Jennifer Glaws Research Statement

My research interests are situated around a choreographic practice called creative cognition in dance making, or choreographic thinking. This research lies in the relationship of dance with cognitive science, and the view that the practice of creative cognition while making dances can enhance neuroplasticity, challenge physical habits, and access a deeper embodied experience in performance for dancers and non-dancers alike.

Creative Cognition in Dance Making

Embodied cognition and creative cognition are two terms describing theoretical methods of the convergence of dance with an individual's function of understanding. The two terms are not interchangeable, but inform one another. Creative cognition as a process to making dances can be explained as the harnessing of sensory systems to ignite embodied cognition (Kirsh 141). Embodied cognition means acquiring all aspects of knowledge or understanding by route of information received from the body (Kirsh 141).

Choreographers can gain multiple possibilities of making dances by utilizing different characteristics of sensory systems and the varying encoding effects on the body. The purpose of shifting between modalities in making art is that each principle has a different pathway or ability to cipher the experience.

The three different sensory modalities are labeled as somato-sensory, visual and emotional systems (Kirsh 142). Somato-sensory system is used when the mover identifies their body in space in relation to another object or idea. Visual system is used most regularly in dance and the learning of physical activities (imitation). This system utilizes site, and the memory of specific images to process information. Emotional system taps into both the working memory and long-term memory, in which associations are formed toward certain actions igniting a physical and emotional response in movement discovery.

Inquiry and Past Research

The research began with inquiry about the choreographic process and how individual's signature physical tendencies could be altered to find new pathways for movement. Ideas of how specifically designed physical exercises and games, stimulating different sensory modalities, could be utilized in creation, to enhance embodiment in performance and the development of unique movement phrases.

In 2015, I choreographed and directed an evening length work, in which the movement generated for the entire piece was derived from the development of choreographic thinking activities geared towards the thematic direction of the dance. The result was a dance that challenged the performers physical movement habits, placing them in new kinetic territory where they were actively thinking their way through a series of sequences.

Concurrently, to producing this work, I structured the activities used in the creation of the dance, and developed a template for a choreographic workshop to offer to individuals with and without dance experience. I presented the piloted workshop to the dance department at Shattuck-St. Mary's (Faribault,

MN), a dance composition class at Gustavus Adolphus College (St. Peter, MN), and a one-week residency of the research to dancers and non-dancers at Rosemount High School (Rosemount, MN).

Having the opportunity to pilot the dance and cognition workshop, with the choreographic cerebral activities utilized in rehearsal, proved to be a beneficial tool for teaching the multiplicity of dance imagery, multiplicity of opportunity and narrative choice to students. The college and high school participants "bought" into the many differing ways to depict or physicalize an idea, because the movement came from their own personal constructions. The students experienced a tactile practice of learning multiple options of representing creative perspectives.

Current Research

I utilize creative cognition as a way to research and enliven the wholeness of the moving body and mind. Working with creative cognition allows for an observance in multiplicity of imagery. The process permits various results, and numerous opportunities for choice. The process offers access to movement ideas outside of stored memory. I utilize the method to uncover possibilities for artistic projects.

My current research topic questions inclusivity, with inquiry, about the act of belonging and how people measure their personal choices and collective selves. The new work is an interdisciplinary, interactive, installation utilizing dance performance; incorporating live feed, projection, recorded video and audience participation. I am interested in exploring the gradual, systematic, physical manifestation of "joining in" as a social phenomenon. How do we understand our collective selves? What does the act of belonging mean now in our current political climate, and in the ways of enduring media and social media? Is there a degree of illusion about independent choice or the desire for independent succession?

Future Development

I have witnessed the benefits of practicing the art of creative cognition in dance making with individuals of differing experiences and approaches to movement. I have recognized an increase in self-confidence, self-awareness, and a greater ability to find reason and action when confronted with obstacles. This is evident by the increased practice of making change. Creative cognition in dance making rehearses adaptability in experiencing change.

I am activated by the belief, that dance making has a significant place in general education as an instrument for the development of problem solving, collaborative and critical thinking skills. Broadly, I conclude, a general, understanding of the social and physical benefits of dance are widely accepted, but the acquired knowledge gained from the participation in creative choreographic practices is not broadly recognized. I am ambitious in presenting the cognition and dance making workshop to additional education institutions and a broader audience with further development in the application of research and facilitation.

Kirsh, David. "Creative Cognition in Choreography." Ed. Dan Ventura, Pablo Gervás, Fox D. Harrell, Mary L. Maher, Alison Pease, and Geraint Wiggins. *Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Computational Creativity* (2011): 141-46. Print.