Abstract

In this paper I take an historical look at dance artists and theorists, examining their influence on today's curriculum in our school system. I argue that dance education should be recognized as of equal importance as other art forms, that it is essential for our society's well being, and that it should be included and fostered in our school curricula. I further examine a number of key contributors to dance and dance education within the last century in the Western sphere. Key questions I examine are: Who were some of the most influential dance artists and dance educators of the past century? Who were the innovators and key contributors? How has their work affected dance education? How has their work been passed on? Have their bodies of work, their methodologies, or their beliefs about the body changed society? Has their work shaped culture or was it a byproduct or reflection of culture and the forces of the time they lived? As well as an historical look at dance artists and theorists, I also undertake a philosophical inquiry, examining the idea of dance in the curriculum as being misunderstood: as an area to explore feeling, but not intellect. Finally, I look at the essentialness of an integrated dance and movement education as a way of connecting human beings to their bodies, as well as using the body as an essential means of expression.
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Author Biography

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Karen Kurnaedy is a dancer and dance educator and currently a Grade Four and Five teacher in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia. She also teaches dance as part of the curriculum and has a firm belief that dance education is an essential component for a complete and whole education. She received her Bachelor of Education in 1990 from the University of Alberta and has completed two Post Baccalaureate Diplomas at Simon Fraser University. (1996, 2000) She is currently completing her thesis for her Masters of Arts at Simon Fraser University.

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