

OPDI 124: Movement Behavior Analysis – Observing Behavioral Differences in Dance Performance

Paula Johnson
Module 5, Part 2
Reflection Paper: My Movement Behavior Profile, Part 1: Explorations 1-3
March 4, 2023

After I observed and reflected on my observations of the movement exploration video, I went back and highlighted the Neuromuscular Energy Patterns (NEP) key words and 'Walk like…' descriptors that I had an affinity for. I thought I would discover that had an affinity for free movement with less tension, which I do. I was surprised to find that I also enjoyed sustained movement more than any other of the NEPS. I highlighted five Sustained key words, where in Burst, Restrained, and Undulate, I only highlighted two of the key words in each.

Video: Movement Exploration 1 -3

Exploration 1
How slow is slow?
My movement felt very slow. I would almost stop, or graze a pause of no movement before continuing on. I was trying to move as slow as I could. Having my eyes closed, I was aware of my student, Autumn, next time and wondered if she was done, or how slow her slow was. After watching the video, I see that she interpreted slow differently at first. Then she peeked and saw I was going slower and adjusted her speed. Perhaps she misunderstood the task at first.

Was your demonstration of slow, very slow, moderately slow, slow in one direction?
I was trying to be consistent with my choice of slow in all directions. I was conscious that I wanted to increase my speed, but fought to remain consistent. I think I got a little bit faster at the very end because I thought that my partner was done and I did not want to waste my student's entire lunch hour. I also wanted to have my lunch before the next class.



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When watching the video, I see that Autumn raised her arms more quickly than she lowered them. I think that was because she was just sorting out the task in her mind. However, watching her speed, there were more variations than in mine.

How did you feel during the exercise? Body sensations?
I felt still almost. There was more tension in my arms on the way up, than the way down.

Do you think your awareness of slow carries over to your awareness of fast?
I believe it is more difficult to be fast because it takes more energy. You are also going so fast that there is less time to think about how all the parts of the body are feeling.

Exploration 2
Your body is mist.
You are the sparkling light inside a sunlit prism.
Your body is made of lead.
You are a dandelion seed floating on a shifting breeze.
You are on a crowded street, late getting to work.
You must get through a completely dark and narrow alley at night.
You are in a large, spacious park with no 'have to dos.'
You are on a very high tightrope.
You are weightless on the moon.

What tasks positive and negative, stood out in your experience?
You are a dandelion seed floating on a shifting breeze and your body is mist were the two I had the most affinity for. I felt free and could move without restrictions.
You are stuck up to your knees in mud and your body is made of lead were my least favorite because my movement was restricted, heavy, and stuck.

What were your reactions to watching?
Watching the video of Autumn and myself, brought me back to what I was thinking when I was moving. Because our eyes were open during this exploration and we were dancing at the same time, we were aware of each other's movements. I was trying to make my own movement

choices but I was also aware that some of our choices were similar because of the nature of the task.

When your group was moving, did you experience strong feelings or sensations?
I felt freedom and joy of movement when the task was one that involved moving freely. I felt stuck and heavy when the task was one that required more tension in the body. I have more of an affinity to freedom in the movement than tension. I would think that is normal for most humans though. I wonder if there are humans who prefer to move with tension? Perhaps poppers or more robotic movers?

When you were observing, did you want to get up and move with the subjects?
We did the task together to save time. I have a motto that I use when I am taking class though, Every group dancer. I prefer to keep it moving but also understand the importance of watching and reflecting on other's movement.

Exploration 3
Burst
Blast

- My arms shot out in front of me.
- I made sound effects. I could not stop making sound effects, they seemed to help me get into the movement.
- I tried moving in different directions and with different arm movements.
- When watching my movements I felt my upper body blasted more than my lower body.

Pop

- My popping movements, I was thinking of popcorn.
- Quick, sharp, short movements
- I did not travel on the stage much, mostly stayed in one spot.
- Autumn's moves were more balletic
- I had random popping corns exploding in different parts of my body.

Fireworks

- At first I was only in my arms, upper body
- I added the legs in jumps with different angles.
- I could feel myself getting tired from all of these explosive movements.



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Explode

- I was thinking of a small thing exploding big.
- My body started in a contained ball and then exploded in all directions. Ir at least that was what I was thinking of.
- It takes a lot of energy to explode

Shoot

- Shoot used sound effects and shot across the stage
- Traveled in straight lines
- Tried to go fast
- Also takes a lot of energy and is difficult to go as fast as you would like to shoot.

Strike

- Again, sound effects made this one happen.
- Autumn and I had similar movements
- We had punches, kicks, and slicing movements in all directions.

Dart

- Darting traveled more but still in short spurts side to side and traveling forward.
- Arms were retracted but still extending shoulder to elbow
- Choppy movements

Punch

- My work partner came in during this one to chat, she started punching on the side, so I invited her into the space. I was a little embarrassed at what I do in my lunch times at first but when she joined in whole heartedly, we just moved forward like any other day.
- Punches were short, quick bursts of energy.
- Mostly on the spot.

Restrained

Clutch

- Squeeze hands
- Move everything in
- Squeeze and crunch in towards center in as many ways as possible.

Hold

- This was interesting, I went for holding something and carrying something, while Autumn froze and held one shape.

Press

- There she is! Fran ran on to press with us.
- I was pushing a dresser or moving something.
- I felt the squeeze and tension in the muscles

Squeeze

- We all made similar hug, squeeze, squishing in towards center movements.

Compress

- Fran and Autumn made themselves small and low
- I was compressing something in my hands and arms but still moving into a lower position and towards my center.

Crush

- We all did different things.
- I was crushing with one arm from high up to low
- Fran was crushing with her foot
- Autumn added more force by crushing with a jump

Contain

- Oh that was interesting.
- I was containing something in my arms
- Fran was containing something very small
- Autumn was being contained in her own imaginary box.

Confine

- Fran's movements were minimal. She made herself smaller and still
- Autumn looked like she was pulling on nylons quickly back and forth on both legs.
- I went down and twisted confining all my body into itself and the ground.

Contract

- We all did similar variations for this one.
- You could see the contraction start in the abdomens.
- Fran contracted and froze.
- Autumn and I contracted in different shapes and directions.

Tighten

- I remember starting this one and thinking, I will tighten all my muscles. I squeezed everything and thought, how can I get even tighter. I then thought of a screw and twisted around.
- Autumn also squeezed and then brought her upper body to her lower body.

Undulate

Wave

- Autumn and I had similar movements. I could see the wave like motions in both.

Sway

- Interesting that our sways all have different speeds. Fran is slow, Autumn is medium, and I am more quick.
- Similar side to side motion
- I had a pattern to my sway: single, single, double.

Falter

- There was a cool moment in this one where we all faltered at the same time.
- Again, we are moving at different speeds.

- Faltering for everyone was a quick movement in a different direction, a collapse, crunch in, or stumble.

Flutter

- We all had different types of arm flutters.
- I traveled around the space more than the others.

Slither

- Difference in levels: I went to the ground to slither snake like
- Autumn and Fran stayed on their feet but showed slithering in their gestures in snake like movements.

Wriggle

- I stayed on the ground to wriggle.
- I feel like we started to feel awkward with this one.

Billow

- We all looked like we were making the bed

Rebound

- I tried to rebound with different parts of my body and in different directions.

Sustained

Float

- It felt good to float after so many tasks that required more energy.

Drift

- I could see Fran drifting forward and then to the side and back to forward.
- I remember thinking of the ocean drifting in and out like the tide.

Steady

- Another interesting one
- We all choice different ways to express steady
- Fran was slow walking
- I was normal pace walking.
- Autumn was still and moving one arm up slowly and then the next.

Sail

- I was on a sail boat that was going pretty fast with the wind. I kept a similar pattern as I traveled around the stage.
- Fran had a slower sail boat with large arm movements.

Glide

- Autumn was having fun with this one. She had socks on and could slide across the stage.
- I felt like I was skating around the ice, shifting from foot to foot.

Flow

- I felt really comfortable with flow. I like to flow from one shape to another.

Melt

- We all made our way down to the ground at various speeds.

Dissolve

- Dissolve might have been different if we weren't already on the ground.
- I came up and kind of went back down.
- I was thinking of the molecules dissolving.
- Fran and Autumn stayed on the floor.

Works Cited

Hagood, T. K., & Sevey Fitt, S. (2022). Movement Behavior Analysis and Profiling: Observing Qualitative Differences in Dance Performances.