

DANCEABILITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO MIXED-ABILITIES DANCE, A SURVEY
ANALYSIS

by

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In the summer of 1996 the 1st Annual DanceAbility Teacher Training was offered by Alito Alessi in Eugene, Oregon. In the past 13 years 265 people have completed the teacher training and are certified instructors of the DanceAbility Method. This study sought to assess the influence of the DanceAbility Method by using a self-report questionnaire to obtain and analyze demographic data and information about the mixed-abilities teaching and choreography of DanceAbility Teachers post-certification. All certified teachers with contact information available (207) were sent the questionnaire. The 61 Certified DanceAbility Teachers who returned completed questionnaires were from 17 countries; the largest percentage of respondents (46%) were Europeans, followed by Americans (23%). Seventy-five percent of all respondents report teaching the

DanceAbility Method, and 54% report choreographing mixed-abilities dance work since completing the certification. A significant by-product of this study is the beginning of a directory of Certified DanceAbility Teachers.

This thesis includes unpublished co-authored material.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the 1960's a visible shift in the ideology of contemporary dancers and choreographers took place. Questions concerning the nature and meaning of movement, especially the definition of dance and the nature of technique, lead choreographers to expand the assumed boundaries that deemed who and what was acceptable for the stage (Banes 1994). An interest in seeking alternatives to the hierarchical, dictatorial and male-dominated structures that governed the ballet and American modern dance communities, as well as society at-large, paved the way for dance that would work for people regardless of size, shape or form (Benjamin 2002). 'Found' and 'pedestrian' movements were considered valid forms of artistic expression and advanced or professional dancers danced alongside beginners or 'non-dancers.' The desire for a dance language that rejected the need for the classical dancerly body was a definitive step toward dance that was open to a more diverse population of participants.

By the 1980's the idea that anyone could dance / be a dancer had taken hold in some quarters and the variation of people invited to dance continued to expand. While most choreographers celebrated the degree of diversity that had been achieved, some choreographers questioned just how diverse contemporary dance really was and sought to create a truly inclusive dance community.

We believed in dance for everybody, but it was not a very wide spectrum of people at all. Then we thought, ‘Wow! A non-technical dancer and a contact improvisation person with a modern dancer together? That’s diversity,’ that’s what we believed. ‘There is a fat person in our collective, there is a woman lifting a man! Wow!’ Of course it was an evolution, a very important change in contemporary dance. It was a big change for society too (Alessi 2007a).

In addition to size, shape, age, color and experience ceasing to be barriers, choreographers on the cutting edge began including people with disabilities. ‘Integrated’ or ‘mixed-abilities’ dance companies were founded across the United States and abroad: AXIS Dance Co. in Oakland; Dancing Wheels in Cleveland; Light Motion in Seattle; Mobility Junction in New York City; Paradox Dance in Berkeley; and in the United Kingdom, Motion House and *Cando Co.* One company, Joint Forces Dance Company (JFDC), which had existed since 1979 as a contact improvisation based company in Eugene, Oregon also began incorporating dancers with disabilities.

While mixed-abilities companies gave legitimacy to performers with disabilities, training for dancers with disabilities remained predominantly at the margins (Whatley 2007). Unlike their able-bodied peers who could freely enroll in local dance classes of their choosing, dance students with disabilities were more like ‘invitees’ into the dance community, forced to wait until the next mixed ability workshop was offered in their community (Benjamin 2002). Even with the passing of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* in the early 1990’s and the ensuing removal of the architectural obstacles once limiting access, a disabled dance student finding their way into a traditional technique class would quickly discover that the existing paradigms of dance training—its values and vocabulary—did not include all bodies. Instructions such as, “See the whole space,”

“Stand up,” or *any* verbal instruction for that matter could isolate students without the ability to see, hear or stand (Alessi et al 1988).

According to Alito Alessi, a Guggenheim Fellow and Fulbright Scholar, and co-founder of JFDC and DanceAbility, in most traditional forms the difficulty in accommodating people with disabilities stems from the fact that they were designed with traditionally accepted bodies in mind. In his experience many people working within traditional dance methods were not temperamentally closed to opening classes to disabled students; they just did not know how to open classes to dancers of mixed-abilities (2007a). After attending a DanceAbility workshop Steven Paxton wrote:

It is clear that some process is necessary to guide the instructor into avenues wide enough to accommodate everyone, and the skill of the instructor is called upon to create within the guidelines and lead the group into the desired movement possibilities without isolating anyone... The instructor must be informed and tuned into the possibilities inherent in the most subtle options for common ground (as quoted in Alessi with Zolbrod 2007, pg.10).

Despite the fact that there was a significant amount of published material documenting mixed-abilities events and performances by the mid to late 1990's, practical experience or training on how to teach a mixed-abilities dance class was not readily available. This worried Alessi. He felt that in order for mixed-abilities work to not be a trend, but rather to flourish and sustain itself, it must live and grow beyond its originators (Alessi 2007a).

In the summer of 1996 the 1st Annual DanceAbility Teacher Training was offered by Alessi in Eugene, Oregon. Twenty-eight people from eight different countries

attended the first training (Alessi 1997). In the past eleven years two-hundred and sixty-five people have completed the teacher training and are certified instructors of the DanceAbility Method.

While this number is remarkable and suggests that the DanceAbility method of teaching mixed-abilities groups has grown beyond its originator, it does not tell us much else. Is the DanceAbility approach to mixed-abilities dance being spread by certified DanceAbility teachers?

In order to assess this question one would need to know first, who the people are that have completed the DanceAbility certification, and secondly, whether or not they have taught the method since earning their certification. Further information concerning the context of the mixed-abilities dance classes and / or choreographic works of certified DanceAbility teachers would need to be compiled and analyzed. No source could be found for comprehensive description of certified DanceAbility teachers.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gather and analyze data regarding people who have completed the DanceAbility Teacher Certification in an effort to assess the state of the DanceAbility Method. Specifically, this study aimed to:

1. Obtain and analyze demographic information about DanceAbility teachers.
2. Obtain and analyze information about the mixed-abilities teaching and choreography of DanceAbility teachers post-certification.

Delimitations

1. The population being examined in this study was limited to DanceAbility Teachers who completed the certification training during the years 1996-2007.
2. Data was collected from DanceAbility Teachers using a self-report questionnaire.

Definition of Terms

The DanceAbility Project commonly referred to now as simply DanceAbility, was founded in 1987 by Alito Alessi and Karen Nelson, co-founders of Joint Forces Dance Company (JFDC). Defined as “a dance method accessible to all people” by the official DanceAbility website, over ninety thousand people have participated in DanceAbility workshops, performances and teacher certification courses around the world (Joint Forces Dance Company n.d.). From 1989 on, Alessi has been the sole director of JFDC and DanceAbility.

The DanceAbility Method uses improvised dance to promote equality, respect and artistic expression between ALL people. Designed to include anybody and everybody’s movement, the DanceAbility Method is the only mixed-abilities approach that will work with all people (visually impaired, hearing impaired, mentally and developmentally disabled, physically disabled and able bodied) and any combination of people (Alessi 2007b).

The DanceAbility Teacher Certification, originally called the DanceAbility Teacher Training, is “four weeks of intensive full-time study, learning the philosophy and

techniques of DanceAbility” (DanceAbility website). The DanceAbility website states

DanceAbility Teacher Certification courses include instruction on:

- identifying and working with common denominators
- integrating Contact Improvisation
- facilitating workshops inclusive of all abilities
- facilitating artistic collaboration, performances and site specific performance
parades

Mixed-abilities dance, integrated dance, and inclusive dance are the three most widely used terms in describing dance for people with and without disabilities today. As opposed to ‘dance with special needs’ which implies that the dancing is *for* or *about* a specific population only, the aforementioned terms imply distinctions from segregated dance structures.

Significance of Study

To date, very little scholarship has been dedicated to an investigation of those teaching, choreographing and performing mixed-abilities dance. This study is the first inquiry to follow up with people who have completed the DanceAbility Teacher Training and their work post-certification. The major significance of this study is that it illuminates the amount and type of work being done by certified DanceAbility teachers. For the first time, insight into who DanceAbility instructors are, what work they are doing, where and when they are doing it, and how they are accomplishing it, will be known.

The findings of this study will be of interest to the DanceAbility and mixed-abilities dance community at large, as well as dancers, dance educators and dance historians interested in integrated dance.

The material in Chapter II was co-authored with Steven J. Chatfield.

CHAPTER II

THE STUDY

This chapter was co-authored with Steven J. Chatfield. I developed and conducted the study entirely on my own; after writing this chapter, I received heavy editorial support from Chatfield.

Introduction

The latter half of the twentieth century produced many radical changes in contemporary dance. One such change was the broadening of bodies deemed acceptable for dancing. The diversity of the dancing body grew to include people with disabilities, and not long thereafter a certification to teach groups of people both with and without disabilities was developed. The changes that began in the latter half of the twentieth century ultimately led to the founding of the DanceAbility Project and, as of June 2008, the subsequent certification of 265 DanceAbility teachers.

Prior to the first DanceAbility Teacher Training in Eugene, Oregon during the summer of 1996, practical experience or training on how to teach a mixed-abilities dance class was not readily available. Though there was a significant amount of published material documenting mixed-abilities events and performances by the mid to late 1990's, the lack of experiential opportunity for learning to instruct mixed-abilities dance classes

troubled the co-founder of the DanceAbility Project, Alito Alessi, and ultimately led him to the decision to offer intensive training in teaching mixed-abilities dance classes.

During an interview in 2007, Alessi expressed his view on the sustainability of mixed-abilities dance. He explained: in order for mixed-abilities dance to not be a passing trend but rather to flourish and sustain itself, it must live and grow beyond its originators (Alessi 2007a). In the eleven years that followed the first DanceAbility teacher training, two-hundred and sixty-five people completed the program and are certified instructors of the DanceAbility method. This undoubtedly suggests that the DanceAbility method of teaching mixed-abilities dance has grown beyond its originator, yet it does not tell us much else. Are participants in the DanceAbility Teacher Certification program contributing to the spread of the DanceAbility method?

The Study

In order to assess if the DanceAbility Method is being spread by Certified DanceAbility teachers one would need to know first, who has completed the DanceAbility Certification, and secondly, whether or not they have taught the method since earning their certification. Further information concerning the context of the mixed-abilities dance classes and / or choreographic works of certified DanceAbility teachers would need to be compiled and analyzed. No source could be found for comprehensive description of certified DanceAbility teachers.

The purpose of this study was to gather and analyze data regarding people who have completed the DanceAbility Teacher Certification in an effort to assess the state of

the DanceAbility method. Specifically, this study aimed: to obtain and analyze demographic information about certified DanceAbility teachers, to obtain and analyze information about the mixed-abilities teaching and choreography of DanceAbility teachers post-certification.

To date, very little scholarship has been dedicated to an investigation of those teaching, choreographing and performing mixed-abilities dance. This study is the first inquiry to follow up with people who have completed the DanceAbility Teacher Training and their work post-certification. The major significance of this study is that it illuminates the amount and type of work being done by certified DanceAbility teachers.

The findings of this study will be of interest to the DanceAbility and mixed-abilities dance community at large, as well as dancers, dance educators and dance historians interested in integrated dance.

Background

While a complete historical or philosophical treatise on mixed-abilities dance is beyond the scope of this study, it is hoped that supplying a more detailed description will assist the reader in understanding the context which beget DanceAbility and the DanceAbility Teacher Certification. For clarity, the abbreviated history of mixed-abilities dance and DanceAbility is divided into three sections. The first attempts to expose the reader to the origination of, and prevailing attitudes toward, dance and disability; the second considers the formative years of the DanceAbility Project; the third addresses the content of the DanceAbility Teacher Certification course itself.

Western Attitudes toward Dance and Disability

A serious dislocation, chapter five in *Making an Entrance* by Adam Benjamin (2002) proved to be very informative in gaining an understanding of the complex layers that lie within the story of mixed-abilities dance. Though Benjamin admits the twenty page chapter is more of a leap and bound through Western Dance History than that of an in depth historian's account, his writing allows the reader to see how our current attitudes toward dance (in general as well as in relation to disability) originated.

Beginning with the Ancient Greek Gods Dionysus, Apollo and Hephaestus, the often unmentioned disabled, dancing brother of Dionysus and Apollo, and touching upon the transition of the dance space from the accessible arena of the *orkhiestha* to the elevated stage, the reign of symmetry, order and beauty in the courtly dances of King Louis XIV, the emergence of modern dance as an alternative to the elite world of ballet, and the development of community dance in Britain and the US following the exodus of German dance artists during World War II, Benjamin paints a clear (albeit brief) picture of the major evolutions in Western Dance before devoting most of his time to the later decades of the twentieth century.

Of course no story of the way disabled people came to professional dance in Western culture, however brief, would be complete without mention of the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s. Before discussing any key players in the story of mixed-abilities dance, Benjamin reminds the reader of the incredible changes that took place during this time.

One such significant change was the rejection of the medical model of disability and the adoption of the social model. Where disability was “conceived of largely in terms of somatic and intellectual ‘abnormality,’” according to the medical model, the social model defined disability as a “restrictive situation imposed upon people with impairments by the patterns and expectations of an (dis)ablist society” (Paterson and Hughes 2000, pg. 30, 32). Or put another way, a paraplegic is not disabled by a wheel chair, but by the stairs which deny him access.

In dance, this translated to a re-envisioning of what movement could constitute dance and what kind of body could constitute a dancer (Albright 1997). Some of the first people to write about a view of dance which rejected equating physical ability with aesthetic superiority are discussed in the following section.

Formation of the DanceAbility Project

As stated in the previous chapter the idea that anyone could dance had taken hold by the 1980’s. And in the latter half of that decade articles documenting the various mixed-abilities dance events began to appear in the literature. Still Moving, a regular feature in the journal *Contact Quarterly*, was intended as a space to ‘address the current thinking, perception and practice of contact improvisation.’ It served as a natural outlet for those exploring the accessibility of contact improvisation (CI) to share their experiences.

Louise Richards and Kevin Finan of the British company New Midlands Dance were among the first to write. Their 1988 article “Contact Improvisation with Special Needs” describes their experiences teaching CI to people with physical and / or mental

disabilities. In line with the study of CI which teaches that there is always movement in the body, Finan and Richards believe that the possibility of a dance is present anywhere there is movement. The size of the movement is not important; within the rise and fall of the breath of an otherwise immobile body is the possibility of a dance. The article continues on from this perspective citing the successful use of common CI elements such as “log rolling,” “body surfing,” and “tables.” Lest their work be confused as something it is not, the authors make it a point to state before concluding their article that they “are not therapists but dancers who teach dance to all people whatever their abilities because we believe dance is for all people” (pg. 42).

Later that same year Bruce Curtis, a disability rights activist, and Alan Ptashek, a dancer well versed in CI, co-authored an article about a “collaborative organization specializing in movement arts and education for physically disabled people,” The Exposed to Gravity Project (Curtis and Ptashek 1988, pg. 18). Similar to Richards and Finan, this article speaks of the accessible nature of CI. Curtis and Ptashek’s article is markedly different however in that it presents the perspective of quadriplegic dancer Curtis alongside that of Ptashek. For Curtis experiencing a common ground during dancing had implications that went beyond art into the social:

I am a disabled person who has spent half of my life trying to open more possibilities in society for myself and other disabled people through legislation, civil rights demonstrations, community organizing and the Independent Living Movement. Yet all of these accomplishments have not caused the able bodied stranger that I would encounter in my work to open their hearts and let their eyes show how happy they were to see me (pg. 21).

The power of mixed abilities dance to breakdown prejudices is also commented on by Emery Blackwell, a certified DanceAbility teacher with Cerebral Palsy:

Dance has helped me reach people more powerfully than my years of lobbying the legislature have. As President of Oregonians for Independent Living I have spent hours...intellectually talking about equality, equal access, that we are people too, just like everyone else. I'd talk and talk and make small progress. But one dance and people just 'get' it. It opens up communication in more equal ways (as quoted in Ashwill 1992 pg. 22).

In 1992 Ptashek published an article documenting *The Moving Body: an integrated movement course*, co-taught by himself and Curtis at the University of California, Berkley in 1990. While the usual concerns of liability and accessibility had to be navigated, Ptashek also noted the lack of university instructors who had the inclination and skill to develop a course where people of different abilities could move together.

In Eugene, Oregon Alito Alessi and Karen Nelson of Joint Forces Dance Company (JFDC) read about Richards, Finan, Curtis and Ptashek in *Contact Quarterly*. They were very interested in what they read, and in partnership with Mobility International USA they offered a mixed-abilities dance workshop to German exchange students and their aides (Alessi with Zolbrod 2007). When JFDC hosted its first public workshop, "Dance with Different Needs," in 1988, it invited Richards, Finan, Curtis and Ptashek as guest teachers. The two day workshop was free and sixty people attended (Alessi et al 1988). The following year, the name Dance with Different Needs was changed to DanceAbility, and from 1990-1995 DanceAbility workshops were offered as a part of the annual New Dance Festival produced by Alessi. The workshops were team-

taught by various people who were active in mixed-abilities and contemporary dance world wide.

‘Integrated’ or ‘mixed-abilities’ dance companies were founded across the United States and abroad: AXIS Dance Co. in Oakland; Dancing Wheels in Cleveland; Light Motion in Seattle; Mobility Junction in New York City; Paradox Dance in Berkeley; and in the United Kingdom, Motion House and *Cando* Co. Other companies like Alessi’s and Nelson’s Joint Forces Dance Company (JFDC), which had existed since 1979 as a contact improvisation based company in Eugene, Oregon began incorporating dancers with disabilities into their previously able-bodied companies.

While mixed-abilities companies gave legitimacy to performers with disabilities, training for dancers with disabilities remained predominantly at the margins (Whatley 2007). Unlike their able-bodied peers who could freely enroll in local dance classes of their choosing, dance students with disabilities were more like ‘invitees’ into the dance community, forced to wait until the next mixed ability workshop was offered in their community (Benjamin 2002). Even with the passing of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* in the early 1990’s and the ensuing removal of the architectural obstacles once limiting access, a disabled dance student finding their way into a traditional technique class would quickly discover that the existing paradigms of dance training—its values and vocabulary—did not include all bodies. Instructions such as, “See the whole space,” “Stand up,” or *any* verbal instruction for that matter could isolate students without the ability to see, hear or stand (Alessi et al 1988).

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After the 1995 New Dance Festival Alessi realized his passion and commitment to mixed-abilities dance were affording him “more experience than the teachers whose engagement with mixed-abilities work was more intermittent” (Alessi with Zolbrod 2007, pg. 4).

He stopped organizing guest teachers and spent some time thinking about the name “DanceAbility.” Was it just a catch-all term, usable by anyone dancing with disabled people? Alessi described his thoughts in an interview this way:

I don't want it to be a catch-all term because it's not, it's a very specific way of working, a specific orientation. It's not just “let's get together with disabled people and dance.” And I also don't believe what I'm doing can be called Contact Improvisation per se, although I couldn't do what I do without knowing it (as quoted in Horwitz 1998, pg. 65).

In the summer of 1996 the 1st Annual DanceAbility Teacher Training was offered by Alessi in Eugene, Oregon. Twenty-eight people from eight different countries attended the first training (Alessi 1997). In the past eleven years two-hundred and sixty-five people have completed the teacher training and are certified instructors of the DanceAbility Method.

DanceAbility Teacher Training

If the intention of DanceAbility is to “work with all people in the study of dance and movement improvisation, and bring more diversity, equality and self-empowerment into contemporary dance, and by extension, into our greater culture,” then the intention of the teacher certification course is to coach people how to use the DanceAbility methods to this end (Alessi with Zolbrod 2007, pg. 5). The paragraphs that follow outline the curriculum schedule of the studio-based, four week training as experienced by the researcher and outlined by ImPulsTanz who has presented the training as a part of the Vienna International Dance Festival for the past two summers.

During the first week of the DanceAbility Certification Course trainees are introduced to the philosophy of the DanceAbility Method. They are instructed on how to identify the physical possibilities and “common denominators” of each new group they work with to ensure they isolate or limit no one. The “movement language exercises” which are designed to be possible for all people who can understand cause and effect are the first to be taught. The basic format of an introductory DanceAbility workshop: opening circle, warm-up, solo/duet/group exercises, closing circle, is also introduced and experienced.

In the second week participants continue to expand upon their understanding of non-isolation and communication through movement. Touch is incorporated through the “approach work” and physical skills such as rolling, leaning, counter-balance, and providing structures to take weight, are explored.

The third week covers variations on a theme and artistic collaboration. Adaptations to lesson plans in response to visual and hearing impairments, developmental disabilities, and children are presented. Trainees learn how to facilitate small groups to collaboratively create performance pieces as well as how to teach, evaluate, and provide feedback on choreography.

The final week includes one or two days where the general public is invited to attend classes designed and taught by course participants. Feedback from Alessi and fellow course participants is offered. Participants view videos of early DanceAbility workshops and performances, and insights into the business aspects of starting to teach or lead a performing group are shared. A site-specific performance demonstration event is prepared and performed for the general public.

Upon completion of the training participants receive a general course manual as well as extensive notes detailing the daily exercises and discussions that took place during their specific training period. Contact information for that year’s class is distributed.

The Need for a Directory of Certified DanceAbility Teachers

Many participants of the 2007 teacher training expressed a desire during personal conversation with the author to know more about the locations and activities of their predecessors. Whether an opportunity for mentorship, collaboration or networking was sought, some newly certified DanceAbility teachers clearly felt access to a directory of certified DanceAbility teachers would serve as a catalyst. Not only would assembling contact information into a public resource guide promote networking and ease communication amongst DanceAbility teachers, it would also allow the general public to locate certified DanceAbility teachers in their respective areas.

A significant byproduct of this study then, is the capacity to fulfill this felt need by organizing and making available a directory of certified DanceAbility teachers.

Procedures

This study is a descriptive, exploratory study in which qualitative data were collected using a self-report questionnaire fully approved by the Office for Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Oregon. The population under examination was certified DanceAbility teachers. Data were collected using a series of questionnaires created specifically for use in this study by the researcher (See Appendix A). The demographic data served as the foundation for a Directory of certified DanceAbility Teachers (See Appendix E).

Questionnaires

The names and contact information for all certified DanceAbility instructors were obtained from Joint Forces Dance Company. Of the 265 Certified DanceAbility Teachers in the world in 2008, 52 did not have contact information (standard mail or email) on file with Joint Forces Dance Company, and were therefore not included in this study. All other certified DanceAbility instructors were contacted by way of email and asked to complete a self-report questionnaire within two week's time (See Appendix B). Two weeks from the first request a second follow-up email was sent to any instructor who had yet to respond, again asking them to complete the questionnaire within a two week deadline (See Appendix D). When an email address was not available, or came back as undeliverable, the survey was delivered via the postal service (See Appendix C). All survey's sent by standard mail had a deadline of three weeks from the date of mailing. Only one request was sent by mail.

Upon receipt, completed questionnaires were analyzed for reoccurring themes. To assist assessment categories of: who, what, where, why, and how were used to sort data. Content analysis within the sorting schema was carried out in order to classify response meaning.

Directory

In order for a directory to be useful it must be easy to locate and access. To maximize the potential number of viewers it is the researcher's intention to make the directory available online. One current option under consideration is posting the directory on the official DanceAbility website, www.danceability.com.

With consent, the directory provides the name, location (city/state/country), and email address of respondents. Respondents were also able to elect for some or all of the below information to appear in the directory: mailing address, phone number(s), fax number, and web address.

Instrumentation

The Certified DanceAbility Teacher Questionnaire had three sections: I. Pre-Certification, II. Post-Certification, and III. Instructor Profile. Data obtained from section III were used for formation of the directory; data reported in sections I, II and III were analyzed by the researcher to determine if certified DanceAbility teachers were contributing to the spread of the DanceAbility method. Specifically, section I provided insight beyond demographics into who is pursuing certification, and section II addressed whether instructors have taught or choreographed for mixed-abilities groups since certification, and if so in what context(s).

Results and Discussion

The results of this study are presented under five headings:

- Who are Certified DanceAbility Teachers?
- What are Certified DanceAbility Teachers Doing?
- Where are Certified DanceAbility Teachers Working?
- Why are Certified DanceAbility Teachers involved (or not) with mixed-abilities work?
- How are Certified DanceAbility Teachers doing their work?

In an effort to simplify summary of pre and post certification findings, data are presented sequentially within the headings as asked in the Certified DanceAbility Teacher

Questionnaire. General information about response rate precedes reports of specific findings.

Response Rate

Of the 265 Certified DanceAbility Teachers in the world in 2008, 52 did not have contact information (standard mail or email) on file with Joint Forces Dance Company, and were therefore not included in this study. Thirty-nine teachers only had standard mailing addresses available and one attempt to contact them via postal mail was taken. The remaining 174 teachers had email addresses listed and were contacted, up to two times, requesting participation in this study.

Three of the 39 questionnaires delivered by standard mail were completed, 6 questionnaires were returned as undeliverable, and 30 yielded no response. It is highly plausible that many of the questionnaires sent by standard mail, which went primarily to overseas addresses, were never received by the intended recipients—a third of the mailing addresses were 9 or more years old, and 90% of the addresses were 5 or more years old.

Fifty-eight of the 174 questionnaires delivered by email were completed, and 111 yielded no response. Five people requested additional time or apologized for not being able to participate for personal reasons.

In total, attempts were made to contact 207 Certified DanceAbility Teachers. Questionnaires were received via standard mail and email from 61 respondents (response rate 29%).

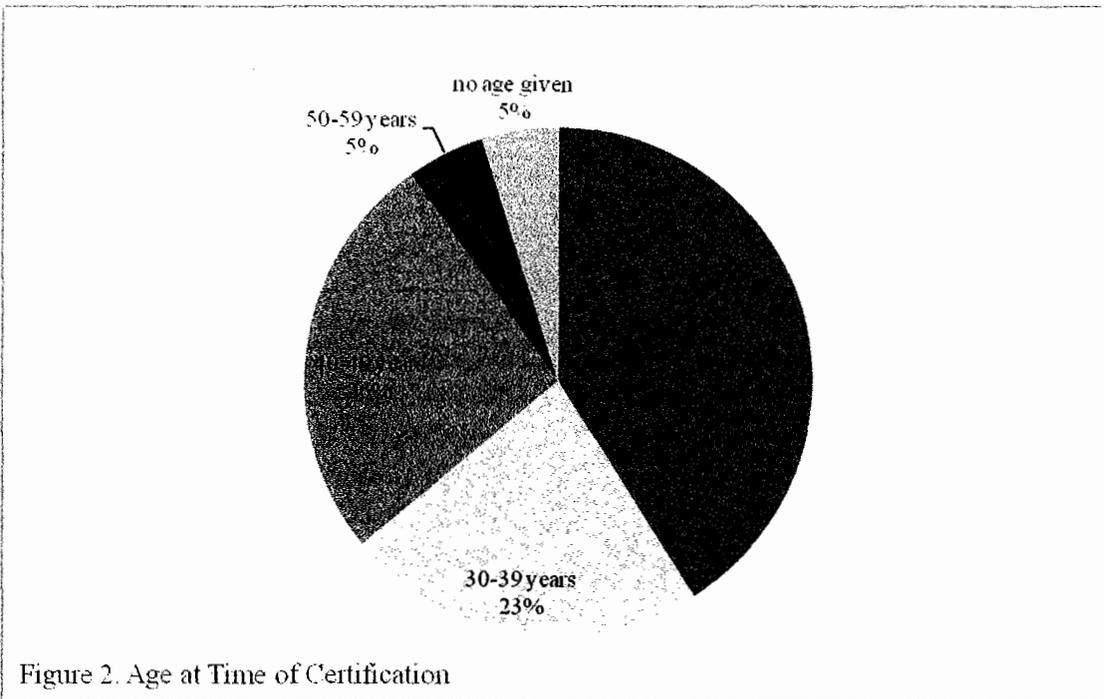
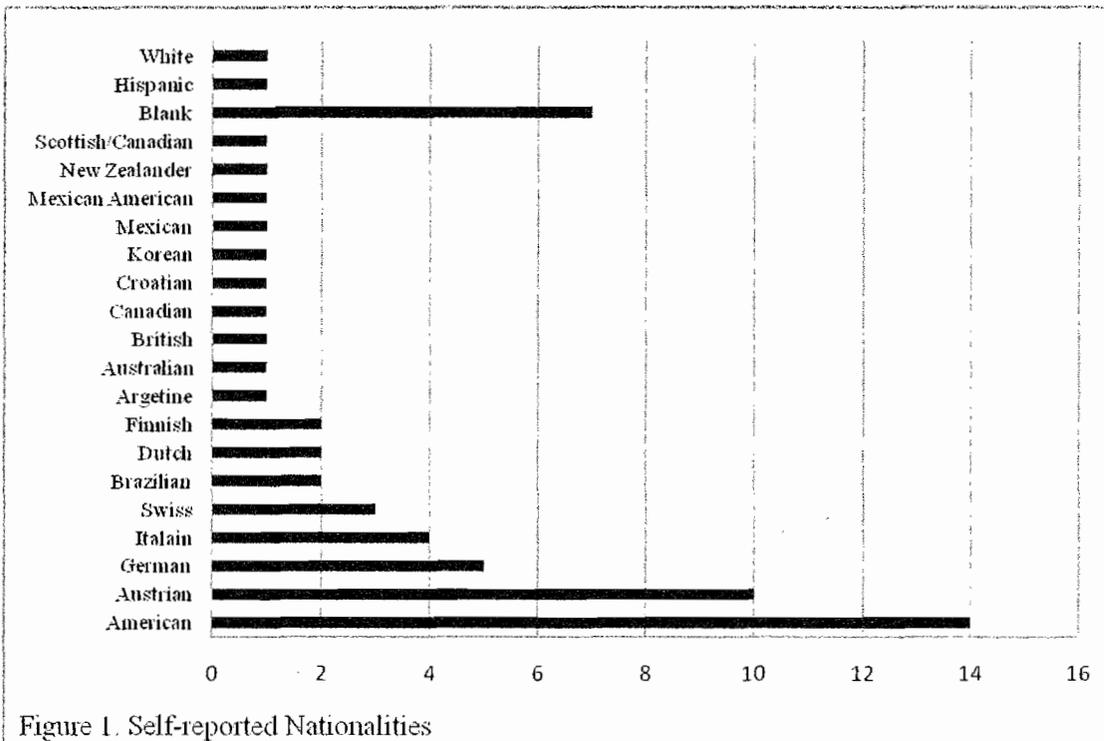
Response Bias

Though only 61 of the 265 DanceAbility Teachers certified at present participated in this study, there is evidence to support that there are other Certified DanceAbility Teachers working across the globe. There were several instances where one person from a particular dance troupe completed the survey, and in their answers implied that they were co-teaching or performing with a Certified DanceAbility Teacher who did not complete the survey. Additionally, through simple search engines like Google, the researcher was able to find online materials (personal or company web pages, and articles) that indicated a DanceAbility Teacher [who did not participate in the study] was active in the field.

Who Are Certified DanceAbility Teachers?

Certified DanceAbility Teachers, as represented by survey respondents, are a diverse group of people. The Certified DanceAbility Teachers who participated in this survey reside in 14 different countries and are of 17 different nationalities. Europeans represented the largest number of respondents (46%), followed by Americans (23%). Figure 1 details each self-reported nationality that was represented in the survey.

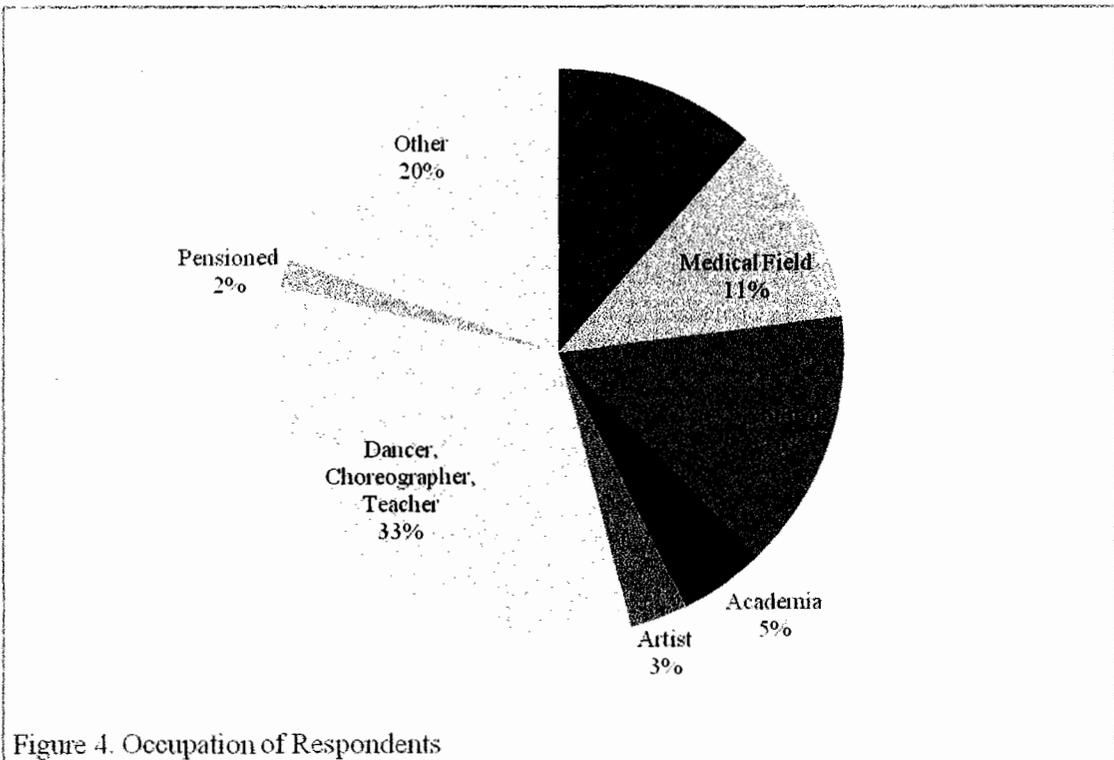
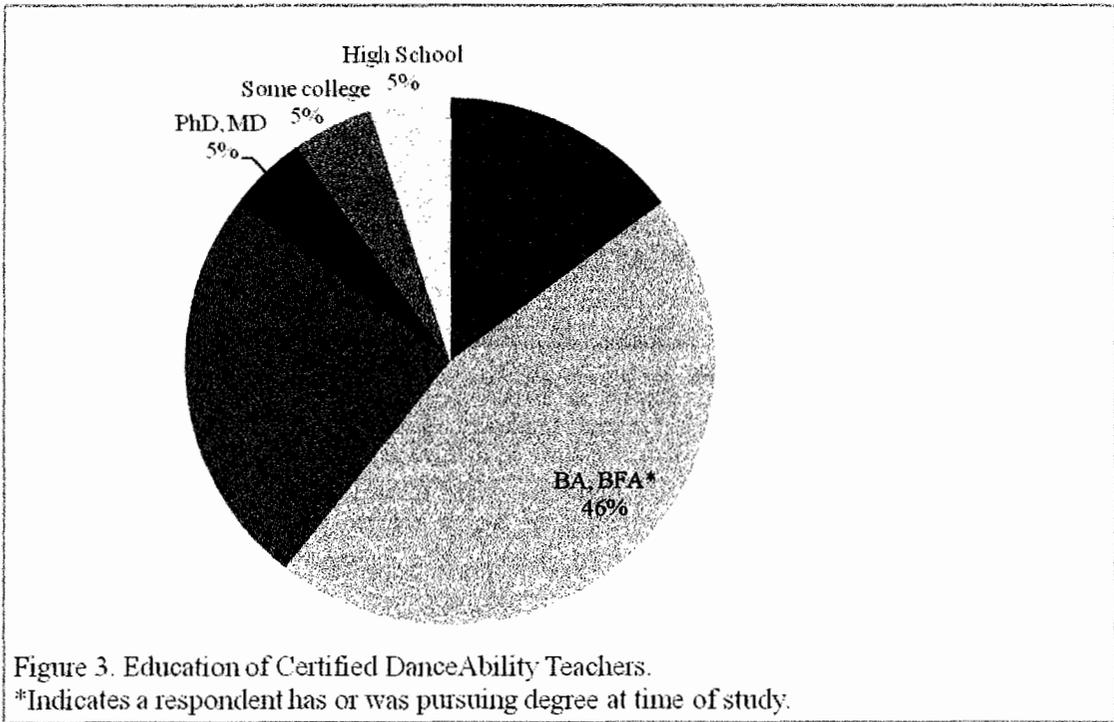
The mean age of teachers at the time of certification was 33.68 ± 9.63 years. As seen in Figure 2, the majority of teachers (41%) pursued certification in their 20s, with 40 somethings being the next common (26%) age group and 30 somethings not far behind (23%).



An equal number of respondents reported having a physical disability (28%) as being able bodied (28%). Yet a considerable number of respondents (30%) declined to answer the question, and another 13% provided philosophical responses challenging the assumptions inherent within the question: disabilities? One respondent suggested that the answer to whether she was disabled depended on one's point of view. Another simply stated that she had "none at the moment," thereby acknowledging that disability can affect any of us at any time, and is not always a permanent condition. A particularly apt respondent put forward the idea that we are all disabled in some way and to varying degrees by responding, "Disabilities: I'm a human being!"

Of the 61 teachers who responded 75% had or were nearing completion of an undergraduate degree. Twenty-nine percent had or were nearing completion of a master's degree, and 5% held Ph.D. or M.D. degrees (see Figure 3).

Thirty-three percent of all respondents listed their occupation as dancer, choreographer, and / or dance instructor. Three Certified DanceAbility Teachers reported teaching in academia, with 2 of the 3 within Dance Departments. Eleven percent reported careers in the medical field (psychologist, psychotherapist, physical therapist, speech therapist, doctor, nurse), and students represented 15% of respondents. Figure 4 provides detailed data related to occupation.



Though only thirty-three of all respondents listed their occupation as dancer, choreographer, and / or dance instructor, fifty-five (90%) respondents reported having experience or training in dance improvisation (contact and non-contact based, see Table 1) prior to seeking certification; 45 (74%) reported experience or training in another dance form, and 47 (77%) reported having other movement related experiences or trainings. Table 2 summarizes the respondents' non-improvisation based movement experiences prior to completing the teacher training.

Table 1. Summary of respondents' improvisation (Contact and other) experience/training before entering certification program.

Response, General	n	Response, Details	n
Yes	55	Some/few/a little experience	7
No	4	Extensive experience	10
Blank	2	Specified Improvisation	27
		Specified Contact Improvisation	34
		Specified Mixed-Abilities setting	11

It should be noted that while some survey respondents included information about the nature and scope of their study (length, proficiency level, etc.) in their responses others did not. Therefore, this study cannot comment on the extent of experience or training in each form.

Respondents reported first hearing about the DanceAbility method in a myriad of ways. The most highly reported were: in collegiate dance programs (18%); from a non-experiential source (18%) e.g. article, newsletter, email, radio, internet, pamphlet; while

studying with a Certified DanceAbility Teacher or a teacher who had studied with Alessi (15%); and from friends or family members (15%).

Table 2. Summary of respondents' non-improvisation based movement experience/training before entering certification program.

Other Dance Forms

African	Butoh	Flamenco	Modern	Spiritual
Afro-Cuban	Contemporary	Hip-Hop	Oriental	Swing
Ballet	Creative Movement	Israeli Folk	Rock 'n Roll	Tap
Ballroom	Dance for Health	Jazz	Salsa	
Belly Dance	Expressive Dance	Latin	Skinner Release Tech.	

Other Movement Related Experiences or Trainings

Adaptive Skiing	Disabled Athletics	Mime	Softball
Aerobics	Feldenkrais	Musical Theatre	Swimming
Aikido	Gymnastics/Acrobatics	Physical Theatre	Tai-Chi Chuan
Alexander Technique	Hockey	Physical Therapy	Taoist Meditation
Athletics	Inline Skating	Physical Training for Disability	Tennis
Authentic Movement	Judo	Pilates	Track
Basketball	Karate	Rock Climbing	Various Sports
Body Mind Centering	Kung-fu	Rowing	Voice Work
Calisthenics	Low Aerial Trapeze	Snowboarding	Volleyball
Cycling	Martial Arts	Soccer	Yoga

The majority of respondents (62%) had had some sort of experience with the DanceAbility method prior to seeking certification, the most commonly reported being attending a DanceAbility workshop (54%). Of the respondents who indicated they had attended a workshop, 17 had attended a workshop(s) with Alito Alessi and 10 attended workshops with a Certified DanceAbility Teacher. The remaining 10 respondents did not specify who led the workshop they attended. A considerable number of respondents (18%) also reported having seen a DanceAbility performance prior to attending the training.

One respondent described her experience with the DanceAbility method prior to seeking certification in a particularly touching way. She writes about a workshop she attended:

I had started to question my choice of career and had forgotten that why I was dancing. At this workshop I saw and experienced people getting touched emotionally and physically in a way that made them very happy and it filled me with joy and I got my first spark for mixed ability dance from there and my motivation for studying. I had realized being a dancer in a company wasn't what I wanted for my future.

Mixed-abilities dance experiences were not just limited to DanceAbility. Thirty-nine percent of teachers reported having participated in other mixed-abilities dance training prior to attending the teacher training, and nearly a third of survey respondents (19, 31%) participated in other mixed-abilities dance work after completing the teacher training. Teachers reported attending workshops with specific teachers Adam Benjamin, Karen Nelson, Sonja Brown, and with integrated dance companies CanDo Co, Stop Gap, Blue Eyed Soul, Dancing Wheels, AXIS Dance Co., and AMICI.

Respondents who reported participating in other mixed-abilities dance training were asked what similarities or differences they may have observed between the DanceAbility method and the other mixed-abilities work. While many spoke to similarities they experienced, like the use of Contact Improvisation and group work, there were several distinctions that deserve mention.

The differences observed between mixed-abilities dance rooted in the DanceAbility method and work not were commonly centered around the wide spectrum of goals mixed-abilities work can have. As one respondent put it, "Adam [*Benjamin*] was

focused more on the art of dancing and production whereas Alito was more focused on the process and the social aspect.” One respondent suggested that in her experience DanceAbility was more intensely focused on community building, looking for the common ground of each group, where other mixed-abilities work, “worked not so much with these idea. In some way the aim of other workshops was more to find individuality, what individual skill do I have with my body...”

This difference in purpose made one respondent who has cerebral palsy feel that she couldn't participate fully. Here she speaks about her experiences in a workshop with Cando Co: “...it was more non-disabled dancer oriented or let's say more for strong disabled persons or good wheelchair user. Not so much for cp but perhaps that also changed meanwhile.”

This sentiment was echoed by another respondent who has performed in the works of several choreographers not utilizing the DanceAbility method. “Individuals without DanceAbility training were not as inclusive of all abilities and often segregated dancers. However individuals with DanceAbility training were more inclusive of all abilities even when using other mixed-abilities dance methods.”

The response of one participant was so thorough and insightful in its description that the whole response, without excerpt, is included below:

This is a huge question. One obvious difference, in comparing the Dancing Wheels and DanceAbility, is that DA is based in Contact Improvisation, and the DW company was a classical modern company. Another is the focus on improvisation and ensemble building, versus choreographed movement in the company. A third is, in DanceAbility, the greater acceptance of different, disabled bodies, rather than what appeared to be an attempt to make the disabled bodies very similar to one another as well as to present the classical body as ideal and emphasize the classical aspects of wheelchair dancing.

In the *Dancing Wheels*, the choreographer choreographed unison movements among the wheelchair dancers, and also used a process of “translation” which converted classical modern vocabulary to disabled bodies in a way that minimized the different appearance and movement qualities of disabled dancers to make them merge seamlessly with the non-disabled dancers. In essence, there was a privileging of virtuosity over choreographic ideas or expressiveness. In DA, there was/is no attempt to hold up a standard of what is “beautiful” movement, rather there was an emphasis on being in the body, attuned to sensation, and on physical responsiveness to each other and connection via movement, however small.

Twenty-five respondents (41%) indicated that they had taught, performed, or choreographed with a mixed-abilities group prior to attending the teacher certification. While 6 respondents (10%) only offered a general “yes” to teaching, performing or choreographing with a mixed-abilities group before certification, 13 respondents (21%) specified performing, 11 (18%) specified teaching, and 6 (10%) specified choreographing. Another 10% of respondents reported teaching or choreographing for solely disabled groups. Three respondents left the question blank or could not recall.

The majority of participants in this study were female. Fifty-one females and 10 males completed surveys.

Who Summary

Though DanceAbility Teachers reside on five different continents (North & South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia) the majority of Certified DanceAbility Teachers are located in North America and Europe. Five times as many women as men have pursued certification; comparable numbers of people with and without disabilities have completed the certification program; and at the time the survey was conducted seventy-five percent of Certified DanceAbility Teachers had or were nearing completion of an undergraduate degree.

Nearly all Certified DanceAbility Teachers (90%) had some level of experience or exposure to dance improvisation, contact or non-contact based, prior to entering the certification program. Another 74% had experience or training in other dance forms such as ballet or jazz, and over 75% had other movement experience or training.

The greater part of Certified DanceAbility Teachers (62%) had direct experience with the DanceAbility method prior to seeking certification, the most common experience being workshop attendance (54%). A smaller number of respondents (41%) had already taught, performed and/or choreographed with mixed-abilities groups before becoming certified in the DanceAbility Method.

What Are Certified DanceAbility Teachers Doing?

After completing the teaching training, 46 respondents (75%) had taught mixed-abilities groups. Fourteen respondents (23%) indicated they had not taught mixed-abilities groups, and 1 respondent declined to answer the question. Table 3 details the formats in which certified teachers have lead mixed-abilities groups.

Table 3. Format of Certified DanceAbility Teachers mixed-abilities dance class offerings.

Formats	n
Ongoing classes	18
Master classes – full day workshops	20
Weekend – week long workshops	16
Two week and longer workshops	2
"Too many to list"	3
General "yes" to teaching, without specifying format	9
Hasn't taught DanceAbility, but has taught dance tech for 1 year with several deaf students	1

Certified DanceAbility teachers who have taught mixed-abilities groups since completing the teacher training (46) reported having taught beginners (43), professional dancers (25), children (26), and adults (42). Additionally, 8 teachers reported teaching alone, 5 reported team teaching, and 33 reported teaching both alone and as part of a team.

Of those that reported they had not taught mixed-abilities groups (14), 4 had completed the teacher training less than one year prior; 6 had completed the teacher training less than two years prior; 8 had completed the teacher training less than three years prior; and 12 had completed the teacher training less than four years prior to the survey being conducted.

Since completing the teacher training 33 respondents (54%) have choreographed mixed-abilities dances, with 11 respondents (18%) choreographing work for their own mixed-abilities troupes. An additional 3 respondents (5%) answered “not yet!” implying an intention or desire to choreograph for mixed-abilities groups in the future.

When asked whether or not they had performed with a mixed-abilities group since completing the teacher training 38 respondents (62%) responded positively, with an additional respondent replying “not yet!” One respondent also noted that some of the individuals she has worked with have started their own performance group.

Another 25 respondents (41%) reported organizing or producing other mixed-abilities activities, including mixed-ability/disability art festivals (5 respondents, 8%), street parades (7 respondents, 11%) and lecture demonstrations at conferences or universities (11 respondents, 18%). Two respondents who participated in the certification

program in 1996 and 1997 in Eugene, OR USA reported producing the teacher training in their home countries in 2003 (Trier, Germany) and 2001 (Milan, Italy) respectfully. A participant of the 2006 certification program in Vienna, Austria is organizing the 2009 teacher training in her home country, Finland.

What Summary

Seventy-five percent of Certified DanceAbility Teachers that participated in this survey have taught mixed-abilities dance groups since obtaining certification. Another 62% have performed in mixed-abilities work, and 54% have choreographed mixed-abilities pieces. Other mixed-abilities activities such as lecture / demonstrations, street parades, and art festivals have been organized or produced by 41% of participating Certified DanceAbility Teachers.

Where Are Certified DanceAbility Teachers Working?

Certified DanceAbility teachers reported teaching mixed-abilities dance in a wide variety of settings and locals. While some teachers only indicated the city where they taught, others provided more detail about the type of venue where their teaching took place. Primary and secondary schools, institutions of higher learning, and community centers were the most commonly reported sites. Other responses included:

- YMCAs
- Institutions for people with special needs
- Homes for disabled youngsters
- Nature spas
- Conferences on Disability and Integrated Arts
- Rehabilitation programs
- Festivals – art, folk, fringe
- Dance Studios
- Community Churches

- Camps
- Private Dance Studios
- Gymnasiums
- Jacob's Pillow
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind

The above sites where mixed-abilities dance has been taught are spread across 20 different countries. While most Certified DanceAbility teachers reported teaching solely within their country of residence, it is worthy of note that 26% of respondents have taught mixed-abilities dance in at least two countries. See Table 4 for a listing of all countries where mixed-abilities dance has been taught, choreographed, and performed by Certified DanceAbility teachers.

Table 4. Countries where Certified DanceAbility Teachers have been active, sorted by Teaching, Choreography and Performance.

<i>Taught</i>	<i>Presented Choreography</i>	<i>Performed</i>
Austria	Austria	Austria
Belgium	Brazil	Brazil
Brazil	Canada	Canada
Canada	Cech Republic	Cech Republic
Cech Republic	Croatia	Croatia
Croatia	Finland	England
Finland	France	Finland
France	Germany	France
Germany	Italy	Germany
Italy	Mexico	Ireland
Mexico	New Zealand	Italy
Netherlands	Romania	Luxemburg
New Zealand	South Korea	Mexico
Romania	Switzerland	Netherlands
Russia	United Kingdom	New Zealand
Siberia	USA	Scotland
South Africa		South Korea
South Korea		Switzerland
Switzerland		USA
United Kingdom		
USA		

Mixed-abilities choreography has been created by certified DanceAbility teachers for small community based groups, regional dance companies and companies that tour on national and international levels. For a listing of all countries where certified DanceAbility teachers have presented choreography see Table 4.

Remarkable venues where presentation of mixed-abilities choreographic work was reported ranged from the highways of Santa Monica, CA, where one certified DanceAbility teacher set a piece on himself and a man in a motorized wheelchair, to the *Ent-hinerte Sexualität* (Sexuality without Hinderence) Congress in Linz, Austria; from local and regional festivals such as the Seattle Festival of Dance Improvisation and Calgary's Annual Freak-out, to events on the world stage such as the 2000 Para Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia. More common venues for presenting mixed-abilities choreography align closely with reported outlets for teaching: schools, community centers, auditoriums, theatres, universities, community colleges, dance schools, and conferences.

It is also worth noting that thirteen respondents (21%) have (co-)founded organizations specifically dedicated to the teaching and / or performing of mixed-abilities dance, and another to Disability Arts & Culture. Table 5 details where these organizations are located, a brief description of what they do, and what position the Certified DanceAbility teacher holds in each.

Table 5. Organizations dedicated to the teaching and / or performing of mixed-abilities dance (co-)founded by Certified DanceAbility Teachers.

Organization	Location	Name & Position	About
Airborne Dance Theater	Durham, NC USA	Cornelia Kip Lee - Founder, Artistic Director	Integrated Dance Company offering workshops and residencies. Member of NC Dance Alliance, a 501(c)3 non-profit.
Austrian DanceAbility Movement (ADAM)	Vienna, Austria	Vera Rebl - Founder	Offers ongoing classes and intensive workshops. Hosted the week-long 2008 "refresher" course for Certified DanceAbility Teachers. Presents mixed-abilities dance work by local choreographers.
BewegGrund	Wiltingen, Germany	Maja Hehlen - Founder	Offers ongoing mixed-abilities dance classes and produces mixed-abilities performances.
Bilderwerfer	Vienna, Austria	Daniel Aschwanden - Founder, Artistic Director	A Professional Dance Performance Group that for 10 years presented mixed-abilities choreography and taught mixed-abilities dance internationally. Attention of Group has expanded to greater questions surrounding "diversity." Present performances generate strategies that are directed against the dissemination of a normative body image, but are not centered around mixed-abilities work.
Cortile Studio Movimento	Milan, Italy	Laura Banfi – Founder, Director	An Artistic & Cultural Non-Profit that promotes the performing arts and somatic disciplines in all their artistic, educational and cultural manifestations, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary work. Since 1995 has expanded its productions and classes to be inclusive.
DanceAbility Finland	Kauniainen, Finland	Gunilla Sjövall - Board Chair; Sally Davidson - Board Vice Chair	Non-Profit aiming to promote the usage of the DanceAbility Method, develop and support accessible, integrated, creative dancing in Finland, and support certified DanceAbility teachers. Will host the first ever teacher training in Northern Europe in the summer of 2009.
Danza sin Limites	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Marina Gubbay – Co-Founder	Promote the diffusion, the education and the practice of an inclusive dance by offering inclusive classes and workshops to children and adults.
Disability Art & Culture Project	Portland, OR USA	Erik Ferguson - Co-Director	A 501(c)3 program under Oregon Cultural Access which furthers the artistic expression of people with both hidden and visible disabilities. Utilizes the performing arts as a method of examining disability in relation to society. Produces annually the Disability Pride Art and Culture Festival.

Table 5. cont'd.

Organization	Location	Name & Position	About
Manifest Dance	Salem, OR USA	Alexis Jewell – Founder	Promotes cultural awareness and strengthens inter-personal relationships through the facilitation of Mixed Abilities dance. Offers half and full day workshops.
Momo Dance Theatre	Calgary, AB Canada	Pamela Boyd – Artistic Director	A Performing Arts Non-Profit that brings together a diverse community of artists, whose purpose it is to remove barriers and facilitate artistic expression and the joy of movement-based improvisation, both in community settings and in performance; runs weekly community and ensemble mixed-abilities classes at both beginner and more experienced levels; creates improvisational, multi-disciplinary performance works.
Núcleo Dança Aberta	São Paulo, Brazil	Neca Zarvos - Founder	Hosts mixed-abilities classes. In the summer of 2008 brought in Alessi for 4 weeks to teach, perform, and set a piece of choreography on locals.
Ottavo Giorno	Padova, Italy	Marina Giacometti – Co-Founder	A Cultural Association dedicated to making theater and dance more accessible. Produces mixed-abilities dance and theater, offering various inclusive ongoing classes.
Touch Compass	Auckland, New Zealand	Catherine Chappell – Founder, Artistic Director	Set up as a Charitable Trust, New Zealand's premier integrated dance company performs choreography and aerial work internationally. Has an education wing, <i>Encompass</i> , which provides workshops and ongoing training for the community.

DanceAbility teachers were also asked about any performance of mixed-abilities work that they participated in post certification. As one might anticipate, performance venues were similar to the types of venues where choreography was presented. While some respondents answered the question of where performances took place with a geographic location (see Table 4), others answered the question of where by providing information about the group they performed with. One such example is a teacher who became certified in 2004, she reported dancing as a guest with Scottish Dance Theatre and the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. Another participant reported performing at the 2006 Para Olympic Games in Turin, Italy.

The DanceAbility Method / Philosophy was reported to be used in other situations such as non-inclusive environments like dance or movement therapy sessions, institutions, and while teaching other idioms of dance by 79% of respondents (48). Data on using the DanceAbility Method in other situations can be found in Table 6.

Table 6. Use of the DanceAbility Method in non-integrated dance settings.

<i>Response, General</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Response, Detailed</i>	<i>n</i>
yes	48	other dance classes	20
no, n/a	9	with future teachers	2
blank	4	dance/movement/occupational therapy	5
		institutions	3
		peer counselor	2
		inclusion/how I treat people outside studio	10
		music/acting classes	3

Where Summary

After completing the DanceAbility Teacher Certification respondents reporting teaching mixed-abilities dance in 20 different countries, performing in mixed-abilities work in 19 different countries, and presenting their choreography in 16 different countries. Twenty-six percent of respondents reported teaching mixed-abilities dance in more than one country, and over 21% have started organizations dedicated to the teaching and/or performing of mixed-abilities dance.

Why Are Certified DanceAbility Teachers Involved (Or Not) With Mixed-Abilities Work?

The opportunity to receive training, refine current teaching methodologies, and further knowledge of working with mixed-abilities groups was listed by 13 respondents (21%) as reasons for attending the teacher training. Another 20% cited the opportunity to study intensively with Alito Alessi while 16% cited the desire to learn how to incorporate all people into their classes and choreographies, to teach beyond their usual student base as reasons for attending the teacher training. Interestingly 5% of respondents cited a frustration with “expert” teachers or a lack of mixed-abilities teachers in their communities as their reason for participating.

I was frustrated at experiencing workshops by ‘experts’ whereby disabled people were expected to adapt the moves for their own bodies, as I felt this merely reinforced a sense of segregation rather than a celebration of difference. I was seeking a truly integrated approach that was less reliant on disabled dancers making the best of a class that really didn’t cater appropriately for everyone.

It is also interesting to note that 8 respondents (13%) stated that they pursued certification because they were personally touched by the work or felt called to do so:

“because of the feeling I did get with my experiences as a student and also teaching: a deep sense of presence and the feeling that I was communicating with other human beings, that I was a part of it and it was good. I don’t get that feeling so often.” Another respondent wrote: “there is something that happens in a mixed group that does not happen when the class is not mixed. There is a real meeting between people in a very intimate and direct way. It touches me deeply to work in these groups.” Another respondent put it this way:

It’s hard to describe. I felt it as a calling. Something I was supposed to do. Participating in the mixed-abilities choreography made me feel so alive, so connected, more than any other performance I have ever done. I often question if my dancing, my art making matters to anyone but me and a handful of others around me. Mixed-abilities work matters, it has the ability to touch and alter the lives of those that do and those that watch. It is very powerful and can make a difference in our world.

Questions 12-14 of the self-report questionnaire were all constructed to solicit responses from participants regarding their thoughts and feelings about participating in the teacher training. Therefore, the answers to said questions are very similar, but offer slightly different information.

When asked what they took away from the teacher training 24 respondents (39%) answered that they took away strategies or methods to teach dance in any situation. Thirteen respondents (21%) indicated that they left the training with more confidence in their personal ability to lead mixed-abilities groups. Twelve respondents (20%) commented on the networking and sense of international community that was gained. Six responses (10%) were centered around leaving the training with a new understanding, respect or appreciation for the abilities of all people.

The most commonly reported (15 respondents, 25%) beneficial aspect of the teacher training was that the learning environment was experiential, and itself a mixed-abilities setting. A large portion of respondents (13, 21%) listed the broadening of their views and expansion of what they thought possible as the most beneficial aspect of the teacher training. Other responses that were cited by at least 10% of respondents as the most beneficial aspects of the training were the quality of teaching by Alessi (7 respondents, 11%), the opportunity to network, dialogue, and exchange ideas with other participants (7 respondents, 11%), and the length and intensive nature of the schedule (6 respondents, 10%). One respondent who cited the length and intensive nature of the schedule as the most beneficial also added, "I must say, having the "certified danceability teacher" title helps to present yourself and get people to pay attention."

Participating in the teacher training was considered a worthwhile experience by 85% of respondents with 7% having mixed feelings about the degree to which the training was worthwhile for all participants. The mixed feelings surrounding the worthwhile-ness of the training were for the most part related to expectations about the experience levels of other participants. Eight percent of respondents left the question unanswered.

Speaking to whether her participation was worthwhile one participant wrote, "For some aspects it was, for example: to practice and grow with the same group for a long time. For other aspects it wasn't: I thought to find a selected group of people with a good curriculum in dance or danceability, but it wasn't so; almost half persons in the group had not any dance experience." Another respondent spoke to the diversity of the group

saying, "...experiences were a bit limited because the group wasn't so much "mixed" (there was "just" one person in a chair)..."

Though the results from this study indicated that that nearly all participants (90%) had experience or training in dance improvisation prior to attending the teacher training, and that comparable numbers of people with and without disability pursue certification, the responses from these women about the background of attendants at their particular training sessions, reminds the researcher that this study cannot comment on the make-up of individual training sessions but only on the sampling as a whole.

When asked whether the study of the DanceAbility Method has affected their work or life, 53 respondents (87%) affirmed that it had. (Only one respondent replied no, while 7 respondents (11%) did not answer the question). Select respondent explanations for how study of the DanceAbility Method has affected their life can be found in Table 7.

Why Summary

The opportunity to receive training, refine current teaching methodologies, and further knowledge of working with mixed-abilities groups was listed by 13 respondents (21%) as reasons for attending the teacher training. Another 20% cited the opportunity to study intensively with Alito Alessi while 16% cited the desire to learn how to incorporate all people into their classes and choreographies, to teach beyond their usual student base as reasons for attending the teacher training.

Certified DanceAbility teachers reported taking away things concrete and intangible from the teacher training. The three most common responses were strategies

and methods to teach dance in any situation, an increased confidence in one's ability to lead mixed-abilities groups, and a sense of an international community and network.

Table 7. Sampling of positive responses to how study of the DanceAbility method has affected respondents' work or life.

...I am more open to people with disabilities (despite being one myself, before DanceAbility I was mostly unwilling to be seen as a part of that community)...

...it has opened my eyes to respect disabled people even more and gave me tools to express that. In fact I have an intimate relationship with one now; we met on the dance floor more than a year ago.

...I had lots of work with DanceAbility which I wouldn't have had the courage to take without my training with Alito, lots of doors opened to me that would have stayed closed without my training.

Gaining more exposure to different bodies and the non-virtuosic perspective has been helpful in my appreciating my own unique movement qualities and those of others. The techniques have become part of my repertoire in teaching. I don't use them exclusively, but rather apply what I learned in teaching using a variety of exercises.

I respect it because it is holistic, combining social equality and social justice issues in our relationships and personal expression. This holism is what I strive for in my life.

I left my spouse due to the empowerment I experience in the training. So, yes, it changed my life entirely.

The DanceAbility work has widened my perspective in many ways. Allowing me to experience more because I have less fear. It has also changed the direction of my career in Dance. Made me question why I value technique and virtuosity so much...and on a deeper level what virtuosity and beauty are. Made me a more observant person.

Over 20% of respondents felt the mixed-abilities setting of the training, the broadening of their individual views, and an expansion of their sense of what is possible were the most beneficial aspects of the teacher training. Other commonly reported beneficial aspects were the quality teaching, the opportunity to network with other participants, and the length and intensive nature of the schedule.

The training was considered a worthwhile experience by a predominant number of respondents.

How Are Certified DanceAbility Teachers Doing Their Work?

Respondents were asked if they had received any financial support or sponsorship for mixed-abilities work. Twenty-one respondents (34%) indicated they had received support of some kind. Of those respondents who had received support, 12 had received local grant monies, 10 had received federal or state grants/sponsorships, 7 had received support from foundations, 3 had received private donations, and another 3 did not specify the type of funding they received. Thirty-eight respondents (62%) indicated that they had not received any financial support or sponsorship for mixed-abilities work, but 10 of those respondents also reported no activity with the DanceAbility method post certification, and therefore would have no reason to apply for financial support. Two respondents left the question blank.

The information gleaned from question 20 is limited however in that it does not tell us whether the 28 respondents that responded negatively, but who had taught, choreographed, or performed mixed-abilities dance post-certification, applied for funds and were denied or whether they had not sought out financial support.

In a related arena, one respondent asked if question 20 included getting paid to teach, choreograph or perform. The survey did not directly address the ability of the Certified DanceAbility Teachers to generate income from their work in the mixed-abilities dance field.

Twenty-eight respondents (46%) reported that they had received press related to their mixed-abilities work. See Table 8 for specific info regarding the type of press received. Thirty-two respondents (52%) reported that they had not received press related

to their mixed-abilities work. Fourteen of those respondents also reported no activity with the DanceAbility method post-certification and therefore one can safely assume did not seek media coverage. One respondent left Question 21 blank.

Table 8. Type of press coverage received by Certified DanceAbility teachers who have taught and/or choreographed and/or performed mixed-abilities work since completing the certification program.

<i>Type of Press Received</i>	<i>n</i>
Magazine	2
Newspaper	14
Radio	3
Television	5
Did not specify type of press	13

Information gained from Question 21 about press is incomplete however, in that it does not tell us if the 18 respondents who indicated they had not received press but had taught, choreographed, or performed mixed-abilities work post-certification had contacted press agencies about covering their events, i.e. attempted to get coverage.

At the time the survey was conducted, nine respondents had received recognition in the form of awards or honors for their mixed-abilities dance work. Awards were bestowed by City Councils, Foundations, Arts Commissions, Counties, Cultural Institutes, Festivals and Federal Departments. Particularly noteworthy recognition includes the companies Bilderwerfer and Touch Compass, both led by Certified DanceAbility Teachers. Bilderwerfer received “first prize of honor” from the Austrian Federal Department of Art for “outstanding artistic work in the field of art and mixed-abilities;” Touch Compass received four awards: Best Female Dancer, Best Male Dancer,

Best Company, and Best Lighting during the 2007 Tempo Dance Festival. The researcher finds this particularly remarkable, because the Tempo Dance Festival is New Zealand's annual festival that "celebrates dance in all its forms and styles" and is not an event limited to mixed-abilities participants.

An overwhelming number of participants (43, 70%) in this study indicated that they were not as active in mixed-abilities work as they would like to be. The most common reasons cited being that the respondent was: too busy (14), still in school for example, that the lack of funding and/or compensation was a deterrent (12), accessibility and transportation issues (6), and a difficulty in finding participants (6).

Other participants spoke about the conceptions of others affecting their activity. One respondent from Austria wrote, "I'm active because I'm a performance artist, but the most barrier is the fight to being accepted as artist and not that it is just leisure time. People have a hard time to see that art is work anyway, and if you are disabled they think it is social." Another Austrian respondent highlighted how the perspectives of individuals with authority can have influence, "An obstacle is still the thinking of the Cultural City Manager, that work with an as disabled person is social work and not Art. So they don't give the financial support. This is a difference to the USA. We have minimal private sponsoring, we relay financial support from the City and the State."

A teacher working in Italy describes the situation there this way:

In Italy communication of dance informations in very difficult. There are not good art magazines or other information's vehicles. It is difficult to be seriously listened from disable organizations and government institutions. It is easier to do short workshops than ongoing classes. Difficulties in finding students (both able and disable) and to have the

trust of families to bring them at the studio. Few accessible gymnasiums, studios, theatres.

One Certified DanceAbility teacher from Canada seems to understand the importance of having leaders sympathetic to accessibility issues:

I am an active board member for Neighborhood Dance Works – and we are planning Mixed-Ability outreach commencing this summer. Also, I was recently appointed to the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council as the Dance Representative and I hope to impart my knowledge of accessibility issues in the arts community through this role. I also work full-time in Disability Services at the College of the North Atlantic and while this is not directly related to dance activities, it is directly tied to disability supports on another level, which greatly influences my understanding of disability issues. ...the barriers for me are really about finding a balance between work and my artistic life. Also being in a new community, settling in and getting to know new people is somewhat of a barrier in that networking is a work in progress. Between 2003-2005 I completed a masters degree at York University and the focus of my work was on Dance, Disabilities and Human Rights. So, during this time I was really immersed in work related to Mixed-Ability dance. Since doing the teacher training, opportunities have waxed and waned and reflect my changing life circumstances.

When asked if they were interested in further training or support opportunities for certified DanceAbility teachers a strong majority of respondents (46, 75%) answered “yes.” Table 9 details the kind of training and support opportunities sought by respondents. While several respondents indicated that in person opportunities were preferred over virtual gatherings, several others expressed concern that time and money could restrict their ability to participate in face to face meetings taking place on another continent.

Several respondents were not only interested in receiving training or support, but offered to assist newly certified teachers. One teacher from Mexico put it this way: “I can offer some assistance to beginners in this work with the elements I have now and be in

contact with people from other countries to know how the work in some other places is.”

This respondent’s offer of mentorship and networking is precisely what was desired by the participants in the 2007 teaching training after completing the certification, and corroborates the need for a Directory of Certified DanceAbility Teachers.

Table 9. Professional development opportunities of interest to respondents

<i>Type of further training/support opportunities sought</i>	<i>n</i>
Conference / gathering	16
further training	19
online support* / networking	21
performance/performing	4
sharing experiences, without specifying online/in person	14
general "yes"	5
no	5
not at the moment	5
maybe	1
blank	4

*Specific online resources suggested: Media Library, Q & A forum, electronic newsletter, international event calendar, list of financial support opportunities, setting up mentorships.

One respondent who was certified in 1999 and reported an interest in meetings, gatherings, or conferences with other Certified DanceAbility Teachers shared this question:

...one question that has come up for me – when I did the training it was suggested that we specifically say who our workshops would be geared for. For example – “mixed-ability workshop for people with physical disabilities.” I have been challenged by disability workers that it seems to discriminate between people who have, for example, developmental disabilities vs. physical disabilities. Based on how I remember it, we were encouraged to make this distinction in order to create a manageable group of participants. Otherwise, if we had a really large spectrum of people with disabilities, it could be hard to manage everyone’s needs. I certainly understand where this comes from, but have question how to involve as many people as possible without feeling exclusive.

When Alessi and Karen Nelson first began the DanceAbility work they did specify that workshops were geared for certain types of people as this respondent suggests. They too tackled the same question. Like the disability workers above Alessi and Nelson felt that placing parameters around what type of person could participate was discriminatory, and the DanceAbility Project grew into a Method that was designed to include anybody and everybody's movement. The DanceAbility Method is the only mixed-abilities approach that will work with all people (visually impaired, hearing impaired, mentally and developmentally disabled, physically disabled and able bodied) and any combination of people (Alessi 2007b).

Like any other field, the DanceAbility Method has evolved its thinking about best practices and refined its philosophy about mixed-abilities dance. The question put forth by the respondent, certified 10 years ago, is a strong example of how opportunities for professional development and dialogue amongst DanceAbility teachers could advance the field and encourage current best practices.

How Summary

Twenty-one Certified DanceAbility teachers have received financial support or sponsorship of some kind for their mixed-abilities work. Another 28 have received press coverage, and 9 have been recognized for their work in the field of mixed-abilities dance. A strong majority (71%) of Certified DanceAbility teachers reported being less active in mixed-abilities work than they would like to be. A slightly greater majority (75%) is interested in further training or support for Certified DanceAbility Teachers.

Conclusion

Since 1996 two-hundred and sixty-five people have obtained certification in the DanceAbility Method of teaching mixed-abilities dance. To date, teacher certification courses have been held in the USA (1996, 1997, 1999, 2004 & 2005), Argentina (1998), Italy (2001), Holland (2002), Germany (2003) and Austria (2006, 2007). The 2009 certification course is being held in Finland, and the 2010 teacher certification course will be held in Uruguay.

Those trained in the DanceAbility method have continued to develop and expand mixed-abilities dance communities around the world. The teachers who participated in this study have taught mixed-abilities dance in 20 different countries, performed mixed-abilities work in 19 different countries, and presented their choreography in 16 different countries.

DanceAbility Teachers reside on five different continents (North & South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia) with the majority of Certified DanceAbility Teachers located in North America and Europe. This finding is not surprising as all teacher certifications thus far, less one offered in Argentina, have been held in those regions.

Seventy-five percent of Certified DanceAbility Teachers that participated in this survey have taught mixed-abilities dance groups since obtaining certification. Another 62% have performed in mixed-abilities work, and 54% have choreographed mixed-abilities pieces. Other mixed-abilities activities such as lecture / demonstrations, street

parades, and art festivals have been organized or produced by 41% of participating Certified DanceAbility Teachers.

Twenty-one percent of participants in this study have started organizations dedicated to the teaching and/or performing of mixed-abilities dance, and 15% have received recognition for their work.

In the summer of 2008, the first ever “Teacher Upgrade” was offered in Vienna, Austria. This week long refresher course open to all Certified DanceAbility Teachers was meant to provide teachers with an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the work and network with other DanceAbility Teachers.

Even with all the activity described in the preceding paragraphs the majority (71%) of Certified DanceAbility teachers reported being less active in mixed-abilities work than they would like to be. A slightly greater majority (75%) was interested in further training or support for Certified DanceAbility Teachers, and 95% opted to be listed in the Directory of Certified DanceAbility Teachers created by the researcher.

When Alessi remarked in 2007 that mixed-abilities dance must grow beyond its originators to flourish and sustain itself, he drew a parallel between his relationship to the DanceAbility Method, and Steven Paxton’s relationship to Contact Improvisation. Alessi felt strongly that it was critical the work not be associated solely with his name.

For me, it’s really important that DanceAbility get out of the concept of being related to Alito Alessi, because my name is a trap for the work. And the teacher that... I learned that [from] is Steve Paxton. He never held onto contact improvisation, he never said that it is what it is and that’s exactly what you have to do in it. He let it be an open body of work, so it can keep going and growing way beyond him (Alessi 2007a).

A reporter covering the 25th Anniversary Celebration of Contact Improvisation at Oberlin College in 1997 echoes Alessi's sentiment:

In terms of the form's survival, it is for example today an obvious strength, that it is not exclusively tied to Steve Paxton's name. It is not 'Steve Paxton's technique' as we know Martha Graham's, Merce Cunningham's or Trisha Brown's technique. ... The danceform was developed under collective responsibility around the world (Vedel 1997).

Just as Contact Improvisation jams, workshops, and classes can and do take place around the world without Paxton needing to be present, so to do DanceAbility workshops and performances take place around the world without Alessi. The information provided by participants in this study is testament to the flourishing of the DanceAbility Method; even with all the societal barriers that still remain, the DanceAbility Method is in a state of activity that will sustain itself beyond the life of its originators.

This study aimed to obtain and analyze information about Certified DanceAbility Teachers as a population. While valid contact information was not available for all teachers, and some teachers opted not to participate, the researcher feels the 61 teachers who did respond represent a fair sampling of the population.

The fact that English is not the native tongue of many Certified DanceAbility Teachers may have impacted the response rate. As one teacher who did not ultimately submit a survey wrote in email correspondence with the researcher:

Please forgive me for not answering your survey. We have had sooo much work here with our dance company – grants applications, workshops, performances... Maybe I also get a bit afraid when Sally told me that she has used a whole day to answer it and her mother tongue is English☺!!

Future studies involving Certified DanceAbility Teachers may yield a better response rate, and possibly more detailed responses, if they are translated into several languages.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

The results of this study were separated into five categories:

- Who are Certified DanceAbility Teachers?
- What are Certified DanceAbility Teachers Doing?
- Where are Certified DanceAbility Teachers Working?
- Why are Certified DanceAbility Teachers involved (or not) with mixed-abilities work?
- How are Certified DanceAbility Teachers doing their work?

Certified DanceAbility Teachers, as represented by survey respondents, are a diverse group of people. The Certified DanceAbility Teachers who participated in this survey reside in 14 different countries and are of 17 different nationalities. Europeans represented the largest number of respondents (46%), followed by Americans (23%). Five times as many women as men have pursued certification, and comparable numbers of people with and without disabilities have completed the certification program

Seventy-five percent of Certified DanceAbility Teachers that participated in this survey have taught mixed-abilities dance groups since obtaining certification. Another 62% have performed in mixed-abilities work, and 54% have choreographed mixed-abilities pieces. Other mixed-abilities activities such as lecture / demonstrations, street parades, and art festivals have been organized or produced by 41% of participating Certified DanceAbility Teachers.

After completing the DanceAbility Teacher Certification respondents reported teaching mixed-abilities dance in 20 different countries, performing in mixed-abilities work in 19 different countries, and presenting their choreography in 16 different countries. Twenty-six percent of respondents reported teaching mixed-abilities dance in more than one country, and over 20% have started organizations dedicated to the teaching and/or performing of mixed-abilities dance.

The opportunity to receive training, refine current teaching methodologies, and further knowledge of working with mixed-abilities groups was listed by 13 respondents (21%) as reasons for attending the teacher training. Another 20% cited the opportunity to study intensively with Alito Alessi while 16% cited the desire to learn how to incorporate all people into their classes and choreographies, to teach beyond their usual student base as reasons for attending the teacher training.

Twenty-one Certified DanceAbility teachers have received financial support or sponsorship of some kind for their mixed-abilities work. Another 28 have received press coverage, and 9 have been recognized for their work in the field of mixed-abilities dance. A strong majority (71%) of Certified DanceAbility teachers reported being less active in mixed-abilities work than they would like to be. A slightly greater majority (75%) is interested in further training or support for Certified DanceAbility Teachers.

Conducting this study has been an enriching experience, both personally and professionally. When I first completed the DanceAbility Teacher Training in 2007 I did not fully realize how varied, diverse, and active the community I was joining was. Sure I knew that people from all over the world were earning their certification, but it wasn't

until I started searching for teachers online that had outdated contact information with JFDC that I started to fully realize the magnitude to which DanceAbility has spread. I felt a bit like an historian tracing the various limbs of the DanceAbility family tree. Some branches were thick and strong, like in Vienna, Austria where there is a local community of DanceAbility Teachers offering workshops and creating work together; other branches were just budding, but were present and impactful all the same, like the sole teacher working in Seoul, South Korea. Not only is she the only teacher in her country, but she is the first and only Certified DanceAbility Teacher living and working on the Asian continent.

I was struck when reviewing the data with the many levels of engagement people have within the field. There were teachers with large scale, touring companies and community outreach education programs who have made mixed-abilities dance work their career, and other teachers who have full time professions in other fields but teach ongoing mixed-abilities dance classes in their local communities. Discovering the bigger companies which had earned accolades and found a path through the prejudices and barriers which still surround integrated dance was inspiring. But equally inspiring was reading about DanceAbility teachers who quietly continue the practice of offering inclusive dance in their local communities. For the DanceAbility method to continue to grow and sustain itself it needs action on both these levels and every level between.

Conducting research on an international scale presents some unique problems to solve as a researcher. If I were to repeat this study in 10 years I would strongly consider enlisting the help of a DanceAbility teacher who is fluent in English and Spanish and

another fluent in English and German. I would also revise the tool itself to promote more thorough responses.

For example, question 8 on the Certified DanceAbility Teacher Questionnaire asked if respondents had taught, choreographed, performed, or otherwise worked with a mixed-abilities group before completing the teacher training. I expected that respondents would specify in what capacity they were involved with mixed-abilities work prior to completing the certification, and most did; but enough simply answered “yes” or did not provide a clear enough response for me to distinguish what their involvement was. Breaking question 8 down into four questions, each addressing one role individually would allow for a more complete understanding of the respondents involvement with mixed-abilities work prior to certification.

Another option I would consider for later studies, and would encourage any researcher, who is collecting data through a questionnaire to use, is Google forms. In 2008 Google introduced a new application to Google docs, called forms. It's a free application that allows you to create surveys, send them to anyone with an email address, and then automatically updates a spread sheet with responses. Not only would this save countless hours of inputting responses from a questionnaire created in word to a spreadsheet in excel for analysis, but it would also allow several researchers, perhaps those working in different languages, to coordinate and access data together easily, and without paying for use of an online survey tool.

In the summer of 2008 I attended a week long dance intensive with physically-integrated AXIS Dance Company. There I met many people attending the intensive who

had not heard of DanceAbility or the DanceAbility teacher certification. I hope that publishing this study might bring more awareness to the possibility of participating in an intensive training for teaching mixed-abilities dance and moreover might encourage those active in mixed-abilities dance who may not yet be familiar with the DanceAbility method to consider attending the training themselves. As Alessi said during an interview in 2008: “The truth is, there isn’t enough people still trained in this work. I’ve trained [nearly] 300, but the world needs many many many many more teachers to be spreading this work” (Alessi 2008).

It is my hope that the directory created from this research will contribute to the flourishing of DanceAbility by encouraging networking amongst DanceAbility teachers, and allowing potential students and performers to more easily locate teachers in their communities.

APPENDIX A
CERTIFIED DANCEABILITY TEACHER
QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction: This questionnaire consists of three sections: 1) Section I: Pre-Certification, 2) Section II: Post-Certification, and 3) Section III: Instructor Profile. Please complete each section to the best of your knowledge. If any question does not apply to you, please indicate this by writing N/A (not applicable) rather than leaving the item blank. THANK YOU!

SECTION I: PRE-CERTIFICATION

Directions: This section consists of questions aimed at illuminating specific experiences prior to attending the DanceAbility Teacher Training.

1. Did you have experience or training in dance improvisation (contact or other) prior to completing the teacher certification? If yes, please summarize in the space below.

2. Did you have experience or training in any other dance forms (ballet, contemporary, hip-hop, etc) prior to completing the teacher certification? If yes, please summarize in the space below.

3. Did you have any other movement related experience(s) or training(s) (martial arts, athletics, etc) prior to completing the teacher certification? If yes, please summarize in the space below.

4. How did you first hear about DanceAbility?

5. Did you have any experiences with the DanceAbility work before attending the teacher training? (For example, did you attend a DanceAbility workshop; see a performance choreographed by a DanceAbility teacher; train with a certified DanceAbility teacher, etc.)?

6. Did you participate in any other mixed-abilities dance work or training prior to completing the DanceAbility teacher training? Please explain.
7. If you answered “yes” to the question above, what similarities or differences did you observe between the DanceAbility method and the other mixed abilities work?
8. Did you teach, choreograph, perform, or otherwise work with a mixed abilities group before completing the teacher training? If yes, please provide more explanation below.
9. Did you follow contemporary dance news prior to completing the teacher training?
Please select one: yes no
10. Did you follow integrated dance news prior to completing the teacher training?
Please select one: yes no
11. Why did you attend the teacher training?

SECTION II: POST-CERTIFICATION

Directions: This section consists of questions related to experiences after completing the DanceAbility Teacher Training. Specifically this section aims to discover the who, what, where, when, and how of any mixed-ability work you may have done post-certification. Please think broadly, and refer to all work where the DanceAbility method was influential.

12. What did you take away from the teacher training?
13. What was the most beneficial aspect of the teacher training?
14. Was participating in the teacher training a worthwhile experience? Please explain.

15. Have you taught mixed-abilities groups since completing the teacher training? If yes, in what settings (i.e. ongoing classes, master classes, day/weekend/week long workshops, etc.), where (venue/ city, state, country) and approximately how many students participated?

16. If you answered “yes” to the above question please mark all that apply below.

Do you teach: beginners professional dancers children adults

Do you: teach alone team teach both

17. Have you created choreography(ies) in mixed-abilities settings since completing the teacher training? If yes, for whom (i.e. international/national/regional professional dance troop, personal dance company, etc.) and where was the work shown (venue/ city, state, country)?

18. Have you performed with a mixed-abilities group since completing the teacher training? If yes, with whom (i.e. international/national/regional professional dance troop, personal dance company, etc.) and where was the work shown (venue/ city, state, country)?

19. Have you organized or produced any other mixed-abilities activities (such as lecture demonstrations or street parades, etc.)? If yes, in what settings (i.e. schools, community centers, conferences, festivals etc.) and where (venue/ city, state, country)?

20. Have you received any financial support or sponsorship for mixed-abilities work? (For example Federal, State, or Local grants, private donations, etc.). If so, when and from who?

21. Have you received any press related to your mixed-abilities work?

22. Have you received any awards or honors related to your mixed-abilities work?

23. Are you as active in mixed-abilities work as you would like to be? If no, why not? What are the perceived limiting obstacles or barriers?

24. Do you use the DanceAbility methodology / philosophy in other situations? (For example in non inclusive environments such as dance or movement therapy sessions, institutions, other idioms of dance training, etc). Please explain.

25. Are you interested in further training/support opportunities for certificated DanceAbility teachers such as gatherings, conferences, online support / networking, etc.? If yes, what type of training / support opportunities interests you?

26. Have you participated in any other mixed-abilities dance work or training after completing the DanceAbility teacher training? Please explain.

27. If you answered yes to the question above, what similarities or differences did you observe between the DanceAbility method and the other mixed-abilities work?

28. Has your study of the DanceAbility method affected your work or life? Please explain.

29. Do you follow contemporary dance news after completing the teacher training?
Please select one: yes no

30. Do you follow integrated dance news after completing the teacher training?
Please circle one: yes no

SECTION III: INSTRUCTOR PROFILE

Name:

Mailing address:

Phone number (including country code):

Alternative phone number:

Fax number:

Email address:

Website(s):

Nationality:

Gender (please "X" one): ___ Male ___ Female

Disability(ies):

Highest level of education achieved:

Occupation(s):

Year and location where DanceAbility Teacher Training was completed:

Age when completed DanceAbility Teacher Training:

The name, location (city/state/country), and email address you provided above will be listed in an online directory of certified DanceAbility instructors. If you would **not** like your information to appear in the directory please indicate so here:

Please indicate any other information from Section I: Instructor Profile that you would like listed in the online directory by checking the appropriate spaces below.

___ mailing address

___ web address

___ phone number

___ alternative phone number

___ fax number

Any additional comments you would like to make regarding mixed-abilities dance, the DanceAbility method in particular, and/or this survey are welcome:

If you are interested in receiving a summary of the results of my study please indicate so by supplying an email (preferred) or mailing address where the results can be sent here:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THIS RESEARCH STUDY!

Please return this questionnaire by <<date>> to:

danceabilityteachersurvey@hotmail.com

OR

Amanda Herman
17714 Silver Creek Ave E
Puyallup, WA 98375
USA

Phone: 001 541 556 6100

APPENDIX B

INITIAL INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE, EMAIL

Dear <<First Name Last Name>>,

GREETINGS! My name is Amanda Herman and I am a certified DanceAbility teacher working with Alito Alessi to follow up with all DanceAbility teachers who have completed the DanceAbility Teacher Training or the DanceAbility Teacher Certification.

I am also currently working toward the completion of a master's degree in Dance at the University of Oregon. My thesis advisor is Dr. Steven Chatfield, Associate Professor, Department of Dance, University of Oregon.

The purpose of my thesis is to establish who certified DanceAbility teachers are and what their involvement is with mixed-abilities dance. The attached questionnaire attempts to ascertain important information in these areas. Through the results of this study, it is hoped that a better understanding of the contributions to mixed abilities work by certified DanceAbility teachers will be obtained. The results of this study will also be utilized to create an online Directory of Certified DanceAbility teachers.

As a person who has completed the DanceAbility Teacher Training or DanceAbility Teacher Certification you have been selected to participate in this study. I encourage you to participate because this component of my research impacts directly on the final phase of my thesis. Even if you are not currently teaching or choreographing mixed-abilities work I need to hear from you.

The completion of this questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. By completing and returning the questionnaire you are consenting to participate in this study.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire. If you have any questions regarding the study or the questionnaire please feel free to contact me at danceabilityteachersurvey@hotmail.com or 541. 556. 6100.

I also request that you attach any supplementary materials (e.g. press packet, promotional materials) which you feel might be helpful in more fully describing any mixed-abilities work you do along with your completed questionnaire. However, the inclusion of these supplementary materials is optional.

Please return your completed “Certified DanceAbility Teacher Questionnaire” and supplementary materials (optional) by <<day, month date, year>> via e-mail (preferred method) to danceabilityteachersurvey@hotmail.com, or postal mail to 17714 Silver Creek Ave East Puyallup, WA 98375 USA. (Note: If you would like to respond to the questionnaire but feel more time is needed to complete it, please let me know and an alternative time frame can be arranged).

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the Office for Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Oregon, 541. 346. 2510. This Office oversees the review of the research to protect your rights and is not involved with this study. Additionally, my thesis advisor, Dr. Steven Chatfield, can be reached at 541. 346. 3385.

Lastly, I am missing the contact information for several DanceAbility Teachers. If you could please forward this survey on to any DanceAbility Teachers you know it would be greatly appreciated!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Sincerely,
Amanda Herman
Master’s Degree Candidate
Dance Department, University of Oregon

APPENDIX C

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE, WRITTEN LETTER

<<Month date, year>>

Dear <<First Name Last Name>>,

GREETINGS! My name is Amanda Herman and I am a certified DanceAbility teacher working with Alito Alessi to follow up with all DanceAbility teachers who have completed the DanceAbility Teacher Training or the DanceAbility Teacher Certification.

I am also currently working toward the completion of a master's degree in Dance at the University of Oregon. My thesis advisor is Dr. Steven Chatfield, Associate Professor, Department of Dance, University of Oregon.

The purpose of my thesis is to establish who certified DanceAbility teachers are and what their involvement is with mixed-abilities dance. The attached questionnaire attempts to ascertain important information in these areas. Through the results of this study, it is hoped that a better understanding of the contributions to mixed abilities work by certified DanceAbility teachers will be obtained. The results of this study will also be utilized to create an online Directory of Certified DanceAbility teachers.

As a person who has completed the DanceAbility Teacher Training or DanceAbility Teacher Certification you have been selected to participate in this study. I encourage you to participate because this component of my research impacts directly on the final phase of my thesis. Even if you are not currently teaching or choreographing mixed-abilities work I need to hear from you.

The completion of this questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. By completing and returning the questionnaire you are consenting to participate in this study.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire. If you have any questions regarding the study or the questionnaire please feel free to contact me at danceabilityteachersurvey@hotmail.com or 541. 556. 6100.

I also request that you attach any supplementary materials (e.g. press packet, promotional materials) which you feel might be helpful in more fully describing any mixed-abilities

work you do along with your completed questionnaire. However, the inclusion of these supplementary materials is optional.

Please return your completed “Certified DanceAbility Teacher Questionnaire” and supplementary materials (optional) by <<**day, month date, year**>> via e-mail (preferred method) to danceabilityteachersurvey@hotmail.com, or postal mail to 17714 Silver Creek Ave East Puyallup, WA 98375 USA. (Note: If you would like to respond to the questionnaire but feel more time is needed to complete it, please let me know and an alternative time frame can be arranged).

To request an electronic copy of the survey email danceabilityteachersurvey@hotmail.com or visit www.danceability.com.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the Office for Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Oregon, 541. 346. 2510. This Office oversees the review of the research to protect your rights and is not involved with this study. Additionally, my thesis advisor, Dr. Steven Chatfield, can be reached at 541. 346. 3385.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Sincerely,

Amanda Herman
Master’s Degree Candidate
Dance Department, University of Oregon

APPENDIX D

FOLLOW UP INVITATION, EMAIL

Dear <<First Name Last Name>>,

Several weeks ago I sent a questionnaire to you regarding certified DanceAbility teachers. As of yet, I have not heard from you. Fully realizing the busy lives we all live, I am once again requesting your participation in my study.

As I am sure you can appreciate, it is very important that I obtain responses from everyone possible. Furthermore, your response directly impacts the final phase of my thesis. Even if you feel that your involvement with mixed-abilities dance has been minimal, I am still in need of your input.

As you may recall, the purpose of my thesis is to establish who certified DanceAbility teachers are and what their involvement is with mixed-abilities dance. The attached questionnaire attempts to ascertain important information in these areas. Through the results of this study, it is hoped that a better understanding of the contributions to mixed-abilities work by certified DanceAbility teachers will be obtained. The results of this study will also be utilized to create an online Directory of Certified DanceAbility teachers.

The completion of this questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. By completing and returning the questionnaire you are consenting to participate in this study.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire. If you have any questions regarding the study or the questionnaire please feel free to contact me at danceabilityteachersurvey@hotmail.com or 541. 556. 6100.

I also request that you attach any supplementary materials (e.g. press packet, promotional materials) which you feel might be helpful in more fully describing any mixed-abilities work you do along with your completed questionnaire. However, the inclusion of these supplementary materials is optional.

Please return your completed "Certified DanceAbility Teacher Questionnaire" and supplementary materials (optional) by <<**day, month date, year**>> via e-mail (preferred method) to danceabilityteachersurvey@hotmail.com, or postal mail to 17714 Silver

Creek Ave East Puyallup, WA 98375 USA. (Note: If you would like to respond to the questionnaire but feel more time is needed to complete it, please let me know and an alternative time frame can be arranged).

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the Office for Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Oregon, 541. 346. 2510. This Office oversees the review of the research to protect your rights and is not involved with this study. Additionally, my thesis advisor, Dr. Steven Chatfield, can be reached at 541. 346. 3385.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Sincerely,
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