



OPDI 124: Movement Behavior Analysis – Observing Behavioral Differences in
Dance Performance
Paula Johnson
Module 4 Part 2
Reflection Paper: *Observing the Expenditure of Neuromuscular Energy*
February 23, 2023

When examining the dancers in Johnny Arcade's, YouTube video, *Stratus Dance Club '86 – '87*, I found it challenging to recognize the Neuromuscular Excitation Patterns (NEPs). For each time mark, I watched and examined the movements of the dancers. I found the key words for each pattern helpful in classification. As I went through each example. I became more capable of deciphering the pattern. However, when it came to choosing random dancers and trying to classify the movement patterns without guidance, I became a lot less confident in what I was seeing.

1:05 Burst initiation with ongoing undulate pattern

I can see the Burst initiation on the 1, 3, 5, 7 and Undulate on the even counts. Her bursts bounce up and are sharper on the odd counts and then diminish after each even count before the next Burst. I question, is that not an undulate pattern unto itself? Perhaps it could be like a rebound? Or is the initiation of her movement on the odd counts too strong to be considered Undulate entirely? I must look to further examples to train my eye.

1:12 Undulate initiation with ongoing burst pattern

I can see how he is opposite to the prior example. He has a downswing and upswing to his arms. His upswings are on the even counts and appear to have more of a BURST energy than the downswing on the odd counts. At this point in my training, I still could see this as an Undulate pattern in itself.

1:31 What are the implications of shared affinities for NEPs?



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In communication?

These two dancers are sharing the same shoulder movement, timing, direction, speed, and levels. At one point they are sharing the same facial expression. One breaks her cool façade when she smiles for the camera. They are communicating to each other that they like each other's moves and seem familiar with each other.

In shared experience?

They are in the same place, at the same time, listening to the same song, moving in the same way. They have a lot of similarities and are no doubt experiencing this time together. Even though they may bring different baggage, knowledge, history to the time and reflect on the event differently because of what came before, as individuals.

In teaching?

If the goal is to teach a piece or set of exercises that fall within a shared affinities for NEPs, I would have to say, teaching someone who shares similar NEP affinities would be an easier student to evoke those specific movements from. However, if a teacher is looking to create something other or looking for something different from what they usually teach, they might be more challenged by students who have affinities in other areas. The challenges could lead to even more interesting choreography.

2:42 Undulate movement



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This dancer is doing his own thing and his smile is authentic. He is taking up space in a clear Undulate pattern now. I see now, how there is no burst at all in the initiation is just flows like a wave. I understand now, that the first two examples had Burst/Undulate or Undulate/Burst patterns. They cannot be pure Undulate. This human, is a clear Undulate pattern even when he changes his movement pattern with a tempo changes.

3:54 - 4:03 Undulate: wave like movement that passes through his center and then out toward periphery ALSO Burst and restrained characteristics

I wanted to watch more of this engaging dancer. I saw the clapping and the rolling or as you say waving through his center and out to the arms. I enjoy his head and eyeline too. It switches diagonals but never looks center as if to say, "I know the camera is watching me, but I am not going to look. But go ahead, soak me in, I am feeling it." I can see how he is restrained and controlled with his movements.

4:33 – 5:00

Sustained/Burst – consistent energy expenditure with small Bursts to accent

I can see that this dancer is moving with Bursts of energy on the even counts and there is a diminishing. This sounds like the Undulate/Burst pattern from marker 1:12. After going back to 1:12, I can see that this dancer is more calm or less energetic overall.



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Burst/Undulate – Burst pop of the movement initiates most of her movement and she continues with an Undulate pattern.

I can see the Burst and Undulate patterns to her movements. Her arms circle and push with a stronger force, her head is bobbing and maybe even shaking as well. Her full body is into the movement energetically. Her mouth even seems to be chewing, talking, smiling or active in some way. Her hair is even dancing. Now I am watching her shoulders. I thought maybe I could say something about their movement but they are moving as a whole piece with her upper body and the movement is maybe a reaction to her arm movements.

Burst/Restrained – control and tightness to her movements

I can see this dancer's Burst of energy and Restrained movement patterns. Her movement is down on the accents and the tempo changes with tighter smaller movements.

5:09 Sustained/ ongoing Undulate

This dancer is moving in a walking on the spot, side to side, motion. It is more calm and controlled. I can see how this movement pattern could be expressed at Sustained and Undulate.

7:08 Undulate

I can see the waving movements in this dancer's body. She is moving down and up and around, and the camera angle is changing. Her neck or chin feels like an initiator of her movements and



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then in and down her center. No, maybe it is her chest that is the initiating location of her wave. Her arms move more at the beginning and then are controlled.

Now, I am going to stop the video at random dancers and see if I can classify their movement patterns on my own. You can let me know in the discussion posts if you agree with my classifications.

11:23 Burst/Undulate

Her Burst is on the upswing as reaches out on the diagonal with her arms and body. She then waves back and down to the opposite diagonal. She has an affinity to that one diagonal but does also incorporate side to side, turn, and back to her fist motion. Her movement is wave like with a rebound.

26:31 Restrained

This dancer's movements seem really controlled. They appear to be initiated from his head and chest poking out to the beat and pulling back in. Perhaps this could be Burst/Undulate as well? I am actually not sure what I would call this one. It is more challenging to decipher them on my own.

14:43 Burst/Undulate to Sustained



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This dancer starts with a wave motion up and down through her core. Her arms are extended above her head and are clapping. She retracts her arms to clap closer to her body. Her body movement stops/slows so she can clap to the beat. What would this be? This must be more than one pattern. I am going to say that she has a Burst to initiate her movement pattern. Her main movement is an Undulate pattern. When she slows/stops to clap, that is a steady Sustained pattern.

How much bleach was used in the making of this video? I cannot believe this is homework. I have enjoyed examining people dance at the club and codifying their movements. People might wonder why I am staring at them at the club next time I venture out. Did you guess the same as me for the last three?

Works Cited

- Arcade, J. (2016, July 10). *Stratus Dance Club '86 - '87*. Retrieved from YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGMn0PpcWCg>
- Hagood, T. K., & Sevey Fitt, S. (2022). *Movement Behavior Analysis and Profiling: Observing Qualitative Differences in Dance Performances*.