Applying Somatic Dance in Diverse Settings
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2nd International Conference on Somatics-Based Dance Education at Dean College
July 17 2015

Defining the Word Somatic
- Thomas Hanna (philosopher, Feldenkrais trained, founder of Hanna Somatics)
- Studied GREEK and found:
  - Soma = the living body
  - Coined SOMATIC to mean the body and person experienced from within.

Defining Somatic Movement
- Martha Eddy implemented a cross-case analysis (1999 – 2015) of somatic movement systems using:
  - Live somatic experiences beginning 1974
  - Interviews (2000 – 2005 with current updates)
  - Literature research (Master writings as well as overview books)
  - Somatic conference participation (NDA, ADTA, AHP, International Somatic Congress, NDEO)

An Example of Eddy's Analysis: Somatic Movement Features:
- Slowing down in order to feel within
- Use of breath
- Use the floor/table/chair - decreasing the impact of gravity to release unneeded tension
- New Coordination: differentiation-integration/recognition & inhibition of habit/neuro-developmental-babies are natural movers/beginners mind/reversing action
- Three-dimensional embodiment/awareness

Defining Somatic Processes
- **Slowing down for anatomical/physical awareness**
- **Global/universal/biological/spiritual connections**
- **Using movement efficiency principles & practices**
- **Integrates developmental theories**
- **The living body unified with psyche**
- **Mostly inductive and some deductive processes**
- **Therapeutic AND educational**
- **Tools: Breath, Movement, Touch, Sound**
Eddy discovered these contributions of Somatic Education to Dance

- Somatic Education teaches one to listen to the body while dancing in order to:
  - Know oneself deeply, gain greater self-awareness
  - Increase expressive capacity (& range of emotions)
  - Move with efficiency and longevity
  - Use sophisticated knowledge of touch within dance (partnering, contact improvisation, choreography of relating to others)
  - Open to bodymind change, new paradigms

All Somatic Practitioners are Teachers by Definition: Conveying How to Find Self-Authority

This Somatics-based Dance Conference 2015 conference at Dean College has had brilliant & sophisticated presentations demonstrating the range of educational experiences aligned with somatic education modalities using movement, touch and vocalization.

- Thanks to all of you for this weave, your brilliant tesseract of:
- Self-learning: key in experiential education
- Guiding each other to tune into students needs: anatomical, physiological, social & emotional
- Improving health and conditioning through classic lessons (ATM, BF, Alexander) or combined with Pilates, NIA and more.
- Bringing self-attention to breath & the pelvis
- Application to aerial dance, jazz, ballet, classic modern (Hawkins), contemporary, performance & choreography
- Synthesis/Crystallization
- Each of these sessions provides insight into some facet of the hologram, tensegrity, synergy, cybernetics of somatic movement
- Highlighting
  - Body-mind-energy-psyche and their connections
  - Filled with the aesthetic that dancing brings.
- In short: Somatic Dance integrates the somatic processes of:
- Listening within
- Embodied anatomy (as in BMC or Functional Awareness)
- Slowing down to find energy, alignment and efficiency
- A full range of expression
- Mind-body-psyche holism
- With the resurrection of Somatic Dance conferences

We Have a Field!
Somatic Movement Education & Therapy
Somatic Dance

- Let's weave Past and Present
- What do we most value:
  - that we have been taught?
  - that lives within us?
  - that we want to pass on to others?
  - that we would like to shape future education?
  - and shape our world?
- Honor our Teachers
- Memories of the 1st International Conference Brockport, NY 2013 (I was unable to attend due to my father's death that day, the solstice.)
- Preserving the legacy includes naming our teachers, as they live in our body memory, and in writing/publishing. (Hand dance experience)
- What Else Makes a Field?
- Books, Curricula, Journals, Dance Pedagogy, Performance Styles, Research Methods
- I write about the development of the somatic movement field in: *Mindful Movement The Evolution of the Somatic Arts and Conscious Action* to be published summer 2016 by Intellect Books/University of Chicago Press.

Journals We Now Have

- *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices*, Coventry UK
- *Journal of Dance, Movement & Spiritualities Research*, Coventry, UK
- *Journal of Dance Education* NDEO, USA
- *Writings on Dance*, Victoria University of Tech
- *Cuadernos de Musica, Artes Visuales y Artes Escinicas*

Javeriana Universidad – Bogota, Colombia.

- *Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies*, Rio Grande de Sul, Brazil – may submit in English.
- Additional Journals that encourage somatic writing
- *International Journal of Body Psychotherapy* (primarily on somatic psychology)
- *Journal of Authentic Movement* and *Somatic Inquiry* (with the somatic movement practice of Authentic Movement at its heart)
- *Currents* – the Journal of the Body-Mind Centering Association (publishes photos, poetry essays on diverse somatic systems inclusive of dance)
- *Contact Quarterly and the ISMETA newsletter*
Books since 2014

Becoming more Comprehensive: The Somatic Pioneers (Eddy, 2009)
- FM Alexander - Alexander Technique
- Gerda Alexander – Eutonie (GAE)
- Irmgard Bartenieff - both LMA & BF
- Moshe Feldenkrais – ATM & Functional Integration
- Ida Rolf – Rolf Movement & Structural Integration
- Charlotte Selver – Sensory Awareness
- Mabel Todd- Ideokinesis (Sweigard, Clark, Dowd)
- Milton Trager – Trager Mentastics
- Precursors that Set the Stage
- Ancient Movement Practices:
  - Yoga, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Afro-Caribbean dance
  - Francois Delsarte/Genevieve Stebbins/ Rudolf Steiner/Rudolf Laban/Isadora Duncan/Rene Dalcroze
  - Wilhelm Reich/Sigmund Freud/Carl Jung

Everyone has additional influences. In the case of Laban: Trained in Art and Architecture/Masonic Philosophy
Mysticism/Crystallography/Poet/Community Dances – Eastern European Folk Dance & Military Rituals

Writer of theory, poetry and dance notation.
- Somatic Dance Legacy IS Continued at this Conference
- Dancing Embodied History/Keeping History Present – Hawkins and beyond
- Presence in all facets of dancing from how start to train to performance to feedback and more
- Curricular Advances – creating logical programs that are developmentally, culturally and capacity-sensitive (awareness of age, race, ethnicity, disabilities & socially constructed dance).
- Names for Soma & Dance
- SOMATIC DANCE
- DANCE SOMATICS
- Somatic Movement Dance Education
Somatics-based Dance Education


How and why must we Communicate with Words:
- To define and convey values
- To determine needed concepts
- To remember and develop somatic principles
- But what words work best?

Frameworks for observing dance
- There are many informal verbal frameworks for dance observation, assessment and movement sourcing.

Informal systems include:
- 1. One’s own dance training and its taxonomy provides a basis for viewing (e.g., fall and recovery).
- 2. Personal preferences and biases
- 3. Creative language and imagery
- 4. Language from other art forms: music, visual arts

Deepen Your Ability to Communicate Somatic Dance
- Use Ballet, Jazz, Modern, Ballroom Dance, Dance Composition (e.g., D’Houbler, Dunn) terms integrated with Taxonomies from:
- Laban Movement Analysis/Language of Dance
- Anatomical & Kinesiological (& Dance Science)
- Somatic Principles including Perceptual-Motor Development Theory
- Biomechanical/Motion capture: vectors & forces
- Systems of Notation (e.g., Benesh, Eshkol-Wachmann LabanNotation,)
- How does LMA enhance the teaching of somatic dance?
- LMA provides language for ANY movement including any SOMATIC Movement
  - Body (How we organize our bodies to move)
  - Effort (Qualities or Dynamics of Movement)
  - Space (Directions, Pathways, Scales etc)
  - Shape process (HOW we form our bodies in space)

Basic movement practices to enliven the body
- Finding teaching style, recognizing moods, shaping new choreography & teaching methods.
- Language Frames Experience
- A method for viewing movement
- A research tool
- An approach to creative movement exploration
- An in-road for technique, choreography & performance
LMA in particular adds: An approach to therapy, cultural studies, education, health & arts including a set of movement practices analogous to musical scales, & a philosophy of integrated mind-body-psyche.

Somatic Dance Applications
- Education
- Health
- Social Activism
- Ecological Concern
- Community Building
- These can easily Overlap

And as we GET OLDER...
What KEEPS us GOING?
- Think of Irmgard Bartenieff – Teaching “flying and falling” at 80
- Charlotte Selver – teaching SA til 102
- Elaine Summers doing outdoor Intermedia work up until the last months before her death
- As we age...More of us may want to do hands-on sessions, private lessons
- And keep dancing with respect for our bodies
- Find our Passions
  What gifts come from being a somatic dancer?

The option to become a professional in or explore engaging with:
- Somatic Movement Therapy
- Social Somatics
- Eco-Somatics
- Somatic Fitness
- Dance Somatics & Spirituality
- Somatics as a Healing Force
- There are almost always therapeutic aspects of Somatic Dance

Verifiable through Neuroscience, Wellness Studies Dance Medicine, & Somatic Research
- One example: Moving For Life

Sneaky Somatics
- [www.EyesOpenMinds.com](http://www.EyesOpenMinds.com)
- Understanding the Perceptual-Motor cycle
Teaching Kinesthetic awareness through the “accepted” senses- in this case through vision to kinesthetics to bodily self-regulation

Somatic Movement & Dance in K–12 Education
- History: Kate Morgan application of Ruth Doig’s Rhythm’s work
- Language of Dance Education in USA & Globally
- NDEO researching Frameworks: BEST (Body, Energy, Space, Time) BESS models (Body, Effort, Shape, Space) BESSR – add relationship

Just do it: Bring any somatic system into schools!
- Teaching and Activism
- Moving On Center – bridging somatics and performing arts for social change since 1994 including:
  - Friere-based Dance Explorations (Theatre of the Oppressed)
  - The Socially Conscious Body – Carol Swann
- The discourses of Jill Green and Sylvie Fortin

BUILD RESOURCES
- If we grow together we strengthen.
- THEREFORE: BUILD OUR COMMUNITY
- With Somatic Dance colleagues AND with:
  - CONSIDER joining WWW.ISMETA.ORG - as an individual, certified somatic movement professional, associate organization, or somatic movement training organization.
- Somatic dancers make great RSMT/Es
- Review
- Why Continue to engage with somatic theory and practices throughout the lifespan?
  - For self-growth
  - For community building
  - For building a peaceable world
  - For pleasure and creative expression.