal limits. Mingus (2011c) notes that because of impairment her

limits change constantly. Additionally, a lifetime spent pushing past her limits, trying to survive in an ableist world, makes it difficult for her to know where her limits are. Moving faster in a safe way that respected the limits of the dancers/researchers bodies and minds was actually a very complex task, determined by multiple factors.

Our explorations of accessing extremes of quick and slow revealed the incredible variability of our personal paces. It also revealed the complexity of moving fast and slow. Specifically moving fast required dancers/researchers to relate to space and each other, whereas moving slow encouraged the dancers/researchers to feel and relate to the internal sensations of their body. Moving fast and slow also involved being in relationship with the past and its effects on the dancers/researchers' bodies, the present and how the dancers/researchers' bodies currently felt, and with the future, and what they anticipated needing to do. Changes in pace created changes in relationships between the dancers/researchers. They needed to be attentive to each other, and make decisions that kept each other safe. These practices of attention meant that each dancer/researcher could continue with the improvisation exercise, allowing them all to participate. By paying attention to each other, particularly at quicker paces, the dancers/researchers made the improvisation exercise, and moving fast, safe and therefore accessible.

Precise Counts

To move in unison it was necessary for the dancers/researchers to be able to alter their pace and move faster or slower than their daily pace. It was also necessary for them to match their pace to each other. A common way of matching dancers' pace to the music and to each other in both integrated dance and normative Western concert dance is

precise counts. Counting is the practice in dance of assigning numbers to beats in the music. Movements are also assigned numbers so that the movements precisely coordinate with the music. Two of the dancers/researchers, Sara and Iris, were comfortable and interested in exploring precise counts which lead us to important information about the effects of movement quality on pace. The other dancers/researchers found counting music and synchronizing movement to counts incredibly difficult and that it interfered with the sense of access intimacy they were seeking. Sheena reflected in the email interview:

> Counts have long been a source of stress for me because as a mover-dancer, I often felt I couldn't quite keep up. The net result in the past (to counts) was to draw me out of my body and into my head.

Sheena found counting difficult and complex to the point that it interfered with embodied experience of dancing that she valued.

Other dancers/researchers also spoke about the stress of precise counting. Chris said, "I love dancing fast when I am able to explore my own movement. I get anxious when I am trying to remember certain steps or beats." Brooke said, "Dancing that is based on precise counts was very intimidating to me. It takes me a long time to process things in my body and I am always nervous and just need more practice." Counts make Brooke nervous to the point that she would "actively avoid precise counts." Almost all of the dancers/researchers said that precise counts made them "nervous" or "anxious." Both dancers/researchers with impairment and without impairment found working with precise counts difficult and stressful, suggesting that this practice may be inaccessible, or at least intimidating and difficult, to a wide variety of bodies and minds, including non-disabled dancers.

The majority of the dancers/researchers rejected counting so strongly that it was only in our final rehearsal that Sara, Iris and I played with precise counts. Perhaps it was that the performances were finished, and the rest of the dancers/researchers were gone on holidays that made Iris and Sara suggest that we focus on precise counts. Sara did not complete an email interview, and Iris was the only dancer/researcher who replied favourably to the question about precise counts in the email interview. She wrote, "I personally like precise counts as they give me a solid base to aspire to." For Iris, counting music was not necessarily easy, but it was a desirable challenge, not a source of anxiety as it was for the other dancers/researchers.

As we explored precise counting, in addition to learning that making movements embodied and automatic was key to being able to use counts, we also discovered that movement quality is an important factor in moving fast and slow. In this rehearsal, we were interested in exploring different paces, as well as seeing if we could give each pace a specificity and regularity provided by the structure of counting the music. Sara said as we collectively designed the exercise:

> I think, what I'm interested in, what is, when are two people doing something different but yet it's connected. Like that's, that's kind of, we're moving at different counts or different speeds, or different levels but there's something connected. And just like you were saying, if you stagger something, like we just heard it, if you stagger something somewhere in the cycle, something happens at the same time.

We decided to use a single gesture that was common to all of us and each developed a short movement sequence incorporating that gesture that was unique to us. We would then set those movement sequences to counts, extending over a variety of different

lengths. The idea was that as we danced through our sequences our common gesture would eventually sync up and appear in unison or close to unison. Sara chose to challenge herself by setting her sequence to a 6 count, I used an 8 count and Iris used a 16 count. Dancers often use music set in a 4:4 time signature, meaning that eight counts is the standard count. Essentially, Iris would move through her sequence in the same amount of time I took to complete two sequences and Sara would move through her sequence almost four times in the time that Iris took to complete one sequence.

Sara initially set the metronome on her phone at 120 beats per minute (bpm), which is around the speed of a standard pop song (Leight, 2017). We assumed that this would be a good pace to dance to but quickly figured out that this was far too fast. We kept dropping the pace, eventually all the way down to 80 bpm. The need to do this reveals a particular specificity to the way we wanted to count the music. We wanted to count every beat, not every second beat. Although we did not discuss this, I assume the mental labour of slowing the music down by counting 'one-and-two' on each beat instead of 'one, two, three' was too much for us to handle in addition to remembering a newly developed phrase of choreography and coordinating it to the beat of the metronome. This suggests to me that if in future I want to make precise counts more accessible to the dancers I am working with it will be important to choose music where the beat is clearly marked and at a slower pace than is usually thought of as normative dance music.

Iris and I then had a revelation about how Iris' body moves. Iris was struggling with the movement quality of her phrase. Laban (1971) originated a system to describe movement quality, describing movement through direction, weight, speed and flow, and dancers often use 'movement quality' to generally describe how a movement or a

movement phrase is performed. Iris was struggling with 'hitting' the counts, which involves sharp, quick movement that moves directly to a position and pauses briefly in the position on the beat. Each time Iris paused in position, she couldn't get her body moving again fast enough so each time she got a little farther behind the counts. After watching her move through her sequence, I said to her, "Yeah, I also think it doesn't make sense for the way I see your body working to go ONE. TWO. And to have sharp movement between. Your body, your body seems to like flow stuff." When Iris thought about moving through the beat - keeping her body in motion and passing through the position on the count as opposed to stopping in the position on the count - she was able to keep up with the counts and the sequence. Altering the movement quality from sharp to smooth made quick movement more accessible to Iris.

This idea that some people's capacity to move relatively faster or slower might be affected by movement quality was supported by Brooke's reflections on pace in our final email interview. Brooke wrote about moving slow, "Easier to get all the moves, but harder to sustain slowness. I get nervous about being smooth." Brooke finds smooth movement difficult, just as Iris finds sharp movement difficult. This suggests that if dancers are struggling with moving fast or slow, then changing the movement quality may be a way for them to access a particular pace. In future, I will adjust the movement quality of dance phrases if dancers are struggling with timing to see if this allows them to access different paces.

Movement quality affected the dancers/researchers' capacity to move fast and slow, and therefore to move to precise counts. While most of the dancers/researchers expressed strong dislike for using precise counts to coordinate their pace, we did discuss counting.

One rehearsal we fell into a discussion of how musicians work with ‘counts’, trying to solve the question of why so many of us found counting difficult.

Figure 1. Organism phrase.

Visual description: The ‘organism’, a movement phrase we did not use in the final improvisation score. In this photo, Chris and Sara are behind Iris, holding onto her chair. Chris is a young man with short-cropped dark hair. Sara is tall and has large brown eyes and brown hair. Iris is an older woman with short grey hair who uses a power chair. Chris crouches down while Sara leans over Iris’ shoulder. Brooke is a slim white woman with short hair. Robert is a larger, older man with grey hair. Sheena is a white woman with fair, short hair. Brooke is beside Iris and Sheena and Robert crouch down low beside Iris’ knees. All the dancers/researchers are looking in different directions, their eyes fixed at points beyond the image. This movement phrase was characterized by sudden, quick movement with long periods of stillness in between the movements.

Sara and Alexis offered their perspective as singers, since singing, like dance, requires the performer to create rhythm through their body. For Sara, whose experience singing was primarily as a solo artist or with a band, there was a distinction between counts which is what dancers did, and feeling the rhythm in one’s body, which is what she reported musicians did. Alexis commented that she needed to “get past the rhythm to

actually sing the music fully." The physical work of producing the vocal music, including coordinating her movements to the rhythm needed to become embodied and automatic, so she could commit to the performance. In terms of cognitive load, she needed to have learned the rhythm and internalized it so she could have the mental space to attend to other elements of performance.

Sara preferred the way musicians feel the rhythm, as opposed to the way dancers count beats. Alexis needed the rhythm to become automatic before she could sing the music the way she wanted to. By making the movements automatic, the dancers/researchers could reduce their cognitive load enough to enable them to concentrate on coordinating their movements to the counts in the music or to other elements of dancing. While this might seem obvious, practicing movements without counts is not common practice in my experiences of normative or integrated dance spaces. Choreographers and teachers often teach counts along with the movement, asking dancers to remember and integrate movement, counts and music simultaneously.

Ultimately, with the exception of the final rehearsal, which only involved me, Sara and Iris, the dancers/researchers rejected the use of counts in building this piece. While counts are a way of creating unison and togetherness, the stress and anxiety that the counts created interfered with the sense of embodied connection and access intimacy the dancers/researchers were seeking through unison movement so we did not use them.

Unison

Finding ways to access different paces was important because to move in unison the dancers/researchers had to move at a pace that was not necessarily the pace they easily

and automatically moved at that day. Despite the fact that the dancers/researchers articulated precise counts as intimidating and difficult, they consistently described the experience of moving in unison as desirable and pleasurable. As a result, one of the first things we did was explore creating unison movement, without precise counts, but using visual cuing to coordinate our movement. Visual cuing in dance refers to the practice of coordinating movement by looking at another dancer. We devoted much of the second rehearsal, April 9th, to building a unison sequence and practiced the unison sequence most of the subsequent rehearsals.

The unison movement phrase we created explored expansion and contraction, which had emerged as a prompt from our brainstorming at the first rehearsal. To create this sequence, the dancers/researchers spent several minutes improvising on that theme. About forty-five seconds before the end of the improvisation I asked the dancers/researchers to return to what was pleasurable or interesting. I asked them to develop a movement or a short movement phrase that was interesting to them and to remember it.

Then, we moved into a circle and strung the phrases and gestures together to create a longer group phrase. Although in the final improvisation score this phrase was performed in canon[10], for the majority of our rehearsal period we practiced the phrase in unison. We found that we needed significant practice and rehearsal time to bring the movement into

[10] In dance, canon is the practice of a group of dancers performing movement or a movement phrase with one or more repetitions of the movement phrase performed after a given duration. So one dancer or a group of dancers will begin the movement or movement phrase and then the next dancer or group of dancers will begin after a given duration. If the dance piece uses music and counting the duration might be one count to several eight counts. If the dance piece does not use music or counting the repetitions might be cued by a specific movement in the first repetition of the movement phrase.

unison. For the dancers/researchers, unison movement was valuable, not because it was easily accessible, but because it was challenging, and because moving together in unison was inherently pleasurable. This suggests that there was a balance that the dancers/researchers were seeking between difficulty and the pleasures of unison movement. Creating unison movement by counting music was too difficult to attempt but creating unison movement by visually cueing off each other was a pleasurable, welcome challenge.

Figure 2. Unison movement phrase.

Visual description: Iris, Sara, Chris, Alexis and Sheena practice the unison movement phrase. They are arranged in a semi-circle arching away from the camera with Iris at the extreme left. Everyone has their arms raised. Iris is seated in her power chair and the rest of the dancers/researchers are seated on the ground with their arms and legs floating into the air.

After we assembled the movement phrase, we repeated the phrase, clarifying the intention and quality of the movement. This meant, practically, that we paid attention to the small details of the movement. For example, how and when in the flying movement

did the wrists bend? What was the muscular resistance in the reaches that Iris added to the phrase? As we worked on clarifying the intention and quality of the movement, we were also working on finding a common, embodied timing. This meant that everyone, either through visual cueing, feeling the timing in their body, or a combination of both, would perform the phrase at approximately the same pace. Although we had previously discussed that all of us had personal paces that varied depending on the day and the context, the differences between our personal paces became evident.

Iris, in particular, was slower than the rest of the group at certain moments. She remarked:

> My timing is slower. Like when, when we go into Sheena's move, when I start you guys are already on your third one. So, oh dear, oh dear, better catch up! Oh no. And so that, obviously, it's my internal clock that's going slow and I just have to speed it up.

The first instinct in the room was to change the group's timing to match Iris'. Iris, however, rejected this solution. She said, "I CAN speed up, I WILL speed up. I just needed a kick in the butt that's all." Iris preferred to challenge herself by moving at a speed that was not the speed her body wanted to move at, rather than ask everyone around her to change. For Iris, the option that made the unison movement phrase easier and presumably more accessible to her was not the most desirable option.

To move in unison, everyone had to adjust their pace to one that everyone in the group could match. This pace was slower than several of the group's personal pace and faster than others. Bringing the phrase into unison required that the dancers/researchers pay close, careful attention to how they wanted to move that day and how the other

dancers/researchers were moving that day. Finding a common pace each time we rehearsed the phrase required that each dancer/researcher practice this ongoing attention to their own physical and mental needs and preferences that affected their pace. Each rehearsal, the dancers/researchers intuitively decided on a range of paces that was safe (and hopefully pleasurable) for them. They also needed to observe their bodily and mental needs, particularly what they needed to focus, be attentive to their energy levels as the rehearsal unfolded and adjust their pace to accommodate any changes. The dancers/researchers' careful and ongoing attention to the variability of pace within themselves and the group echoes Mingus' (2010) call for us to learn and attend to our limits, rather than pushing (when pushing is not desirable or pleasurable).

To move in unison the dancers/researchers needed to maintain a careful attentiveness to each other's movements to keep in unison. Robert drew attention to this cognitive labour when he reminded himself at almost every rehearsal to watch Chris when we practiced the unison movement phrase. At least initially, Robert and Chris sat together when we practiced the unison movement phrase. Robert watched Chris out of the corner of his eye, matching the pace of his movements to Chris. Chris in turn, changed his focus and watched each member of the group for the movement they contributed to the unison movement phrase, adjusting his pace to match the pace of the person who originated the phrase. Throughout every repetition of the unison movement phrase, dancers/researchers watched each other, adjusting their pace and how they moved, based on their observations of other members of the group. They had to maintain an ongoing, attentive and responsive relationship with everyone in the group.

This did not mean that the pace of the unison phrase changed dramatically each rehearsal. The pace varied, but subtly, meaning that the movement phrase was always practiced at a similar pace. The repetition, the embodied memory of pace that the dancers/researchers worked to build supported the sense of connection to their bodies and each other that they were seeking. Alexis said, "because in this piece we weren't doing it to counts, there was a certain embodied-ness that came after time. And I think, by the second or third performance, my body, there was some muscle memory and some inherent internal clock." The point of dance for the dancers/researchers was to feel. The dancers/researchers' frustration and rejection of using counts was about wanting to feel access intimacy when they were dancing. They wanted to feel embodied, secure in their movements, not anxious, or "frustrated" as Chris described his previous experiences with unison movement through counts. An embodied, as opposed to counted, timing created through visual cuing supported that emotion.

The dancers/researchers were adamant that we investigate how to create unison movement without counts because unison movement created without the use of counts could lead to access intimacy. Mingus (2010b, c) wrote often about being together and moving together, stating, "I want to be with you. If you can't go, then I don't want to go" (Mingus, 2010b, para. 1). Moving together, particularly in unison is a literal interpretation of Mingus' (2010b, 2010c) call for access for the sake of being together, of the good feeling that comes from being and moving together. Moving together required the dancers/researchers to find a common pace, requiring us to investigate how to move faster and slower than the pace at which our bodies automatically wanted to move. We discovered that moving at a pace not our own required effort, particularly increased

attention to other people and the space as we went faster. Changing the movement quality could also give some dancers/researchers access to a broader range of paces. When we created the unison movement phrase, we used visual cueing to adjust and accommodate for these variations. We allowed for the moment-to-moment variability in our own bodies, minds and personal paces by being in an attentive, ongoing relationship with each other.

Chapter Eight: Improvisation and Pace

Dancers/researchers circle the stage, orbiting Alexis as the black hole. Alexis is planted, grounded, as she hums and vocalizes into the microphone, her sounds looping and layering into the soundscape. Her body barely shifts but her eyes scan the space in front and beside her constantly. As each dancer/researcher passes by her she tracks them with her eyes, seeming for a moment to vocalize to them.

The moments I examine in this chapter are the moments where I learned about the complexity of pace when improvising with a score and that made me fundamentally question the accessibility of improvisation. Prior to this rehearsal/research process I had unreflexively internalized the assumption, present in the literature about integrated dance (Cooper Albright, 2003a; Foster, 2002b), that improvisation was a more accessible form of dance than technical forms like Cecchetti ballet or Graham modern dance that have a set lexicon of movements that dancers must master. Over the course of the rehearsals, however, as we worked to refine the final improvisation score I realized that asking the dancers/researchers to find a collectively felt ending, and more generally, a collective pace in changing tasks within the final improvisation score was a very difficult and possibly inaccessible task. Our struggles caused me to reflect on how to determine when the practices of timing we were investigating were difficult and when they were inaccessible.

Improvisation and Collective Pace

When we explored unison movement, we were relatively successful in finding a collective pace and a way of doing unison movement that did not rely on counts. We

were far less successful at finding a sense of the collective pace of our final improvisation score. This collective pace was challenging because it was not about individual movements but about finding a collective understanding of how long specific sections of the final improvisation score should last. This required the dancers/researchers to be paying attention to all the other dancers/researchers, and to the practical and artistic frameworks that informed the pace of the improvisation.

The common timing we were trying to find was not as nuanced or precise as moving in unison, and developing it proved more challenging than finding a common pace for the unison movement phrase. We spent two rehearsals developing the final improvisation score. After we had developed the final improvisation score and ran it the first time, I gave the dancers/researchers multiple notes adjusting the pace of several sections. I asked the group to let Alexis have a full four breaths and to start the unison sequence before Iris and Sara entered, prolonging the amount of time that Alexis was alone on stage. I asked Robert to slow down the pace of his movements in the unison movement sequence. I had a clear sense of what I felt was needed to make the timing of the final improvisation score feel right.

We particularly focused on the ending of the final improvisation score. Several of the dancers/researchers had opinions about the right pace of the ending of the improvisation. Sara asked for an extension of the ending of the piece saying, “So it’s not everyone gets caught right away and then clumps,” meaning that she did not want the dancers/researchers to get caught by the black hole one after another, rapidly creating a clump of bodies around Alexis and the looping pedal. Alexis added to this, saying, “Like when Sara gets caught for example, you might not get caught when you try to get her,

you might get free for a bit." There was a sense from at least a few dancers/researchers that the timing of the end was rushed. At the same time, they had to coordinate and cooperate with the other dancers/researchers. If other dancers/researchers started clumping around Alexis, caught in the black hole's gravity before Sara and Sheena were ready, they felt like they had to make choices that supported the other dancers/researchers' decisions. Explicitly discussing the timing of the end helped us to understand, a little better, the feeling of the timing of the ending.

The dancers/researchers never quite found the correct, collective timing of the end. The difficulty of finding a collective "right time" appeared when we debriefed the performances. Alexis said:

> And then the ending was weird, 'cause there wasn't a really clear way to end it. Like we thought maybe there was, like once we get to this point stop, and then we'll turn this down, but that was actually way harder to do than it was to see and there was no feeling time. And sometimes the lighting person would turn the lights down before we had either stopped or I was going to release it down.

While we could clearly articulate that the final improvisation score ended when all the dancers/researchers were caught in the gravity of the black hole and came to stillness around Alexis, in practice, making this happen was quite difficult. Learning an embodied, collective timing so that the entire group could feel a collective ending was so difficult that the dancers/researchers never developed a clear sense of it.

Divided Attention

Part of the difficulty of finding a collective timing for the ending was that the dancers/researchers needed to be attentive to all the other dancers/researchers and to their own sense of the timing of the final improvisation score. The final improvisation score ended with the dancers/researchers orbiting Alexis, who represented a black hole. One by one the dancers/researchers would be drawn into the black hole and would spiral their orbits in towards Alexis until they stopped. Early in the ending section other dancers/researchers (violating the laws of physics) could rescue the stuck dancers/researchers from the gravitational pull of the black hole by using one of two movements we had developed to free each other. The final improvisation score ended when one by one all the dancers/researchers became trapped in the gravitational field of the black hole and could not be freed. When this happened, Alexis would slowly turn down the volume on the soundscape, bringing the dance to an end.

The repetitive nature of the end of the final improvisation score meant that Alexis and all the other dancers/researchers were paying attention to everyone else and their own sense of the score. Alexis would think that the ending had arrived and then one of the free dancers/researchers would rescue one of the dancers/researchers stuck in Alexis' orbit and Alexis would need to look for the ending again. Or conversely, the dancers/researchers would quickly become stuck in Alexis' gravitational pull before she felt that the improvisation was ready to end. When we created a collective, embodied timing in the unison movement sequence, dancers/researchers paid attention to one particular dancer/researcher, the dancer/researcher who originated the movement. The ending of the final improvisation score we designed required the dancers/researchers to be attentive to everyone, constantly looking for the possible ending and for cues that

people might be rejecting that possible ending by breaking away from the black hole. Researchers (Sweller, Ayres & Kalyuga, 2011) examining cognitive load suggest that when people divide their attention between multiple sources of information their learning suffers. The demands of being attentive to all of the other dancers/researchers and to their own sense of the pace of the score may have been too much to ask of the dancers/researchers, creating the kind of anxiety and stress that they described as interfering with the good feelings of dancing together. Adding in the timing of someone new, the Nextfest stage manager who could also end the final improvisation score by fading out the lights, meant that the timing never entirely felt right. Perhaps we simply needed more rehearsal. Perhaps there is a way to teach a group to feel an ending to an improvisation together that I will develop or learn as I grow as an improviser and artist. Perhaps I needed to simplify the final improvisation score to create a clearer structure for the end. But the practice of feeling a collective ending in an improvisation score proved inaccessible to the dancers/researchers.

Aesthetic Considerations

Part of our difficulties communicating how long each section of the final improvisation score should be were the factors that informed our sense of the correct timing of the score, particularly the constraints of the Nextfest performance slot and the tacit aesthetic framework we were working within. The correct pace seemed to be determined by outside constraints, like the length of the piece required by the Nextfest performance slot. When we were developing a transition to the black hole section, out of the set movement phrase section, I said, “Let’s, let’s think about the length of time,

'cause we've got four and a half minute slot."[11] If we had an hour I would let you guys do that for five minutes straight, but we can't." Difference dance performance formats and lengths of performances would have led me, and possibly other dancers/researchers, to have different feelings about the length of each segment of the dance.

That my sense of the length of each section of the final improvisation score was at least partly determined by the overall length of the dance piece, suggests that there were some aesthetic guidelines about the relationship of each section to the overall improvisation score that I had internalized and could not make explicit. The dancers/researchers, in order to feel the amount of time that seemed right to me in each section needed to have also internalized those aesthetic guidelines, and then, while dancing, keep track of the length of time that had passed. This required them to integrate tacit knowledge of the ambiguous aesthetics we were working with, an awareness of time passing, and to make decisions based on all this information. While I locate this dance piece and CRIPSiE's work within the Canadian disability arts movement and its aesthetics of accessibility, there is no manifesto or aesthetic guidelines that would have helped to make this knowledge explicit.

To find a collective pace for each of the sections of the final improvisation score and to find a collective ending the dancers/researchers needed to be attentive to the choices all the other dancers/researchers were making, be attentive to time passing, and integrate the tacit knowledge our aesthetics into their sense of how long everything should take. Iris spoke to the difficulty of keeping track of the many elements of a scored improvisation. She said to me when we were reflecting on the final improvisation score, "I guess we just

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[11] Ultimately, the improvisation score performed at Nextfest took eight minutes, not four and a half, indicative of the complexity of timing in dance.

have to pick a priority." What Iris meant by this was that she wanted us to pick a priority for the dancers/researchers to focus on in performance or in rehearsals. She did not want multiple notes and changes to remember and implement.

Iris' desire to focus on one thing speaks to the complexity of our practices of timing. In all our work to investigate elements of timing we always found ourselves noting and discussing how the dancers/researchers' attention was divided. In the case of Alice Sheppard's warm up improvisation the dancers/researchers needed to keep track of where everyone else in the room was and their pace so they did not collide. When practicing the unison movement phrase, they needed to keep track of the movement sequence, the other dancers/researchers' pace, and their own pace in relationship to the rest of the group. In the final improvisation score, they needed to keep track of the score, what all the other dancers/researchers were doing so they could make appropriate responses, and their own internal sense of timing so they could change tasks within the score at an appropriate pace that was coordinated with their fellow dancers/researchers. Given that we circled back to discussions about the complexity of what we were trying to do regularly, I suspect that in future one strategy that I could employ to make elements of timing more accessible is find ways to simplify the tasks dancers are engaged in to reduce their cognitive load.

Our attempts to create a collective sense of timing for each section of the final improvisation score and the final improvisation score as a whole were unsuccessful. We could not make this skill easily accessible to the dancers/researchers. While some dancers/researchers, particularly Alexis and Sara, found it easier to articulate when the pace at which we moved through the final improvisation score felt wrong and right, their

capacity as individuals to influence the group and to make the timing feel right was limited. This points to the difficulty and complexity of dance improvisation skills. Reflecting on our failure to make these skills accessible I also wonder about the amount of time we gave ourselves in rehearsal to learn the improvisation final score and then, when the final improvisation score was set, to learn to find a collective ending. My suspicion from working with scored improvisation in a number of different contexts is that this is a very difficult improvisation skill for everyone, regardless of impairment. Likely, with more time dedicated to practicing the skill we would have developed it and might have developed a sense of collective embodiment and ease.

Difficult versus Inaccessible

Our difficulties finding a collective sense of timing for the final improvisation score lead me to ask, what is the difference between inaccessible and difficult? Abstractly, it seemed clear to me that inaccessible meant that the practice of timing we were working with was currently (or always would be) out of reach for the dancers/researchers or that the cost of doing it, or learning it was too high. Reflecting on finding our pace through the final improvisation score, I still question if this practice of timing was difficult or inaccessible. The practical dividing line between the two seemed and still seems murky.

This rehearsal/research process also made it clear to me that the stakes for making the wrong decision about if an exercise or skill was inaccessible or difficult were very high. If I asked the dancers/researchers to do something inaccessible, I was replicating the ableism where disabled people are asked to push past their limits (Mingus, 2011a). I risked hurting them, physically or emotionally. In this process, however, the

dancers/researchers built the final improvisation score. The dancers/researchers themselves did not know if the final improvisation score was difficult or inaccessible. Most important to shifting my understanding of accessibility and inaccessibility, the dancers/researchers were also clear with me that they wanted to be challenged, to improve, to get better at dance. They had their own understanding of what improvement and getting better at dance meant that was not necessarily based on the standards of normative Western concert dance. But they did want to be pushed and challenged in meaningful ways that respected their limits and if I didn't do that too, it was a form of ableism. Iris was the most explicit with me about this. She said:

> Like, I'm, I know, there are things, like when I raise my arms up this hand doesn't go up as high and there's nothing I can do about it. So, but, but make sure this one's proper, the proper, like I, I go back to my, when I first wanted to learn to dance. And it should not be this far back, and it should be where you can just see it. And I give myself these lessons and that's good, that I had some basic training. But, I think there are times it could be corrected. By you. Or anybody else. But nobody wants to correct me. Because I'm handicapped. Like, this is the closest thing I've ever had to normalcy in this handicapped world. Which I was, I've stated several times since getting involved with CRIPSiE. But still not pushed hard enough. Push me harder.

Iris wanted me to correct her to improve her dancing. She wanted to be challenged, the same way she wanted to be challenged by the pace of the unison movement phrase. She said that no one, including me, corrects her because she is disabled. For Iris, her desire for correction is tied to a desire for "normalcy." In her use of "normalcy" I hear a desire

for respect that Iris felt she had lost as she acquired impairment. When she urged me to push her harder, I interpret that as me denying her the respect that she deserves.

Iris was right. I often didn't push because I did not know what I could ask for. I didn't record and reflect on all the moments that I didn't ask Iris, or any of the other dancers/researchers for something more, but I know there were many throughout the process. I had been assuming that making practices of timing easier was equivalent to making practices of timing accessible and therefore creating conditions that might lead to access intimacy. But I can see that this is a form of condescension. Access intimacy must involve mutual respect (Mingus, 2011b) and if I consistently under-estimated Iris, or any of the other dancers/researchers, I was creating a form of access, but a form of access that pushed people apart, not brought them together. To guard against creating access that pushes people apart I will need to learn about every dancer I work with. I will also need to remain open to being surprised. People change. They learn. Their capacities shift. Their desire for challenge could also be altered by the passage of time.

We struggled to find a common sense of the pace of the ending of the final improvisation score. This could have been because finding a common pace required the dancers/researchers to pay attention to multiple sources of information, some of which did not offer clear guidance. This led to me to realize that it was not always clear to me when a practice of timing was difficult and when it was inaccessible. To create the possibility of access intimacy I and the dancers/researchers needed to carefully balance ease with pleasurable challenge. I did not have the knowledge of the dancers/researchers involved in this research/rehearsal process or of the challenges involved in using scored improvisation that I needed to determine if finding a common end was difficult or

inaccessible. So, I could not choose, or work with the dancers/researchers to choose, the appropriate balance of ease and challenge. I know that in the future I will need to develop that knowledge of the dancers I work with, and that, as Mingus (2011b) noted, this will require significant work and effort.

Chapter Nine: Improvisation and Memory

The dancers/researchers switch to rocking or tight circular movements. Robert watches them for a few seconds and then starts rocking from side to side on his stomach. The dancers/researchers move into orbiting patterns, circles and spirals across the stage that eventually lead them into the center of the space, where the black hole is. In this improvisation, the orbits are chaotic. The dancers/researchers circle the stage both clockwise and counter-clockwise and sometimes flatten their orbits, creating loops rather than circles. Robert gets to his feet and walks to upstage right. He stays there, walking in small loops, as the rest of the dancers/researchers circle the perimeter of the rehearsal space.

I began this research/rehearsal process assuming that improvisation was a more accessible form of normative Western concert dance than forms that use set movement. This assumption was challenged by the difficulties we had finding a collective ending to the final improvisation score. The process of building the final improvisation score also challenged my assumptions about the accessibility of improvisation. I discovered that improvisation scores required particular memory capacities that were not unlike the memory capacities required of set choreography. Remembering a complicated improvisation score was inaccessible to Robert, who could not visually cue off the other dancers/researchers the way he did when doing unison movement. This discovery made me realize that the specialized nature of dance meant that the dancers/researchers could not know if a task or skill was going to be inaccessible to them without trying it.

The process of analyzing the video footage also made me realize that even though engaging with the final improvisation score by memorizing it was inaccessible to Robert, Robert's responses in the improvisation fit the dancers/researchers' definition of good dance, and the combination of Robert's choices and the other dancers/researchers' choices were creating access to the improvisation for Robert. It was not access that felt

good or that involved access intimacy – all of the dancers/researchers were working too hard for that. But it was access.

Developing the Final Improvisation Score

I realized the memory capacities demanded by improvisation scores when we began to use multi-prompt or multi-task improvisation scores. Multi-prompt improvisation scores required the dancers/researchers to remember multiple prompts and monitor if they were changing prompts in a way that was appropriate and coordinated with the group. In the research/rehearsal process, we moved from less structured improvisation to more structured improvisation over the course of both individual rehearsals and the overall rehearsal process. In the first three rehearsals we spent a lot of time brainstorming around timing and the more general concept of time. I gathered these brainstorms and then over the next three rehearsals, checked with the dancers/researchers about what they wanted to prioritize in their explorations, provided prompts for individual improvisations, and then suggested structures to transform the individual improvisations into set choreography, by asking dancers/researchers to remember movements that they enjoyed in improvisation and then providing tasks that transformed the movements into the unison movement sequence and into duets.

The initial prompts were simple and open-ended, and taken up in multiple ways. For example, when I provided the prompt of disconnection to the group, some people played with physically attaching and then disconnecting their limbs from each other. For example, Alexis developed a movement where she grasped her stump with her hand then

pulled with great force, eventually separating her arms. Other dancers/researchers however, explored emotional disconnection. Sheena said, reflecting on the improvisation:

> That I was a person disconnected from themselves, or a body disconnected from the mind. Um, so it was like I was walking, and walking and walking backwards because there was some kind of disconnection and I wanted to be walking forwards but I was walking backwards.

Robert similarly said, "I was leave-taking my body, but I was, I was exploring avenues in my mind, how to get back and connect." In contrast Brooke said she explored the experience of, "the floor is broken and gravity doesn't work" and "element of surprise and uncertainty." A single prompt, generated in a specific context of brainstorming produced radically different interpretations in movement improvisation and radically different movement sequences in subsequent rehearsals. We would often discuss these interpretations. For example, after this exercise we spent some time talking about our assumptions that disconnection was not a positive experience and that connection was. We did not ever attempt to decide on a unified interpretation of the prompt.

Benjamin (2002) notes that the shift from very open improvisation to refining the movement or the score is typical of choreographic processes. He states, "This often means that a very experimental or creative phase is followed by a period of structuring, which, in turn, is followed by a phase in which the material is refined and set for the stage" (p. 64). We followed a similar process creating the final improvisation score. When we started building the final improvisation score, we were inspired by the way time slows near a black hole. We asked, could we portray how time slows as we near a black hole? Could we move slower closer to the black hole and faster the further the

dancers/researchers got from it? The concepts behind these improvisations were more complex, and in addition, each time we tried the improvisation we all reflected on what we felt, and I reflected on what I saw. We would then discuss these reflections, prompting changes to the improvisation.

Figure 3. Robert's orbits improvisation.

Visual description: Robert is caught in movement, looking down. His weight is on his left foot and his right arm and right leg are blurred from motion.

These changes imposed more structure on the improvisation, limiting the interpretations of the improvisational prompts. We then added an entrance and the unison phrase before

the black hole improvisation and the ending to complete the final improvisation score, refining those elements too as we continued to rehearse. The refining process proved quite inaccessible to Robert[12]. When we first built the black hole improvisation and when we built the final improvisation score we began by deciding on the tasks or prompts that would form each section of the score and the order of the score. Then we tried the version we had decided on to see how it felt, discussed the experience and decided on any changes. Both times, Robert could not remember the initial score we settled on, nor the changes we made to the score. He spent both rehearsals very confused, often stopping in the middle of dancing and looking around to cue off the other dancers/researchers.

The form of memory the dancers/researchers were using as we built the final improvisation score is referred to as working memory. While there are multiple theories of working memory, all the theorists agree that it is a mechanism for temporary storage and processing of information and that the capacity of this mechanism to store and process information is limited (Richardson et al., 2012). Working memory is also assumed to play a role in using newly perceived information for learning and decision-making (Gathercole, 2008). Working memory is connected to cognitive load. The more items we are holding in our working memory, or the more items we are paying attention to, the higher our cognitive load (Sweller, Ayres & Kalyuga, 2011). The demands of

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[12] Robert and I discussed this chapter and it's contents when we met to discuss the research, following the conclusion of the research/rehearsal process. I asked him, in rephrasing a few times, if he agreed to me writing about the difficulties of building the score. Finally he told me (perhaps, slightly exasperated), "That's how my brain works." His bluntness made me reflect on my hesitation to write about these rehearsals. I had no hesitations writing about how Iris struggled with hitting counts. Was it that I didn't find an easy solution to the inaccessibility of collaboratively determining the score and felt stuck? But if I'm not prepared to be honest about my failings as a facilitator or choreographer how do I ever improve the accessibility of my rehearsal processes?

these two rehearsals, in particular when the score was constantly changing, made the collaborative process of building the final improvisation score inaccessible to Robert. The problem that stymied the other dancers/researchers – how to coordinate the pace of each section and the ending of the improvisation score - was not even accessible to him. We built a beautiful dance in a way that was deeply meaningful and responsive to the desires of the other people involved in the process, and that was incredibly inaccessible to one of the members of the group. The collaborative nature of this research/rehearsal process intensified the inaccessibility of using an improvisation score.

Set Choreography

Robert was not alone in finding the memory capacities demanded by our processes of creating movement challenging. The challenges of memorizing the series of prompts that formed the final improvisation score had similarities to the challenge of memorizing the unison movement sequence. Brooke had to learn the sequence after being away the week it was created. She noted that it was challenging, especially because we had built it collaboratively.

We built the unison sequence through accumulation, where each dancer/researcher contributed a movement. As a result, the dancers/researchers who had been there to build the sequence cued each movement off of the person who had originated the move. The dancers/researchers who had been there to build the sequence were invested in the way the ownership of the movement was distributed through the group for two reasons. First, they were invested in the collaborative choreographic process, meaning that it was important to them that I had not given them a sequence of movements to learn, but they

had developed it themselves. Second, it was important to the dancers/researchers that, as much as possible, the work of adapting movement to fit one's body was distributed through the group and that it was not one person, particularly not one physically disabled person, continually adapting the movements. So, emphasizing ownership of the movement meant that the way Iris did the movement she had developed was the 'original' that everyone else adapted and coordinated their pace to. Practically, this did not totally succeed – Iris needed to adapt most of the movements - but this was the intention behind emphasizing the ownership of each movement. The dancers/researchers kept emphasizing cuing off the person who originated the move as they taught Brooke the sequence.

Brooke did not know who had created each move, and as a result of not being there for the process of building it, was not invested in who had created each movement. She said, "I found that very stressful actually, to go into and try to figure out other people's preferences of movement and counts and precision." The group's assumption that visually cuing the timing of the movement off of the person who originated the movement was important meant that she had to learn who had originated the movement as well. She ended up compromising by visually cueing off of one person.

Brooke's frustrations learning and memorizing the unison movement sequence was about training, not impairment, as Brooke has a strong movement background in improvisation. There is evidence that technical dance training, or learning a set lexicon of movements, improves one's capacity to learn and recall movement sequences (Sevdalis & Keller, 2011). In contrast, Brooke's background in improvisation would have given her practice remembering and using improvisation scores but not remembering a precise

series of movements. Asking Brooke to memorize the unison movement sequence, a relatively new skill to her, and also memorize who had originated the movement was too much. Brooke's frustrations memorizing the nuances of the unison movement sequence and who originated it mirror Robert's experiences learning the final improvisation score. Both ways of creating asked the dancer/researcher to learn and remember a sequence. They then had to make choices about their pace in relationship to the other dancers/researchers' pace. At the time, I thought that doing improvisation and doing a set movement phrase were two very different skills, but reflecting, I can now see the similarities between the demands both made upon the dancers/researchers memory capacities.

The other dancers/researchers thought similarly to me about the distinction between improvisation and set movement. In the rehearsal before we began developing the final improvisation score, I explicitly asked the dancers/researchers if structured improvisation was preferable to developing set movement based on what we had discovered and developed thus far. The group indicated that they preferred structured improvisation and when I asked why, Robert told me that for him, structure improvisation was more accessible because of his short-term memory capacity. He explained:

> Like once I catch on and see things you know then I can do things. But if someone lays eight or nine rules on me – do this, don't do that, stop over there at two o'clock, over there at two ten, I'll get confused. And then I get stressed.

I wrote a few weeks later in my field notes:

> In many ways, this whole process has been relatively inaccessible to him [Robert] because of all the things that made it meaningful for everyone else – that people

> generate their own movement, that they were always doing their own movement, and often not doing movement that everyone else was. I don't like unison often as a choreographer, but is likely more accessible to Robert because it creates a mass of people for him to visually cue from.

I trusted Robert and followed his desires and the desires of the other dancers/researchers to explore structured improvisation. Except, I suspect that if I had choreographed a unison sequence of the entire group to learn, and then in rehearsal taught the sequence and repeated it again and again until the majority of the dancers/researchers had memorized it, Robert would have been able to follow by visually cueing off the dancers/researchers who had memorized the sequence. With the entire group doing the same movements he would not have had to make decisions about who to follow. And he might have found the process less stressful, more meaningful and overall, more accessible. Both Robert and my own assumptions about the accessibility of improvisation created barriers to his participation.

The other dancers/researchers, however, likely would have found the process less meaningful had we made a dance that consisted only of unison movement. Sara said when building the final improvisation score, "So my preference is not be, I'm going to rescue three people and they're going to be these people each time. I really like the organic feel." For Sara and the other dancers/researchers, their desire to work with structured improvisation was about creating circumstances where they could feel embodied and connected to their fellow dancers/researchers. I was also very aware that the iterative process of experimenting and changing the final improvisation score was

consistent with the axiology of a participatory creation process, but was creating additional barriers to Robert's participation.

This points to the difficulty of knowing one's access needs (Mingus, 2010a). Mingus also points out that for access to go beyond checklists[13] and logistics, there needs to be ongoing learning and relationship. Mingus (2017) wrote, "People I don't know or who have never even had a conversation with me about disability casually expect to be my 'access person' without realizing significant trust and competency must be built" (para 7). Neither Robert nor myself had competency in his access needs in the context of collaboratively building or performing an improvisation score. We had to experience the inaccessibility to know it existed. As I engaged with the breadth of the practices of timing that we worked with I learned about many of the access needs of the dancers/researchers. These access needs were not necessarily ones that the dancers/researchers could have known and told me about before beginning this process, because of the specialized nature of the dance and the practices of timing we were investigating. We had to discover our access needs together.

Given that ableism robs disabled people of agency and expertise, particularly about themselves (Kumari Campbell, 2009), I believe my decision to trust that Robert knew the most accessible way for him to dance was an ethical one. But it meant that I created a

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[13] Checklists sometimes decrease accessibility. Dolmage (2017) examined ableism in academia, including universities' use of Universal Design for Learning. Dolmage (2017) noted that when universities published checklists illustrating their commitment to Universal Design for Learning on their websites, there was no user/student feedback. Public online checklists mandated that students accept the access solutions provided regardless of whether those solutions worked for them or not. Essentially, checklists intended to increase accessibility can sometimes remove the need for ongoing relationships around access.

process that was inaccessible and frustrating to him. This tells me that in future, creating the conditions for access intimacy in the rehearsal process will likely depend on the specific access needs and desires of everyone involved and how they interact, but also that we may need to experiment and fail to better understand our needs and desires.

Questioning My Assumptions

Throughout the process of assembling the final improvisation score, I felt overwhelmed by the incompatibility of Robert's access needs and the desire and joy of the other dancers/researchers in their capacities to improvise, experiment and make choreographic decisions about the dance. Here, the emotional nature of access becomes apparent. I valued the emotional response of the dancers/researchers other than Robert to the collaborative process of building the final improvisation score. They were excited and proud. But I also recognized Robert's confusion indicated the inaccessibility of the process. I felt caught between these competing needs - competing emotions - and in feeling stuck I failed to recognize the access that was being created in those moments. When I reviewed the footage with an eye to access and access intimacy, I saw that in the moments Robert forgot the improvisation score he consistently made choices that created connection, particularly moments of unison movement. Robert's choices were not choreographic problems. Further, these unexpected choices meant that the other dancers/researchers created access to the experience of improvisation for Robert by abandoning their assumptions about how the improvisation should unfold.

When I examined the video footage of May 22nd 2018, the first rehearsal at which we were doing full runs of the final improvisation score, I noted a number of moments where

Robert stopped, not knowing what to do next. The score was still very new to him and it was quite complex. The score required dancers/researchers to remember the sequence of events: the order of entrance; the unison movement sequence; a transition; to orbit the edge of the rehearsal space a particular way; and, several set movements that were part of the movement vocabulary of a particular section of the score, such as the movements that freed the dancers/researchers from the gravity of Alexis as the black hole. It also required dancers/researchers to coordinate the changes from one part of the score to another, collectively finding an embodied pace and timing of each section. In addition, we had played with several different orders for the improvisation prompts and set sequences the week before, further complicating the sequence the dancers/researchers were expected to remember.

In this footage, Robert entered in the order we had predetermined, after Sara and Iris. He breathed into the microphone, layering the sound of his breath into the soundscape being created. He sat on the floor near the looping pedal and microphone and began to move. The first movement he performed was 'his' movement from the unison sequence. The unison sequence was now in canon, with each dancer beginning it after they entered. Robert had lost his visual cue and therefore did not start the sequence at the beginning, but rather started the sequence with the movement he remembered best – the one he created. He performed the next two movements in the sequence, and then stopped, looking around. His gaze fell on Alexis, who had finished the unison movement sequence and who had started to do a series of floating and spiralling movements to travel her across the stage from her starting place upstage right to the looping pedal and microphone at downstage left. The very first movement Alexis performed looked similar to the

floating roll that is part of the unison movement sequence. Robert copied this movement, putting himself in Alexis' path of travel to stage left. She curved around to avoid him and moved to the looping pedal, turning down the sounds of breath and then beginning to hum.

The dancers/researchers began the transition from the unison movement sequence to the orbits by rocking or moving in tight circular movements. Robert, after rolling into Alexis' path, stopped on his stomach, watched them for a few seconds and then started rocking from side to side on his stomach. The dancers/researchers moved into orbiting patterns, circles and spirals across the stage that eventually led them into the center, where they imagined black hole was. In this improvisation, the orbits were chaotic. The dancers/researchers circled the stage both clockwise and counter-clockwise and sometimes flattened the orbits, making them more like long, thin ovals than circles.

Robert got to his feet and walked to upstage right. He stayed there, walking in small loops, as the rest of the dancers/researchers circled the perimeter of the rehearsal space. Iris came into the center, caught in the black hole, and Robert followed her. Iris made a small circular motion with her hands, indicating that she should be freed from the black hole by another dancer/researcher taking the same position with their hands and matching those circles. Robert, instead, tried to free her with one of the contact improvisation based movements we had played with at the rehearsal the week before. In this movement, the dancer/researcher freeing a stuck dancer/researcher should slide their hand around the side of the head of the stuck dancer/researcher. As the rotational movement of the head transferred down the stuck dancer/researcher's spine to their pelvis, the stuck dancer/researcher would turn. The dancer/researcher freeing the stuck dancer/researcher

would slide their hand off the stuck dancer/researcher's head and both would return to orbiting the perimeter of the rehearsal space.

Rather than Robert placing his hand on her head however, he placed his hand on Iris' back. Having been given the wrong movement to free her, Iris did nothing. Robert and Iris stayed there, frozen together in the event horizon. Eventually Sara came and freed Iris. Robert followed Iris, trying to stay in contact, but in her power chair, Iris was too fast for him and zoomed away. Robert decided to head back to free Sheena, who had now become caught in the black hole's event horizon. Immediately after Sheena was freed Robert came back to rescue Sara. Shortly after, the dancers/researchers all began to get stuck in the event horizon of the black hole and I ended the run.

I knew Robert forgot what to do in all of these moments because he made choices that were outside the final improvisation score – placing his hand on Iris' back instead of her head when she was signalling to be freed or freeing Sheena and Sara one immediately after the other instead of orbiting around the stage like the other dancers/researchers did after freeing each other. When I re-watched the video I also saw him stop multiple times, looking around at the other dancers/researchers, trying to find a visual cue he could follow. In the rehearsal hall, I assumed these choices indicated an accessibility problem, but reviewing the video footage, I could see patterns in Robert's choices and the reaction of the group to his choices that I could not in the rehearsal. In the moments where he forgot the score, Robert consistently chose movement that would put him into a clear relationship with other dancers/researchers, usually through copying the movement of the other dancers/researchers. At the beginning of the piece, when he forgot the unison movement sequence, he mimicked Alexis' movement. The movement was the same

movement as Alexis, done in relatively close timing. The dancers/researchers had articulated the value of being together through moving in unison together. Robert created unison movement with Alexis.

The other moment where this clearly manifested is when Robert came to free Sara. Sara was using a version of the circling fingers gesture that is unique to her and was never used again after that particular rehearsal. She moved the circling fingers (which the other dancers/researchers held in front of their stomachs) from her right hip, up to her left shoulder and back again. As her fingers came up to her left shoulder her weight shifted to her left foot and her right foot lifted off the floor. None of the other dancers/researchers used this movement, but Robert copied it. He came behind her and moved his circling fingers in a parallel pathway to Sara's. Once again, when Robert did not remember the final improvisation score he used visual cueing and made a clear choice to bring himself into unison with another dancer/researcher. These choices were outside the options given by the final improvisation score but they were choices that created unison movement, and therefore created an image of the dancers/researchers being together. Robert always chose to create connections. The dancers/researchers defined good dance as dance that connects and makes people feel, particularly feel embodied. Robert's choices created good dance.

Dance improvisation is often framed around making clear choices in relation to the choices of other dancers. The choice should either support the group, often by mirroring it, or taking up its quality, or by deliberately countering the choices of the other dancers (Alessi, 2017). For example, if one dancer in the improvisation has established a pattern of doing soft, flowing side-to-side hand movements on the spot, another dancer in the

improvisation might support them in a variety of ways. They might come beside the original dancer, mimicking their movements. This establishes the same type of movement in the same space. The second dancer might also do this same movement in a different space, or may kneel, performing the same movement at a different level. Or they may transpose the movement into another body part, but keep the same movement quality. These choices all support the movement choice of the original dancer. Or, if most of the group is engaged in this soft, flowing, stationary movement, the dancer may choose to counter it by moving with a staccato quality or moving through the space, countering the stationary or flowing quality of the movement that has been established. The choices of a dancer in an improvisation are ideally always made in relationship to the group.

This understanding of supporting and contrasting choices in improvisation was familiar to the dancers/researchers. Sara explicitly referenced this when she asked for a particular order to the entrance. She said, "So for me, I really don't want to go first because I have the fast breaths and I want them to contrast with the slow breaths." Sara wanted Alexis and Iris' longer slow breaths to go first to establish a pattern that would allow her to break the pattern and provide contrast. Within dance improvisation, including integrated forms, training aims to improve dancers' decision-making capacity to enable them to make clear choices that relate to the rest of the group and the improvisation through support or contrast (Benjamin, 2002; Alessi, 2017).

In all of the examples I give, Robert chose to support the movement choices of the other dancers/researchers rather than to contrast them. By always choosing to support the movement choices of the other dancers/researchers Robert transitioned from task to task in the final improvisation score at relatively the same pace as the other

dancers/researchers because he was cuing off of them. I was so stuck - emotionally entangled – because of my concern that the moments when Robert forgot the improvisation score indicated an accessibility problem, I could not recognize that Robert's pace through the final improvisation score was consistent with the rest of the dancers/researchers.

Releasing Assumptions and Access Intimacy

I suggest that access intimacy works similarly to wonder. Access intimacy, like wonder requires a reorientation to the world, letting go of our assumptions (Ahmed, 2014). To remain in the improvisation with Robert the other dancers/researchers had to let go of their assumptions about what should happen in the improvisation. Robert's choices created unexpected interventions into the space, and forced the other dancers/researchers to respond to Robert. For example, when Robert mirrored Alexis' movement to the looping pedal, his movements took him into her pathway of movement. Alexis had to respond, creating new movement and a new relationship within the improvisation.

Not knowing forced Robert to pay attention to his surroundings, to make choices based on what he saw, not what he thought should be happening. Similarly, his choices, based on information from those surroundings forced the other dancers/researchers to make choices in the improvisation based on what he was doing, not what the dancers/researchers thought should be happening. Benjamin (2002), suggests, "Improvisation teaches us on a daily basis to readjust our perceptions of occurrences that we might ordinarily regard as a mistake or distractions" (p. 49). Robert's choices, while

outside the improvisation score we had agreed on, were not mistakes because they created new relationships and new possibilities for the improvisation score. All the other dancers/researchers stayed in the improvisation. None of them stopped the improvisation. Instead they responded to Robert's choices, continuing the improvisation. They reoriented, creating access to the improvisation for Robert and for themselves. They did not create access intimacy. There was no ease, no embodied good feelings of togetherness in the room that day. Everyone was working far too hard to stay in the improvisation for access intimacy to arise. But there was access.

I see in these moments the possibility of access intimacy. To create the possibility of access intimacy, the assumptions we need to let go of could include the inaccessibility of the world as a given, and common disability narratives such as disability as a private tragedy (Snyder & Mitchell, 2006). Reviewing the video footage and reflecting on Robert's pattern of seeking unison and connection made me realize that the assumptions that I need to release can also be ordinary, small assumptions that contribute to inaccessibility in my everyday interactions. In this improvisation, the dancers/researchers and I needed to release the assumptions we had about what doing the final improvisation score involved. In this research/rehearsal process I also had to release the assumption that improvisation is a more accessible form of dance than set choreography and recognize that improvisation can make similar demands of dancers' memories as set choreography.

That moment of releasing our assumptions about how the final improvisation score should unfold allowed us to stay together in the improvisation. With time and a lot of practice the dancers/researchers, myself included, might have been able to do as Benjamin (2002) suggests and see improvisational offers and opportunities. Years from

now, with hours of improvisation practice, we may find ourselves in a similar situation and be able to move from access to access intimacy. Even if the experiences of the other dancers/researchers in this improvisation were difficult, the practice of remaining in the improvisation may eventually lead them to have confidence and ease integrating choices that are outside the improvisation score.

When researchers (Banes, 2003a; Cooper Albright, 2003a; Pallant, 2006) reference improvisation as a more accessible movement practice than normative Western concert dance technique, they are primarily referring to physical accessibility. Working from a prompt, task, or constraint to develop movement provides more possibilities for dancers to be physically right. However, improvisation practice contains a number of assumptions about the mental capacities of dancers that are similar to the assumptions that set technical movement sequences make of dancers, namely that dancers can hold significant amounts of information in their working memory and use that information to create movement. These assumptions of dancers' working memory capacity may create barriers to participation, as they did for Robert.

When working to develop the final improvisation score we did not create conditions that might make the good feelings of access intimacy possible. Indeed, we struggled just to create access. But it did cause me to reflect on the way the dancers/researchers releasing their assumptions about how the final improvisation score should unfold created access, and how if I had been able to release my assumptions about improvisation being more accessible than set choreography, I might have been able to create more access and conditions that might lead to access intimacy.

Chapter Ten: Partnering

Sara is facing to stage left and Iris is directly behind her, looking at Sara's back. Sara slowly turns on the spot until she is facing Iris. Her gaze does not meet Iris'. It is directed at some distant point downstage right. Sara slowly raises her left hand, pointing at this spot. Iris watches her hand rise. When Sara has come to stillness Iris floats both her hands up, palms down, elbows lifted so her forearms are flat. Sara looks at Iris and gently brings her hands, underneath Iris', palms up. Iris and Sara's palms meet and Iris' hands softly float apart and then up. Sara and Iris rotate away from each other, Iris staying on the spot and Sara walking towards to stage left. As Iris finishes her rotation, Sara turns back to face Iris. Iris lifts her right leg up out of its footrest. Her leg floats in mid-air and her arms float up, expanding all her limbs away from her body…

Unison movement required the dancers/researchers to pay careful attention to their own needs around pace and to how others were moving. Improvisation required the dancers/researchers to remember a score and make decisions based on each other's actions and the score. The final element of timing we examined was altering our pace to coordinate our movements in partnering. Partnering required the dancers/researchers to have a shared understanding of each other's movements and to learn each other's timing. Because of the variability of access needs and of personal timing, the dancers/researchers also needed to check in with each other, either by look or by touch, in order to coordinate their movements. In this chapter I will examine a duet between Sara and Iris. I will contrast the movement of this duet and our experiences creating it with our experiences determining and rehearsing the 'freeing movements' in the final improvisation score. The duet and the freeing movements required the dancers/researchers to check in with their partner. The choreographed duet used visual checking in to allow Sara and Iris to keep track of each other. The freeing movements we tried to incorporate into the final improvisation score used touch for the dancers/researchers to keep track of each other.

The dancers/researchers' lack of familiarity with using touch to track each other's pace and spatial position made these movements very difficult.

Set Choreography Duets

The duet between Sara and Iris was developed early in the process and was not ultimately included in the final improvisation score. This duet used visual contact to enable Sara and Iris to match their pace to each other. The duet was one of several we built by using a series of tasks to combine and alter the short expansion and contraction movement phrases that the dancers/researchers had developed from their improvisation.

The dancers/researchers worked in pairs. First, I asked the dancers/researchers to combine their movement phrases together as a conversation. I asked them to alternate movements by finding the moments where they wanted to stop the movement. So, the first dancer/researcher would move through their solo until they found a place in their movement where it felt good to come to stillness. Then the second dancer/researcher would move until they found a stop in their solo. Then the first dancer/researcher would begin again. I asked them to change as little of the movement as possible when they were first constructing their conversation. Once the dancers/researchers had built the conversational back and forth, I offered other tasks to evolve the duet. As connections, both made and missed, were something that had come up several times in the initial brainstorming at the first rehearsal, I asked them to find two places for a connection and two places to change the movement to a missed connection, whatever that meant to the dancers/researchers. Finally, I asked the dancers/researchers to find a moment of weight

sharing. The dancers/researchers also added and adjusted the movement as they saw fit beyond the tasks that I gave them.

Figure 4. Alexis and Brooke duet.

Visual description: Alexis and Brooke stand side-by-side with their backs to the wall. Both are looking down at their arms. Brooke clasps her forearms and Alexis' right hand is lifted just above her left forearm that ends in a stump, palm down.

When the dancers/researchers reflected on this process of building the duet they talked about how the addition of someone else deepened the movement and increased the

connection and complexity. The dancers/researchers talked about how much happier they were developing duets than developing their solos.

Brooke stated:

> For me, it just increases the amount of choice in connection. So, doing something solo you can play with pace and tempo in relation to yourself and the audience. But when you put someone else in there, yeah, it just increases the choices that you're making.

Alexis, Sara, and Iris all talked about the intimacy and connection that was created through creating a movement relationship with another dancer/researcher. Like unison movement, moving together in duets and creating together was deeply meaningful to the dancers/researchers in ways that suggest that access intimacy might arise in this practice.

To coordinate the pace of their movements to each other, Sara and Iris choreographed moments of visual connection. The duet began with Sara and Iris, positioned close together. Sara faced stage left and Iris was directly behind her, looking at Sara's back. Sara slowly turned on the spot until she faced Iris. Her gaze did not meet Iris' but was directed at some distant point downstage right. Sara slowly raised her left hand, pointing at this spot. Iris watched her hand rise. When Sara came to stillness Iris floated both her hands up, palms down, elbows lifted so her forearms were flat. Sara looked at Iris and gently brought her hands, underneath Iris', palms up. Iris and Sara's palms met and Iris' hands softly floated apart and then up. Sara and Iris rotated away from each other, Iris staying on the spot and Sara walking away to stage left. As Iris finished her rotation, Sara turned back to face Iris. Looking at Sara, Iris lifted her right leg up out of its footrest. Her leg floated in mid-air and her arms floated up, expanding all her limbs away from her

body. Mirroring Iris, Sara extended her left leg and then fell forward into a deep lunge, her head and neck folding down towards the floor.

Iris began the duet aware of, and in relationship to Sara. Iris established this awareness and relationship by looking at Sara. She looked at Sara from the moment that the duet began and remained looking at her until she turned. Reviewing the video, when Sara began the duet, I did not know if she was aware of Iris until she met Iris' eyes as she broke apart Iris' hands. From that moment on they were in constant relationship through their visual connection.

As Sara fell, Iris curved towards her extended leg and then, quickly, cued by Sara expelling breath as she fell, Iris and Sara looked up at each other, once again creating a relationship with their gaze. Sara rolled towards Iris and Iris moved towards her. As they came close, Sara slowed, and as they passed Sara sped up. As Sara rolled, her eyes tracked Iris for as long as possible and then as she turned, found Iris again as quickly as possible. They moved to opposite sides of the space and once again turned to face each other.

The visual connection in this duet served to establish and heighten the relationship between Sara and Iris and, like the unison movement phrase, it also let them keep track of where the other was in the duet. When Sara and Iris turned back towards each other after separating and breaking visual contact they were checking on each other's timing. Sara might not have timed her cross to the ends of the stage perfectly. Iris may have turned a little too fast. So, they looked at each other and connected before moving to the next section of the duet that required them to extend their legs in unison.

Figure 5. Sara and Iris' duet.

Visual Description: Sara and Iris mid-duet. On the left Iris has released the controls of her power chair, opening both her hands out to the side, palms towards Sara. Sara is in a long, low lunge, her head dropped, her palms touching the ground.

For all of this to happen, there had to be an agreement about the movement - what Iris would do, what Sara would do. Both Iris and Sara needed to know and be aware of the timing of the other, particularly when Sara crossed stage left. They were not looking at each other, but Sara was trying to arrive at the opposite end of the stage from Iris and turn at the same time Iris finished her rotation. They needed to have a sense of how fast and slow the other person moved and to regulate their own movement in relationship to that. To do this, they both had to know their own movement in the duet and also their partner's movements. Finally, both of them had to have developed, through rehearsal, a sense of the general pace of the duet, including a sense of their partner's pace and how it changed as they moved through the choreography. Each of the dancer/researcher's individual paces varied from day to day. The visual connection that Sara and Iris built into the choreography of their duet, including moments that reconnected them before they moved

to unison movements, enabled them to calibrate the pace of their movements to each other in the absence of musical cuing.

Sara and Iris felt good doing the duet. They expressed a couple of times that they wished this duet could have been included in the final improvisation score and they asked to work on it in our last rehearsal. They had ease and good feelings doing this duet because of the knowledge they had each developed about the way the other moved and because the duet was created to enable them to check in and adjust to the other. In this duet, Sara and Iris created the possibility of access intimacy because they had built knowledge of the duet, including of each other's movement and each other's pace in the duet. The duet also had deliberately choreographed moments that enabled them to check on their pace in relation to each other. They needed to have a way of checking their knowledge of each other. Visual cuing, for Sara and Iris and for many of the dancers/researchers, was an easy and familiar way to check the knowledge they had built of how the other moved in the choreography.

Visual cuing is particularly apparent in Sara and Iris's duet but was something all the dancers/researchers utilized to a greater or lesser degree across a wide variety of contexts including duets, unison movement and in the final improvisation score. When dancers/researchers used visual cueing they often experienced ease and access intimacy through coordinating their movement. Visual cuing for Sara and Iris was a carefully choreographed way, but familiar way, to recalibrate their pace to the inevitable minute variations in each other's pace.

Cueing Through Touch

When the dancers/researchers experimented with coordinating pace in partnering through touch, rather than visual cueing, we ran into difficulties. In particular, we struggled with contact improvisation derived movements that we developed to free the dancers/researchers from the black hole. These movements required the dancers/researchers to adjust their timing through touch and proprioception. We found coordinating bodies moving together through weight, touch and momentum tremendously difficult.

We spent a few rehearsals, as we were developing the final improvisation score playing with contact improvisation inspired movements to free dancers from the black hole. At the May 21st rehearsal, Sara and Robert were working together. They tried to practice a freeing motion where the dancer/researcher freeing the stuck dancer/researcher scooped their arm around the stuck dancer/researcher's back and swung them in a small circle, releasing them away from the black hole. Sara and Robert practiced once with Robert spinning Sara. The movement was contained, there was no force or push obvious on the video. Sara tried to explain to Robert that the movement was about two bodies interacting. She used the example of a shot-put. On the video, Sara spun, her hand cupped near her chin, visually illustrating for Robert the metaphor of a shot put. Sara explained to Robert, through a visual metaphor, the particular sense of movement and force to coordinate her movement with Robert that she was not getting.

Similarly, Sara asked me to take a look at the same scoop motion, but with her spinning Sheena. She asked me to take a look because it did not feel right. She said to me, "The spin is hard." I watched and then we explored how to make it feel better:

Kelsie: Yeah. So, if you curve the path of your entry I think that'll give your body a clearer indication. Cause you're trying to come straight and then you're trying to curve. But if, um, I'll come from here, because this is probably more logical. But if my pathway actually enters curved then I understand better, my body knows where the center of the circle I'm making is.

Sara: Okay.

Sheena: A spiral.

Kelsie: Yes, that's the word! Yes, that was it!

Visually, when Sara was watching the movement as it was developed she saw a straight line of entry into the movement and replicated that. This meant that she had to initiate the turning, curving movement as she made contact with her partner, rather than having this movement already established as she made contact with her partner. Sheena had to match the pace of Sara's turn as Sara initiated the turn, which felt awkward. There was important information about this movement that Sara needed to make the movement feel good that could not be conveyed visually. Sara and Sheena discussed the complexity of being asked to move in curved pathways:

Sara: It's actually really complex spatial stuff.

Sheena: Yeah.

Sara: Because straight is so easy, and that's how I naturally move and I'm like, oh, there's all these spirals! Yeah.

Sheena: Yeah.

Unlike the visual cueing of the unison movement phrase, these kinds of movements relied on touch and a sense of spiral for the dancers/researchers to sync up their pace and spatial

pathway. These movements are familiar to me, through training in contemporary dance, partnering and contact improvisation, but to the other dancers/researchers they were not. We did not want, however, to alter the movement pathways to make them straight. Some of this movement vocabulary was determined by the improvisation structure we had already settled on. For example, the entry into any of the freeing movements had to be a spiral because the dancers/researchers were travelling in circles around the stage during that part of the improvisation. To add to the complexity, because of the structure of the final improvisation score, the dancers/researchers needed to be able to do these movements with everyone. So, it wasn't just memorizing one other person's feel and timing doing these movements, it was memorizing feel and timing for everyone doing these movements. For some dancers/researchers, particularly Iris, other adaptations and changes were needed to make the movement accessible so further adjustments needed to be memorized.

Coordinating partnering through touch was a skill that, as a group, we did not have and needed to acquire to create ease in the kind of contact improvisation inspired movement that we had developed. Ultimately, there was no ease or access in improvised partnering requiring touch for the dancers/researchers to coordinate pace and spatial pathways. In the end, we discarded most of the movements we experimented with because we could not make them work in the time we had. Both these types of partnering, the set choreography duets and contact improvisation derived movements, required the dancers/researchers to have particular kinds of knowledge to create access to the movement and to feel at ease in a way that might create the possibility of access intimacy. Set choreography duets required dancers/researchers to know their movement,

each others' movement and the general pace of the duet. Contact improvisation derived movements required the dancers/researchers to know how to give and receive information through weight, touch and momentum. This echoes Mingus' (2011b) reflection that access intimacy can take tremendous work. In our research/rehearsal process any of the moments when the dancers/researchers felt the kind of ease that could lead to the possibility of access intimacy were the result of tremendous learning and hours of practice. Determining how much time learning and practice would be required to create the kind of ease that might lead to access intimacy required weighting the dancers/researchers' previous movement training, the dancer/researchers' access needs and the desires of the dancers/researchers to learn and practice particular skills.

Division of Labour

The complexity of the tasks the dancers/researchers needed to manage while dancing and the relationship between the complexity or difficulty of these tasks and the possibility of access intimacy appeared in several moments in the rehearsal/research process. Creating the possibility of access intimacy in our practices of timing was, in no small part, about managing the amount of labour and learning the dancers/researchers were doing at any moment. Often the dancers/researchers were doing different types of labour and learning from each other.

In our integrated dance rehearsal/research process, for the most part, not everyone needed to have the same skills or capacities. Sometimes particular people took on specific types of movement work because they had the capacity or previous training to easily do that kind of work. Brooke, however, pointed out that it was important for us to think

carefully about who took on what roles and responsibilities while dancing. She commented when we were working on the unison movement phrase that she was not happy with herself for visually cuing off the rest of the group because it meant that other people had to do the work of memorizing the movement. This made me realize that I needed to be aware of, and attentive to the question of whether some people were taking on more or less labour in the rehearsal hall to create access. The kind of access intimacy that I realized we were seeking through moving together was built through learning about how we moved and how the other dancers/researchers moved. This kind of learning can be difficult and sometimes required significant time and effort from the dancers/researchers. I realized through our difficulties with improvisation, and coordinating movement through touch that if the learning required was onerous or difficult, or the skill we were working on was difficult for everyone in the process, then access intimacy was less likely to happen.

Mingus (2017) speaks bitterly about the one-sided nature of the access work that she has had to take on to survive. She writes, "Access intimacy is shared work by all people involved, it is no longer the familiar story of disabled people having to do *all the work* to build the conversations and piece together the relationship and trust that we know we need for access" (Mingus, 2017, para. 24, italics in original). Mingus (2017) is calling attention to the division of access labour between disabled and non-disabled people. But I have also seen this dynamic present among disabled people, and in our research/rehearsal process, the division of labour that supported access to particular types of movement and timing practices was sometimes uneven. Sometimes, as in the case of scored improvisation, this was about different capacities. Most of the dancers/researchers found

it relatively easy to remember the final improvisation score so they provided access to the score for Robert by providing him with visual cues he could follow. Whenever the dancers/researchers took on too much labour, however, whether it was because their attention needed to be divided or when the tasks or skills we were working with were too new or unfamiliar, we lost the possibility of access intimacy, and sometimes we lost access all together. Access work had the potential to add to the labour the dancers/researchers were already doing, so had the potential to be the one extra thing that closed down the possibility of access intimacy.

Brooke's question also made me ask, what happens when the skills, capacities or training are not in the room at all? Or what happens when we need everyone to have similar skills, capacities or training? The contact improvisation-based movement we played with required both dancers/researchers performing them to have similar capacities to feel and respond to the other dancers/researchers. For Sara and Sheena to make the scoop movement work, both of them had to be able to read the other's movement through touch and respond appropriately. Sara had to give Sheena clear physical cues about the movement pathway and the pace of the movement. Sheena needed to read those cues and match Sara's movement pathway and pace as best she could. Sara might also have needed to respond and shift her movement based on physical cues from Sheena once they had made contact. When we tried to work with the contact improvisation inspired movements all of the dancers/researchers struggled with reading each other's pathway and pace through weight and touch. We needed all the dancers/researchers to have some of those skills to make the movements work with the ease required to create the

possibility of access intimacy. We could not rely on a few of the dancers/researchers learning these skills and then creating access for everyone else.

In future, I will need to be careful and check in throughout rehearsal processes. Even if I know the dancers I work with possess particular skills and capacities, in the context of the other tasks the dance requires them to do and in the context of the access work they may also be doing, I cannot assume those skills and capacities will be easy, or accessible at all. Just as Sara and Iris looked at each other to check in, I will need to figure out ways to constantly recalibrate how I choreograph and facilitate in relation to what the dancers I work with are experiencing.

Rehearsal Time

When the dancers/researchers encountered skills and practices of timing that they struggled with, such as finding a shared timing for the end of the final improvisation score or coordinating their pace through touch, it is easy for me to suggest that in future I should schedule longer rehearsal processes to give more time to these different skills. Practically, there were several factors that determined the length of this particular research/rehearsal process. While some of these constraints, such as the need to pass ethics approval, were unique to this process, others are common to my experiences of integrated dance rehearsal processes.

The first factor that determined the length of this rehearsal/research process was the timing of this study receiving ethics approval. The University of Alberta's research ethics board approved this study on February 16th. This study also passed CRIPSiE's research review process in late February, and on March 1st potential dancers/researchers received

emails inviting them to participate. By March 17th I had received expressions of interest from the dancers/researchers and set the first rehearsal for April 2nd. On the 2nd we discussed and determined a rehearsal schedule for the next three months.

Many of the dancers/researchers had summer commitments that meant that the research/rehearsal process could not continue past the end of June. The gap between receiving ethics approval and the end of June created a defined time for the research/rehearsal process. In addition, when building the rehearsal schedule, the dancers/researchers expressed some hesitation at committing so many hours to a project that was unpaid. Even if the rehearsal/research process had not been unpaid and I was able to pay professional rates, there are caps on the amount of money that any granting agency will provide, limiting the length of any rehearsal process. In addition, restructuring rehearsal processes into something more like an ongoing part time job would require a major shift in CRIPSiE's way of working that might not be desirable to the dancers/researchers involved in this work. Conflicting work schedules and balancing the demands on the dancers/researchers' bodies and minds with adequate rest and valuing the dancers/researchers' time meant that there were limits to the number of rehearsals we could possibly do in those three months. We scheduled as many as seemed reasonable. These factors – the dancers/researchers' individual schedules, the need to balance work, rest and artistic creation, and the lack of a budget to pay the dancers/researchers – are not unique to this project. They are the same factors that I take into account in every rehearsal process.

The presence of a performance, shaping the rehearsal process, was also not unique to this research/rehearsal process. While dance processes exist that are exclusively about

exploration and creation, it is generally understood that it is harder to secure funding for these types of projects, meaning that they are less common. I also prefer creation processes that have a performance at the end. My experience of creation processes without a performance attached is that dancers are less focused and less committed to the process, even if they are paid for their time.

Once we accepted the performance opportunity, the relationship of the performance to the rehearsal process was felt in almost every rehearsal. In particular, how far away the performance was shaped my and the dancers/researchers' attitudes to what we needed to accomplish at rehearsal. Alexis, looking back at the rehearsal process said:

> And I think we all collectively, around that time, were like, okay this is where we're at, we're not going to like, keep adding or taking away, we just understood that. But you know, had the performance been in August we would have still been working on things right now.

The pressure of an upcoming performance pushed the process from exploration to analysis where we were had to evaluate what we liked, what the final improvisation score was trying to accomplish, and what movement choices were successful enough to make it into performance. This deepened the work in particular ways, making it more critical and analytic earlier in the rehearsal process than it might have been had we not had a performance date. This meant that we sometimes discarded movement that was too hard or that we might have been able to figure out how to make accessible if we had more time to practice and think about it.

Sara said of determining when she would say yes and no to a movement:

> I think it, it really depended on when my performance dates was. And I felt like, how much labour should I put in before I'm like, it's not going to work for my performance, why don't I just find a cool move that I will do well and do that, that would, that would serve the piece far more than me trying to fake something.

The pressure to be "good enough" for an audience and the question of how long it would take to be "good enough" framed dancers/researchers' decision making around which movements they kept and which ones they refused. The difference was, in this rehearsal/research process, we took the time to be reflexive about why particular skills or movements might need more time than we had for us to feel confident about performing them in front of an audience. The moments when we stopped, discussed, and made decisions were moments where we checked in with each other and the timeline of the rehearsal/research process, just as we checked in on each other in the midst of dancing together.

Practically, this means that since the amount of time in the rehearsal process is part of making particular practices of timing accessible, we will never have perfect accessibility. Knowing exactly how much time is needed for a rehearsal process would require me to know the dancers I am going to work with and the practices of timing (or other skills) we are going to use in the dance well enough to be able to confidently predict the complex ways the dancers and the practices of timing are going to interact. As our experiments in improvisation showed, I could not confidently predict the accessibility of a particular practice of timing. In this rehearsal process I also could not predict what practices of timing the dancers/researchers would find meaningful and want to spend time on, as in the case of unison movement. To limit this uncertainty I would need to remove or limit

the collaborative component of the rehearsal/research process that the dancers/researchers found so meaningful, something I am not willing to do. Instead, I believe the way to create more accessible rehearsal processes is to continue to develop my ability to determine when something is difficult, inaccessible, or inaccessible in the timeframe we have. Deciding not to continue working on a movement or a skill is a recalibration of the rehearsal process just as Sara and Iris' moments of visual connection were moments for them to shift and adjust to each other's pace. I need to improve my capacity to respond to the complex interactions of dance practices, dancers and accessibility in the rehearsal process.

Chapter Eleven: Description of the Final Improvisation Score

From the second rehearsal, black holes and cosmic senses of time emerged as an important and exciting source of inspiration. Sara said:

> Or the event horizon where you're - you can never fall into the black hole. It's a terrifying paradox, but you can't fall into it, you will always be on the cusp of falling into it. I could go on for a long time about these things, I find them really spiritual.

The physics of black holes, particularly how time slows down the closer you get to a black hole, gave us a visual and movement metaphor to describe the felt relativity of time. This metaphor became the starting point for the final improvisation score.

Figure 6. A rehearsal of the final improvisation score.

Visual Description: Alexis, Sara, Iris and Sheena in rehearsal of the final improvisation score. Iris is at the center of the image, propelling her power chair forward. Sara is just behind her, also facing into the camera. Sheena is to the right of Iris and Sara, also facing into the camera. Like Iris, Sara and Sheena have been caught in motion, partway through their step. To the left Alexis is seated on the ground, back toward the camera, looking over her shoulder at Iris, Sheena and Sara.

Final Improvisation Score

I imagine a bare stage. The dark. Black flooring vanishing into the black drapes. Light, filtering horizontally in from the wings. In reality, the hard light of the fluorescents illuminates both the floor and the walls of this small, square rehearsal hall in unforgiving light. I'm playing that choreographer game where I try to see, laid over the reality of the rehearsal hall, the future performance.

Downstage left – the imaginary audience's right - there is a looping pedal and a microphone. A looping pedal is a piece of sound equipment that can be attached to a guitar, microphone or other instrument. It is a small, rectangular box with a large pedal and several knobs. When you depress the pedal it records sound and then repeats the recorded sound over and over again, in a loop. It is often used by musicians to accompany themselves.

Dancers/researchers enter one at a time, beginning with Alexis. She comes on from the wing closest to the looping pedal. She stops just behind the looping pedal and picks up the microphone with care, depresses the pedal and breathes, long and slow into the microphone.

Pace. As I watch her, I can hear Chris' reflections on how moving slow allowed him to connect to his body. Alexis breathes and I can see (and feel) her connection to her breath and body. In the slow exhale I hear Mingus' (2017) description of access intimacy as a long exhale, a sense of bodily ease and connection.

Alexis walks to the upstage right corner of the rehearsal space and sits, facing the imaginary audience. She begins the unison movement sequence. Her arms float up, reaching long, and then she curls down, placing each vertebrae from her pelvis to her head on the floor in sequence. On the floor, she curls to the right, her arms sweeping the

floor about her head. She curls into a tight ball and then expands again, her body opening to a starfish position on the floor. She curves to the other side as Sara and Iris enter from the same wing Alexis came in and move to the looping pedal.

Sara and Iris both stop just behind the looping pedal. Sara picks up the microphone and passes it to Iris who breathes faintly into it. Iris passes it back to Sara and rolls to upstage center. Iris comes to a stop on a slight angle facing back towards Sara. Sara breathes into the looping pedal, a sharp, rapid panting sound.

Improvisation. I think about the importance of contrast, how Sara specifically asked to go after Alexis and Iris because she wanted her quick breath to contrast with their slow breaths. The order of things, and how and when you change, what pace you change at, is important. And difficult to coordinate.

Sara puts the microphone down and walks downstage center and lowers herself onto her belly. Sheena enters from the same wing. She breathes into the microphone, adding her breath to the vocal landscape that is being built by the looping pedal. She places it back on the floor and sits, curled into a little ball just upstage of the looping pedal. Finally, Robert enters, taking short steps. He breathes into the looping pedal, a long whistling sound and sits directly beside the looping pedal. The looping pedal has layered the sound of all breaths together and this shifting tapestry of breath continues throughout the unison movement sequence.

Alexis is now a third of the way through the unison movement sequence that she began as soon as she sat on the floor in the upstage right corner. When we first developed this sequence, we performed it in unison, but we decided to place it in canon for the final improvisation score.

Repetition. I think about this pattern of expansion and contraction that we have repeated again and again, the dancers/researchers carefully watching each other in order to synchronize their movements. Access intimacy is often difficult to build,

requiring significant labour (Mingus, 2011b). The repetition of movement in rehearsal is a kind of labour that can create the possibility of access intimacy.

From her starfish position, Alexis curls side to side, crunching into a little ball in fetal position and then expanding and stretching her limbs on her way to the other side. She curls back up to seated, and reaches side to side, arms parallel to the floor. Her arms drop a little and then flap up and down five times with the up movement swift, a small hold at the top of the movement, and a slow, gentle drop down.

Pace. Our capacity to change our pace and regulate our pace was key to all the types of timing we experimented with. Our own, unconscious paces varied from day to day and it took effort for us to change our pace and bring ourselves into unison with the group.

Finally, she suspends her limbs in the air, balancing on her seat. She rolls from her seat to her stomach and then back again, as if floating. As each dancer/researcher leaves the looping pedal and comes to their position on the stage they start a variation of the unison movement sequence.

Attention and contrast. Every dancer/researcher is doing a slightly different variation of the unison sequence, the variation mostly created by the dancers/researchers' different starting positions. It was important to the dancers/researchers that there were many variations in the unison movement sequence. If the only difference is difference created by impairment then we drew attention to the impairment. Instead we chose to make variation, difference – access - part of the texture of the dance piece. This can make dancing more difficult for the dancers/researchers who are relying on visual cueing to help them remember the movement. We have chosen to prioritize one type of access here, but did we make the right choice?

Once Alexis finishes the sequence she moves across the floor from her spot to the looping pedal, rolling and floating, echoing the last movement of the unison movement sequence. She then stands and spins and spirals back down to the group to sit and pick up the microphone. She slowly fades down the sound of the dancers/researchers' breath. Then she begins to hum, a b-flat, the sound of the only black hole to make sound, located in the Perseus cluster of galaxies ('Black Hole Sound Waves'). The dancers/researchers

respond by shifting to rocking, orbiting movements that grow and grow until they finally break out of the orbiting movement to circle the stage. Some run, some walk briskly, Iris zooms in her chair.

As the dancers/researchers orbit the stage they sometimes become drawn in, attracted to Alexis, who is still improvising with the looping pedal, creating a soundscape of humming and breath. When they become attracted to her, they spiral in towards her, find a stationary position and begin to make a circling motion in front of them with their forefingers extended. They remain in this position, trapped in Alexis' gravity, until another dancer/researcher comes and frees them, either by reaching in and, with their own fingers, matching the circling motion of the trapped dancer/researcher's hands, or by sliding their hand over the trapped dancer/researcher's head, propelling them into a turn that releases them.

Here I see how much we struggled to find ease and comfort with these freeing movements. All dancers/researchers have different bodies and minds, but they also have different histories that shape how they move and the kinds of movement that are comfortable for them. Sometimes the decision of when to stop trying to make a movement work is key.

The pattern of the dancers/researchers orbiting the stage, becoming drawn into the black hole and then being rescued continues until all the dancers/researchers eventually become trapped in their attraction to Alexis. I let them hold the image for a few breaths, imagining the performance where the stage manager would decide that the dance was done and gently dim the lights.

Chapter Twelve: Valuing

In this run, Sheena is the last dancer/researcher to be caught in the black hole. The rest of the dancers/researchers at this rehearsal, Sara, Iris, are clustered stage left around Alexis. Alexis pulls the microphone close to her lips and then away to change the texture of her hum. Sara and Iris are still, but not frozen, pulsing ever so slightly and slowly, as if resisting the gravitational pull of Alexis. Sheena's curving orbit ends and she circles her hands, pointer fingers extended, to indicate that she too is caught in the black hole. Alexis reaches out and turns the soundscape slowly down. They all sag, hands and fingers falling, then form a circle. "So?" I ask, "Thoughts, feelings?"

I began this research process asking, *how do professional integrated dancers practice timing in the rehearsal process*? I suspected, because of personal experience and community feedback that we ways we practiced timing were informed by compulsory able-bodiedness/able-mindedness. I realized when I began analysis that this was the wrong research question and the wrong theoretical framework. I instead needed to be asking, *how can professional integrated dancers create access and the conditions for access intimacy in their practices of timing in rehearsal?* I also needed to revise my theoretical framework to reflect the dancers/researchers' desire to investigate their practices of timing in order to feel. The only major part of this research that did not change between planning and conclusion was my commitment to using a participatory creation process that used the dance rehearsal process as a site of knowledge generation.

Conrad & Beck (2016) argue that, "arts-based research should not be seen as a scientific activity, but a vigorous, partly intuitive process for meaning making in its own right" (p. 7). As such, they articulate the process of reflecting on an arts-based research study as *valuing*. Likewise, Leavy (2018b) suggests that arts-based researchers use flexible valuing criteria that are general and specific to the research and the art form. To value this research, I begin with Alexander's (2005) five point means of evaluating

performance ethnography. Then, I discuss more general means of valuing, not specific to performance ethnography (Leavy, 2018b). These general means of valuing involved seeking external feedback from the dancers/researchers as consistent with the principles of PAR and arts-based research, and critically reflecting on the research process. I conclude by reflecting on my decision to change the research question and the theoretical orientation of the research.

Valuing Performance Ethnography

Researchers (Denzin, 2003; Hamera, 2011) who use performance ethnography value the way the creation, or rehearsal processes are a site of knowledge generation and the way these processes value embodied, as well as linguistic, knowledge. This research process drew on performance ethnography in its use of an inherently embodied dance rehearsal process to generate meaning. Alexander's (2005) five questions to value performance ethnography are: (a) *Does this piece contribute to our understanding of social life?* (b) *How did the text or performance come to be? Is there adequate self-awareness within the text or performance?* (c) *Does the text present an embodied sense of lived experience? Does it express a reality?* (d) *Does the piece invite interpretive response? Is the piece artistically shaped, satisfying, complex and not boring? Does it have aesthetic merit?* and (e) *How does performance ethnography affect the performers and audience? Does the performance move the performers and audience to try new ways of understanding the world?* As this study emphasized the creation process, I propose an alternative question. Instead of *how did the performance ethnography affect the performers and audience* I propose, *did the creation of this dance move the*

dancers/researchers and me to new understandings of our movement practices and/or new movement practices?

New understandings of social life. Certainly, I believe that this piece has contributed to my understanding and ways of thinking about social life. My understanding of the accessibility and inaccessibility of integrated dancers' practices of timing in rehearsal and crucially, why we practice timing the way we do, has been fundamentally shifted. I understand now that we modified our paces in order to coordinate our timing to create the possibility that we might feel access intimacy. Some of the practical techniques to make timing more accessible, and therefore create the possibility of access intimacy, suggested by the dancers/researchers have already made their way into my everyday teaching and choreographic practice. My understandings of accessibility and inaccessibility have become more complicated and nuanced through considering access intimacy in our practices of timing. I have also learned to think about access, and therefore access intimacy, as complex, situation specific, and related to the cognitive load that the dancers/researchers were navigating.

Self awareness. Alexander (2005) next asks *how did the text or performance come to be? Is there adequate self-awareness within the text or performance?* The final improvisation score is an incomplete and indirect reflection of the journey we took to develop it. The way we engaged in the research/rehearsal process meant that we generated far more movement material than we used in the final improvisation score. In addition, many of our conversations and learnings from this process are woven into the content of the final score, but not in ways that would be explicit to an audience. Sheena,

in particular, commented on how our final improvisation score felt less rich than our explorations in rehearsal.

I consider this written document and the final improvisation score to be complementary research outcomes. They are each different forms of knowledge translation that capture different types of knowledge. The final improvisation score was a place to practice the things we learned about making elements of timing accessible and to continue to seek the access intimacy we had sought throughout the rehearsal/research process. Developing this text enabled me to document and reflect carefully on our rehearsal/research process. From previous collective creation experiences, and my own artistic processes, I knew that a performance would necessarily exclude some of the things we discovered. I was upfront about this with the dancers/researchers from the very first rehearsal. Indeed, part of our conflict resolution plan was to record and discuss any examples of artistic disagreement in the rehearsal processes and development of the dissertation, particularly around what material was and was not included in the final improvisation score. At the same time, there is embodied knowledge and felt experience that I cannot adequately capture in words. I assert however, that together, the text and the final improvisation score demonstrate self-awareness and perform different knowledge translation functions.

Expressing a reality. *Does the text present an embodied sense of lived experience? Does it express a reality?* I find the final improvisation score to be a deeply affective experience that conveys to me much of the wonder and intimacy that we sought throughout the rehearsal/research process. In performing and rehearsing it, the dancers/researchers made strong choices, particularly around pace and connecting to each

other visually and through touch that convey a very specific reality and experience. More importantly, through the final improvisation score the dancers/researchers could convey the sense of embodied ease and intimacy with each other that they were seeking. This text, as the second research outcome, conveys the journey of doing this research, what we learned from the research and how we might change our practices of timing in the future.

Interpretive response. *Does the piece invite interpretative response? Is the piece artistically shaped, satisfying, complex and not boring?* I feel that the final improvisation score we developed is artistically cohesive, and complex, even if it feels not yet finished. I find it endlessly fascinating and satisfying to watch. My sense that this piece is not yet finished does not mean that the final improvisation score is not complex and cohesive – it is. Rather, I sense that there is more to explore and develop within the final improvisation score[14].

New understandings. Finally, I asked: *did the creation of this dance move the dancers/researchers and me to new understandings of our movement practices and/or new movement practices?* I have discussed above how my understanding of access and access intimacy through timing in the integrated dance rehearsal process have shifted over the course of this research. Dancers/researchers repeatedly indicated that the process had meaning for them in that it shifted their understanding of timing, but also of rehearsal processes. Many of the dancers/researchers stated that they found a lot of meaning and learning in the collective, collaborative process of creating the dance. When I asked, "What have we learned?" many of the dancers/researchers replied that they had learned what they prefer in a creation process. Sara said:

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[14] In 2019 I received funding from the Edmonton Arts Council to further develop the final improvisation score.

> I've observed in myself how important it was for me that we created the piece together. And that there wasn't a choreographer telling us what to do. That seemed an integral part of it and that seemed really important to me. Because everyone brought something cool and we are like intertwined into it, and it gave me a sense of pride and it made things more meaningful for me, that we created it together and I continually have that sense of, we.

Sara felt a sense of shared ownership of the dance piece and connection with her fellow dancers/researchers, which made her proud. Iris echoed this, stating:

> I don't have the dance background that you guys have. Mine's just dancing and you know, and yet, I really feel I was able to contribute and quite knowledgeably so to this piece. So, it was, it was an ego boost to me to be in this dance.

In this sense of collective ownership and pride in their work, and in realizing that this was something they could experience in a rehearsal process, this rehearsal/research process contributed to the dancers/researchers understanding of their own social lives. I have already begun to incorporate my reflections on how to make timing more accessible in the rehearsal process into my teaching and choreography process. I know that at least one of the dancers/researchers has used the knowledge we developed to advocate for conditions in other rehearsal settings that would allow her to feel confident and comfortable moving fast. In a PAR informed research process, this practical application of knowledge within a community is just as important as more academic outcomes (McIntyre, 2008).

General Valuing

Beyond the specific criteria Alexander (2005) suggests to value performance ethnography, I also engaged in more general valuing of this research (Leavy, 2018b). To value this research, I sought feedback from the dancers/researchers at multiple points during analysis and writing. Both arts-based researchers (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Conquergood, 2013) and researchers (Brydon-Miller, 2008; McIntyre, 2008) using PAR emphasize the importance of reflexivity. Reflexivity can take multiple forms including participants reflecting on their lived experiences and the change they wish to see (McIntyre, 2008), participants reflecting on data collected to the researcher (Leavy, 2018; McIntyre, 2008) and researcher reflexivity (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Brydon-Miller, 2008).

McIntyre (2008) suggests that it is in co-researchers reflecting deeply on their lived experience and the potential this creates for change that PAR gains its validity. Throughout the rehearsal/research process, the dancers/researchers were highly reflexive about their practices of timing and their artistic processes. The dancers/researchers were consistently able to draw clear relationships between their lived experiences and their practices of timing. They were able to identify ways they could alter their practices of timing to make them more accessible and why they would want to do this.

To ensure the dancers/researchers reflected on the data and the research/rehearsal process I sought feedback at several points following the completion of data collection. Following the transcription of the rehearsals, I sent the transcripts and field notes to the dancers/researchers by email and I invited them to check the transcripts for accuracy and to offer feedback. I received no feedback and a single correction to the transcripts. In

addition, I also made my annotated transcripts reflecting my analysis and an outline of my proposed dissertation available to the dancers/researchers. No one commented on the analysis, but the three dancers/researchers who responded thanked me for keeping them up to date with the research process and expressed their support of the proposed dissertation outline. I have also sought feedback from the dancers/researchers on conference presentations, articles and questions that I encountered writing this dissertation. I sent all these questions and documents over email and received feedback over email, except for two discussions I had with Robert, where we met face to face so I could update him on the research process and ensure his understanding. Once I had a preliminary draft of my findings I solicited feedback and reflection on my analysis. For the sake of understanding, I also included a two-page plain language summary of the dissertation when I sent the dancers/researchers my full draft. Only four of the dancers/researchers responded, all to congratulate me on nearing the end of the dissertation process. No one offered critical feedback.

To engage in reflexivity around the rehearsal/research process, I now discuss what I learned about data collection and the research process and note what I would do differently in future. Specifically, I discuss elements of data collection - audio recording and video recording - that I feel I could have improved. I also discuss the decision to exclude performance from the data collection, a decision that I now believe was wrong.

Video and audio recording. I made a number of decisions around video and recording that I want to revisit. First, was my choice of video recording equipment. Mostly I recorded on my phone, but one rehearsal I brought in a Go-Pro. The Go-Pro was necessary to capture the all of the movement in the room. When I was video recording

with my phone, especially when dancers/researchers' movement was spread over the whole room, I was making choices about where to focus the camera. Knoblauch, Schnettler and Raab (2009) note that video data not only records auditory and visual information, but also decisions made in the recording itself, such as the angle of the camera, cuts and any other editing elements, making it some of the most complex data available to a researcher. Practically, I always decide what movement we video recorded in consultation the dancers/researchers, but this meant that video recording was selective and there were many, many moments that might have been useful to have video recorded (for example, Alice Shepard's pace focused warm-up) that were not captured.

Second, audio recording in a rehearsal setting proved more challenging than I anticipated. In designing this study, I made the decision to audio-record the full rehearsals and video-record key movement exercises and run-throughs of movement sequences. This was done partly because of concerns that video-recording entire rehearsals would be too intrusive and partly because of worries about the density of the data captured by video-recording. These concerns are valid, and in many ways, I am happy with the decision to audio record the full rehearsals. This decision, however, meant that large sections of the audio recordings are the sound of breathing as dancers/researchers rehearsed or dancers/researchers reciting the metaphorical imagery that they used to assist themselves in remembering dance phrases. While meaningful to everyone involved in the rehearsal/research process, people muttering, for example, "reach, reach, bird, flick" was not data that was useful to this research, especially when transcribed and stripped of the duration of the words. In addition, when dancers/researchers split off into groups to work on duets separately the audio-recorder

would become overwhelmed by the overlapping voices and sounds of movement in the room. It is clear that the structure and content of dance rehearsals are not well suited to audio-recording, although what was captured was rich data.

Looking back, I made these decisions because I found myself struggling to value kinaesthetic information in the way arts-based research processes are intended (Snowber, 2002). I joked about this at one point, proposing to the group, "Shall we show and maybe talk briefly, because I should probably actually get some words, as that is an acceptable form of data for the university world?" My attitude reveals that I have not entirely internalized that embodied, kinaesthetic data is just as valuable as linguistic data (Snowber, 2002). Should I have the opportunity to conduct arts-based research again, I will need to be mindful of my tendency to value words over movement, and make decisions about data collection methods accordingly.

Exclusion of performance. I consider the decision to exclude performance from my data collection the major error of my research design. When I initially proposed this study, it was suggested that I exclude performance from the study in order to manage the volume of data potentially generated by this study. I agreed. When I recruited for this study there was no performance planned. This quickly changed when CRIPSiE was offered a performance slot with Nextfest, Edmonton's large emerging artists' festival that takes place each year in June. CRIPSiE's relationship to the broader Edmonton arts scene, my uneasiness with not compensating dancers/researchers, and the meaning and significance that the dancers/researchers placed on performance meant that performance shaped the way the rehearsal process unfolded. Ultimately, excluding performance from a research process investigating rehearsal was impossible.

When CRIPSiE was offered a performance slot with Nextfest, and CRIPSiE had determined that there were no other suitable dance pieces that could be performed, I brought the opportunity to the dancers/researchers. After we discussed how a performance date might affect the research process, the dancers/researchers decided to commit to the performance. The performance opportunity felt significant because of CRIPSiE's previous relationship to Nextfest. CRIPSiE had presented site specific work twice before at Nextfest, because of the inaccessibility of the Roxy, the theatre that hosted Nextfest. In January of 2015 the Roxy theatre was destroyed by fire and Nextfest moved to a series of alternative spaces. This was the first year that the dance program would be performing in a theatre that was physically accessible. The decision to perform was made in relationship to the complex histories of CRIPSiE and the broader Edmonton arts scene; in making this decision, these histories shaped our rehearsal/research process.

Nextfest was also a paid performance. I clearly communicated in recruitment that this artistic research process was not a paid opportunity. All the dancers/researchers involved chose to engage anyway. Not paying, or minimally paying, research participants is generally considered good practice to avoid coercing low-income participants (Polascek, Boardman, & McCann, 2016). Largent and Lynch (2017), however, argue that minimal or no payment for research participants creates a situation of "mutually beneficial exploitation" (p. 7). While all parties involved consent to mutually beneficial exploitation Largent and Lynch (2017) contend that lack of compensation for sometimes labour intensive or invasive research practices is a major ethical problem. Not paying dancers for their labour is considered less than ideal within CRIPSiE (Eales, 2013) and considered unethical within the broader Edmonton arts context. When Nextfest offered us

a performance slot, I felt compelled to bring it to the dancers/researchers because I felt ethically uneasy with not paying the dancers/researchers for their labour.

As our rehearsal/research process extended past the performance dates, we spent time the rehearsal after the performance debriefing it. I learned from this discussion that the performance was an important part of the process for the dancers/researchers. It was a means of communication with a larger community and it was a deeply embodied, affective and relational experience.

Both Sheena and Sara commented on what it was like to talk to audience members about their experience of the piece and the gap between the experience of building the piece and the experience of watching the piece. Sheena noted, "We tried to take what we could out of our practices and onto the stage, um, but that it's difficult to do because the preparation was so rich." For Sheena, we failed to convey the richness of the rehearsal experience. For Sara, the disconnect came from experiencing a co-creation process focused around improvisation, something very new to her, and that her friends and family did not see something new and innovative in the piece. Even though the dancers/researchers were drawn to discussing the gap between what they were trying to convey and what the audience experienced, Sheena also noted, "I knew it wasn't just about the performance. And it wasn't about proving anything, it was really about a conversation, with each other." What was important was that the shared experience of the performance created a connection between audience and performers.

Performance afforded the dancers/researchers an opportunity to feel connection and access intimacy. The tone of excitement in their discussion of the performance suggested that the experience of performance offered something beyond rehearsal,

something meaningful and different from improvising in the rehearsal process. Performance was meaningful in the way it shaped the rehearsal process and in that the dancers/researchers found moments of access intimacy with each other and connection to the audience. Video-recording the performance and capturing audience reactions, whether by survey, interview or focus group, could have provided a valuable point of comparison to the dancers/researchers' reflections on the performance. In particular video would have allowed me to track the ways the dancers/researchers created access for each other in performance, just as they did in rehearsal. In future, when working with arts-based research methods, I will ensure that I negotiate with my co-researchers if performance will be included in data collection, given the value that the dancers/researchers placed on it in this process.

Change of Research Question and Theoretical Orientation

My decision to change the research question and theoretical orientation of this research is consistent with both PAR and arts-based research. Both forms of research emphasize engaging with the unexpected as an important part of the research process. McIntyre (2008) emphasises the need, not just to make space for the unexpected in a PAR project, but to embrace it. McIntyre (2008) writes:

> Yet it is precisely the unexpected twists and turns that occur in an ongoing collaborative process that generate creative energy, increase the possibility of people becoming agents of change in their own lives, and make it necessary for practitioners and participants to find various ways to evaluate success (p. 473)

The unpredictability of PAR is what makes it meaningful. I changed my research question and theoretical orientation in response to the unpredictability and unexpectedness of my findings. This research would have been less meaningful to the dancers/researchers (and myself) if I had persisted with the original research question and theoretical orientation. Indeed, I believe it would have been a betrayal of the axiology of PAR – the fundamental belief that people themselves possess the knowledge and agency necessary to effect change in the world (McIntyre, 2008) – to not change the research question and theoretical orientation in response to the data that emerged from the rehearsal/research process.

Conrad and Beck (2015) identify the "inherently relational quality" (p. 12) of arts-based research. Within the context of arts-based research I understand my decision to change the research question and theoretical framework as a relational act. The dancers/researchers told me very clearly that the assumptions I had made framing the research were wrong. These were necessary assumptions – to pass a candidacy exam and the University of Alberta's research ethics review I needed to demonstrate that I had thought deeply about the question I was proposing, why I was proposing it and the best methodology and theory with which to address that question. Making those assumptions and demonstrating that competency in research is a structure the University of Alberta puts in place to ensure ethics and accountability in research. But it was equally necessary, ethical, and consistent with the practice of PAR and arts-based research to change my research question and theoretical orientation.

The shift from *what are some of the ways professional integrated dancers practice timing in the rehearsal process* to *how can professional integrated dancers*

create access and the conditions for access intimacy in their practices of timing in rehearsal is a refinement of the question I was originally asking. One of the ways professional integrated dancers practice timing in the rehearsal process is through a focus on access and access intimacy. This focus on access and access intimacy necessitated the theoretical shift from compulsory able-bodiedness/able-mindedness to access intimacy and wonder. Changing the research question and the theoretical orientation of this work was necessary based on the data, but also consistent with PAR and arts-based research.

I have reflected on this research/rehearsal process through Alexander's (2005) five questions to value performance ethnography and more general valuing (Leavy, 2018b). This general valuing included opportunities for the dancers/researchers to provide input and feedback on transcripts, analysis and written products of this research including articles, conference papers and this dissertation. I have also critically reflected on how I will approach arts-based research in the future, based on what I have learned in this process. This includes videotaping more instead of relying on audio recording and, including performance and audience feedback in the data. Videotaping more of the rehearsal/research process will, in future, ensure that important improvisation and movement sequences are captured on video, providing important data and context for the audio recordings. More video recording will also provide more movement data ensuring that movement and embodied knowledge is valued equally with linguistic knowledge in future processes. Including performance and audience-feedback in future studies, or at the very least, discussing and negotiating their inclusion with future co-researchers will enable the inclusion of data

that future co-researchers deem important, particularly if I research access intimacy again. I have also reflected on my decision to change the research question and theoretical framework within the context of PAR and arts-based research. This valuing and reflecting will inform future research processes, just as the new understandings around timing, access and access intimacy that I and the dancers/researchers developed in this process will inform my future artistic practice.

Conclusion

I'm talking to Brooke as I scan the room, making sure everything is neat, just as we found it. I prop the door open with my hip and then turn off the lights. The hum of the fluorescents stop. I reach down, heft the amp and the bag with the looper pedal. I'm moving slowly for me. I can feel the lactic acid from yoga class earlier settling deep into my muscles. I slide out, balancing the door against my hip so it closes softly.

I began this research because I noticed that timing, in both the normative Western concert dance settings and in the integrated dance settings I engaged with, was practiced in very similar ways. Furthermore, researchers of normative Western concert dance (Banes, 2003; Clark, 2013) and integrated dance (Dinold & Zitomer, 2013; Eales, 2013; Irving and Giles, 2011) treat practices of timing as tacit knowledge and rarely subjected them to critical scrutiny. But it also began because of that particular combination of love and frustration that comes from struggling with something as long as I have struggled with timing.

In my experience, struggling in an integrated and disability dance space was more frustrating than struggling in a normative Western concert dance space because of the way accessibility was valued in CRIPSiE. Experiences of accessibility and inaccessibility carry an emotional weight (Mingus, 2011b). It is hard and isolating when the kinds of accessibility you need are not evident or important to anyone you are working with, nor sometimes, even to yourself. But inaccessibility also has the potential to bring people together and create experiences of access intimacy. My frustration with the practices of timing I observed in the CRIPSiE community eventually brought all of us together to investigate the accessibility and inaccessibility of our practices of timing.

I thought at the time that we were going to develop a set of practical strategies to make our practices of timing in dance more accessible. And we did. The strategies we developed were: a) when asking people to move faster, make the group moving smaller so people feel safe moving a higher speeds; b) if someone is struggling with a particular pace, whether fast or slow, try changing the movement quality; c) avoid using precise counts, and if you must, practice many times without the counts so the movement becomes automatic before you add the counts; d) if using counts, choose music where the beat is clearly marked and slower than the average pop song; e) use more visual cueing or allocate more rehearsal time to practicing cueing through touch as visual cueing is easier for dancers than cueing through touch; f) constantly evaluate the mental demands on dancers are cognitive load is a key consideration in making an integrated or disability dance rehearsal process accessible. These are all important things to learn, but it has also become obvious to me that these kinds of practical strategies are not easy fixes. Our practices of timing in dance are complex.

I've joked many times over the last two years that the central thesis of this dissertation is that *dance is hard.*

Dance is hard.

The complexity of what the dancers/researchers were doing was evident to me every time we reflected on what we were doing. Depending on what they were doing, the dancers/researchers were paying attention to the space, the other dancers/researchers' movement in the space, to their pace and the other dancers/researchers' pace, and to their internal sense of time passing. Often, they were paying attention in order to use this information to make decisions especially in improvisation. Or they needed to use this

information to coordinate their pace in unison movement or partnering. All of the practices of timing we investigated required the dancers/researchers to change and control their pace in order to coordinate their pace with other dancers/researchers. It took effort however, for the dancers/researchers to change their pace from the pace that their body wanted to move at that day. All these things placed significant cognitive load on the dancers/researchers. Dancing was complex and difficult and required tremendous effort from the dancers/researchers.

And despite all this complexity, or perhaps because of it, dance is still worth doing.

The dancers/researchers taught me that one of the reasons they danced was because of the good, magical feelings of connection to each other and their bodies. This occurred when they had access to practices of timing that meant they could coordinate their movement in particular ways. This feeling was access intimacy.

I could also joke that the thing I learned from this research is that *access is hard.*

Access is hard.

I've learned that creating access to practices of timing in the integrated dance rehearsal so that access intimacy might arise is incredibly complicated. Just as dance is complicated. My own assumptions about the accessibility of improvisation created inaccessibility in the rehearsal/research process. I assumed that improvisation was more accessible than a set movement sequence. Finding a common pace to the end of the final improvisation score was difficult (if not inaccessible) and improvisation scores actually demanded similar memory capacities as set movement. I felt stuck - caught by my surprise that improvisation was not more accessible than set movement, and by the

realization that the collaborative way we built the final improvisation score was creating barriers to full participation for Robert.

It was clear that there were high stakes surrounding decisions about if something was difficult or inaccessible. If I asked the dancers/researchers to do something inaccessible I was replicating the ableism and inaccessibility of the wider world. But if I understood inaccessibility as making things easy then I was condescending to the dancers/researchers and enacting another form of ableism. I also risked removing the pleasurable challenge of dancing and learning new skills. The work of creating access also had the potential to become onerous and disrupt the possibility of access intimacy. I realized we needed to pay careful attention to the division of labour that was required to create access to practices of timing and therefore the possibility of access intimacy. If one person was taking on all the access work, it might require so much labour that the possibility of access intimacy would vanish. Or if a particular practice of timing required everyone to have similar skills to execute it with enough ease to make access intimacy a possibility, we might decide to stop working with that practice of timing until everyone had the skills.

Access is hard. And, like dance, it is still worth doing.

I believe access is worth striving for, grappling with. Access intimacy is a part of disability justice. Striving to create the conditions for access intimacy is practicing for a better future. It is worth the effort required to create conditions, to create the access, in which access intimacy might arise. But I do not believe that I do access, or integrated dance, or the dancers/researchers I worked with, justice if I pretend that access is easy. Embracing access intimacy and therefore the complexity of our practices of timing and

access in this research/rehearsal process enabled me to think through access and timing in ways that had not occurred to me. This research has made me far more aware of the emotional, affective reasons we might dance and grapple with the accessibility and inaccessibility of our practices of timing. I learned myriad practical tools to increase the accessibility of our practices of timing, questioned my many assumptions, got stuck on the hard questions, and was constantly surprised.

Barone and Eisner (2012) wrote of arts-based research:

> The utility of this sort of research is thereby based on its capacity to fulfill a second important human need. This is indeed a need for surprise, for the kind of re-creation that follows from openness to the possibilities of alternative perspectives on the world. (p. 4)

Barone and Eisner (2012) are speaking about wonder, about the moments when we see the world anew and can therefore imagine a different world (Ahmed, 2014). For me, this rehearsal/research process was wondrous. It opened me up, allowed me to question, reimagine, and reinvent practices that I had grappled with for years. It allowed me the opportunity to do this with other members of my dance community who had similar questions.

Dance is hard. Access is hard. Research is hard.

But all of them are worth it for the possibility of wonder and access intimacy.

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Appendix A: Email Interview

Hello folks,

First, thank you for being part of this process. It was deeply meaningful to me that you were excited and willing to give up your Sunday afternoons (and a few Saturdays) to explore questions of timing in integrated dance.

While the work is not done, I know I've learned important, valuable things in this process that will change how I approach integrated dance rehearsal and research.

As requested, here is the final interview over email. I invite you to answer all the questions that are interesting/relevant to you. This can be the entire list of questions, or it can be only a few.

Please return this to me by email. If this isn't accessible to you please let me know and we'll discuss options.

With so much gratitude,

Kelsie

1. What is your favorite memory of this creation process.
2. If you could change something about this creation process, what would it be?
3. Has your understanding of timing in dance changed? If so, how?
4. Tell me about when we introduced music. What changed in your dancing?
5. Before this process, how did you approach precise counts?
6. Has this changed?
7. Describe to me how we rehearsed unison sections in this creation process.
8. How do you feel when we do unison work?
9. How do you feel about dancing fast?
10. What do you do, think or feel or think about to help you dance fast?
11. Is how we dance fast different from other dance companies?
12. How do you feel about dancing slow?
13. What do you do, think or feel or think about to help you dance slow?
14. Is how we dance slow different from other dance companies?
15. When you dance a duet or trio how do you connect with your partner(s)?
16. What are some of the ways you can show a relationship with your partner(s) through timing?
17. What is dance?
18. What makes dance or a dancer good?
19. What was meaningful about being involved in this process?
20. What questions or desires do you have around timing that we didn't get to explore in this process?