

OPDI 124: Movement Behavior Analysis – Observing Behavioral Differences in Dance Performance
Paula Johnson
Module 2, Part 1
Reflection Paper: Biological Organization of Man to Move
February 12, 2023

When reflecting on the first two readings, Dr. Thomas Hagood's manual, "Module Two: Introduction to Movement Behavior Analysis and Profiling, MBA/P," and Valerie Hunt's, "The Biological Organization of Man to Move," I feel as though I have been handed a pile of brightly colored Lego bricks in various shapes and sizes clicked together into one piece to create a human shape. I open my hand using sustained movements. I explore the shape, space, and weight that the Lego takes up which adds to my sensory knowledge of what I am holding and what I am holding it with.

As I was reading, questions popped into my mind. First, I thought about what movements have changed, developed, or been lost since the humans newly found addiction to mobile devices? Bent over shapes, sustained sitting in hunched over positions, walking slowly while staring down, are just a few images that come to mind when I think about the movement that they have created. When thinking of the movement they have restricted, I think of lack of eye contact and connection in the real world. A strong juxtaposition to my own movement patterns that were learned before these devices were created and spread to the masses. A teacher in the hall greeting, welcoming, moving in uncommon ways to draw attention away from the device and back to the real world, if only for a second.

When Hunt talks about her explorations in flexibility and stretching, I think about the times I have taught PNF stretching with my high school dance classes. I wondered, but have not yet

Googled, if Hunt and her team, through their experiments and ideas of reciprocal innervation, were the originators of this now common method in stretching?

My brain then wandered over to a recent battle I watched on YouTube for the, *Red Bull Dance Your Style Battle,* in South Africa. One of our students, from Canada, Humuzza, was battling D Soraki from Japan. The song was, "I'm Coming Out," by Diana Ross. Let me tell you, those two boys came out and each with their own movement style. However, having known Humza and watched him grow up, his style was consistent. Furthermore, having followed D Soraki on Instagram and admiring his movement style, his also remained consistent.

When Hunt talks about the explorations with forty youngsters and how, "it didn't really make any difference what you asked them to do or how you asked them to it; their style was consistent" (Hunt 58). This made me think more about the idea of a freestyle battle and how they develop movement. I love watching students perform pieces that they have rehearsed to perfection however, there is nothing more magical than watching students bravely step into the arena, not knowing what song will be played or what moves their opponent will do, or even what moves they will do. No matter what though, I always "see" my student in their freestyle. I see their constant style and even though, their style develops over time because of new movements practiced, rehearsed, and repeated, there is a consistency that is innate and not programmed.



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Quotidien movements are interesting to me. I agree that we go back to a “comfortable style” to perform these even when we may have more developed and “diverse” styles when dancing. It makes me think of drama classes, when you get students to exaggerate normal activities for the stage and then reign them back in. There is something beautiful about gestures and my mind wanders to Pina Bausch and her many explorations of gestures in her choreography.

Back to the Lego. I open my hand which is sensing in the direction of upwards and forwards. I see and feel and experience this piece of Lego. It is built into a whole piece. It is a multicolored creation of smaller pieces. As a whole, it is the shape of my body, or the perception I have of the shape of my body. My body image in bricks or a close proximity, with the use of my imagination. I made this through experience. I have played with Lego as a child growing up and with my own child, and hopefully, one day with his child. My Lego experience evolving and changing with each new experience.

The Lego creation of my body image is a bad example as I move into exploring the idea of shape of movement. For one thing, Lego does not move. If it were to move, it would move in straight lines and not circular paths. It would be interesting movement because it is not normal. It is different and different is exciting because, “it is not common” (Hunt 59).

Lego continues to be a bad choice in reference to the, “electromagnographic recordings” where Hunt and her team, “isolated four distinct patterns which [they] have named: burst flow, free

flow, restrained flow and sustained flow" (Hunt 59). However, I will sustain this Lego example to the end for "constancy" and "consistency of my own writing style." We have seen movies of Lego in movement. A lot of animation draws from reality and therefore would mimic the movement of humans, animals, trees, or whatever is being animated. Stay with me. An animated Lego human then, would have movement classified as sustained due to their restrictive joints. They could not ever be considered bound flow, burst, or even resistance. But I fear, this analogy might be considered burst flow as it started strong and is definitely getting more relaxed. I also fear it might be met with resistance. On that note, let us move onto the next paragraph and leave Mr. Lego man behind.

The potential application of this course and its content in my own work as a dance educator, as you can already tell, can connect in many ways. Being able to communicate more clearly with students about movement is foremost in my mind. Already, I am thinking from new perspectives. Which is why, I for one, like to take courses that give me time to read, reflect, apply, reflect, and think from new spaces and places. Giving students a language to refer to their own movement will also help them to communicate their ideas as well.

I have had professors that have used Laban in their movement practices and teachings but I have never fully studied his method myself. I look forward to learning the MBA/P, "taxonomy of understanding and language, developing [my] skills in observing and recording individual and

compared variations in movement behaviors, and through increased awareness in these areas to develop skills in sharing that information with students in constructive helpful ways" (Hagood 5). Imagine MBA/P as a the brightly colored Lego human. I place it on the table in front of a student. I can talk to them about the bright blue block, three dots long and one dot wide and how its shape and weight takes up space. Through our common "Lego" language we can communicate details more clearly and with a deeper understanding from which to move forward.

Works Cited

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