

What are Disciplinary Literacies in Dance and Drama in the Elementary Grades?

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ABSTRACT: Disciplinary literacies in dance and drama are underrepresented in classrooms and in scholarship, especially at the elementary level. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine how preservice teachers constructed meaning of the disciplinary literacies in dance and drama. The theoretical framework guiding this study was drawn from social constructivism. Data was examined from three tenets: (a) learning from *others*; (b) learning through *dialogue*; and (c) learning by *doing*. Data sources included observation notes, artifacts, and a focus group interview. A combination of conventional and directed content analysis tools coupled with writing as an analytical tool were applied to examine the data. Five findings emerged: the preservice teachers (a) utilized instructional practices to teach comprehension with the complex texts of dance or drama, (b) supported students who had academic knowledge gaps in dance or drama, (c) taught the academic vocabulary unique to dance or drama, (d) customized literacy strategies unique to dance or drama, and (e) included instructional spaces for the inquiry process. We assert that in socially constructed environments, preservice elementary teachers can realize disciplinary literacies in dance and drama. Moreover, the notion of embodied literacies emerged as one of the disciplinary literacies in dance and drama.

Key words: Disciplinary Literacies, Embodied Literacies, Dance Education, Drama Education, Teacher Education



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“I saw first hand how engaged my students were with dance maps and that was enough to convince me. I will use performing arts in my class.”—Nicole Marie

Our discussion begins with a quote from one of the K-6 preservice teachers in our study who expressed excitement surrounding the use of *dance maps*—a “specialized literacy” strategy (Fang & Coatoam, 2013 p. 628) unique to the discipline of dance. Nicole Marie’s (all names are pseudonyms) enthusiasm caught our attention because disciplinary literacies in dance and drama are underrepresented in classrooms and in scholarship, especially in elementary classrooms. That is, the literature is scarce in reporting the particular ways dancers and actors read, write, speak, and think within their disciplines. Further, arts educators often feel the arts speak for themselves (Barton, 2013); for example, dancers engaged in mapping use movements and floor patterns as language for communicating ideas. Traditional notions of literacy include reading and writing text but often exclude symbolic forms, modalities, and cognitive processes inherent in the arts (Handerhan, 1993). At the same time, theory (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1977), empirical evidence (Deasy, 2002; Fiske, 1999), and policy (No Child Left Behind, 2001; President’s Committee on Arts and Humanities, 2011) all converge in agreement that the arts, including dance and drama, are valuable disciplines for study at all levels of education. Yet these two disciplines are often neglected (Meyer, 2005) or taught as decorative frills with very little attention to the language demands they present to young learners (Mishook & Kornhaber, 2006). The purpose of this study was to examine how preservice teachers constructed meaning of disciplinary literacies in dance and drama. Given the shortage of extant research in these disciplines and the debatable impact of disciplinary literacies at the elementary level (Heller, 2010; Moje, 2010), we are contributing to scholarship in this area.

Before sharing our review of the literature, we address terminology used in this paper surrounding dance and drama, especially important to consider as we continue to unpack disciplinary literacies in these areas. In particular, the terms *theater* and *drama* require some distinctions. The term *drama* (as it

applies to children) was born out of the Progressive Era views of childhood and education, placing “democracy and educative principles primacy over artistic principles of theatre” (Woodson, 1998, p. 6). Early practitioners worked to separate the ideals of drama from the processes of theatre, which was considered a profession and art for commercial purposes and did not serve the child (Woodson, 1998). For many drama educators, drama is a vehicle for children to “expand their understanding of life experience, to reflect on a particular circumstance, to make sense of their world in a deeper way” (Wagner, 1976, p. 147). The major difference between theatre and drama is that drama focuses on the experience of the participant and theatre focuses on the experience of the audience (Bolton, 1983; O’Neill, 1983; Taylor, 2000; Wagner, 1976).

Similarly, we wanted to understand more deeply the distinctions made between the terminology of *movement* and *dance*. In recent literature, the fields of physical education, preventative medicine, exercise, sport, and health education have been instrumental in researching movement education. Experts in these fields suggest movement is valuable to a range of learning situations (Hillman et al., 2009; Van Dusen, Kelder, Kohl, Ranjit, & Perry, 2011). Not only does movement “influence mood and behavior; physical movement has also been linked to academic achievement” because it “helps get students’ brains active, thinking, and building connections” (Wells, 2012, p. 3). However, movement, even that which is structured for educative purpose such as brain gym or yoga, is not dance without a strong expressive element. On the other end of the spectrum, dance education includes the acquisition of aesthetic skills, not only the technical skills required for dance and choreography, “but also the habits of mind and behaviour that are developed in the arts” (Winner, Goldstein, & Vincent-Lancrinm, 2013, pp. 261-262). In this paper, although we use the terminology *dance* and *drama*, we are not excluding the notions of *movement* and *theater*. We recognize that all of these terms, from an insider’s view, come loaded with multiple descriptions, examples, institutional histories, and avenues.

Literature Review

Disciplinary Literacies in Elementary Education

In this study, we intently examined the disciplinary literacies of dance and drama. However, to situate our work, we begin with a brief overview of the disciplinary literacies field that flourished this past decade. Disciplinary literacies stem from the field of content area literacy, which has been well established in elementary education (Alvermann, Swafford, & Montero, 2003; Armbruster, 1992; Lapp, Flood, & Farnan, 2005; Moss, 2005). However, a distinction that grew between the two concepts as disciplinary literacies called for a more robust way to teach students to read, write, act, talk, and think in precise ways for specified purposes determined by each discipline area (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). For instance, one critique of content area literacy suggested generic literacy strategies might not be appropriate for all disciplines (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Instead, teachers should customize the literacy strategies providing students a more authentic apprenticeship to each discipline.

There is contention amongst scholars who assert elementary students are too young for the disciplinary literacies approach (Heller, 2010; Moje, 2010), and this is why it is more prevalent in secondary education. Moreover, Brock, Goatly, Rapheal, Trost-Shahata, and Weber (2014) reported that disciplinary literacies in the elementary grades remains “minimally defined” (p. 18) even though they support disciplinary literacies in K-6 education. Nevertheless, many scholars have promoted disciplinary literacies for elementary teachers because they think it is never too early to apprentice elementary students to the disciplines, and this can contribute to their success in later grades when they encounter more disciplinary literacy challenges, such as complex text structures and discipline specific vocabulary (Altieri, 2014; Billman & Pearson, 2013; Fang & Coatoam, 2013).

We agree with Brock et al. (2014) who explained that children are “best served when engaged in disciplinary instruction while simultaneously learning to read and write throughout their elementary years and beyond” (p. 19). They cited the strong interest young children have in discipline related topics, such as science and

history, along with the fact that some children in upper elementary grades still struggle with basic and intermediate reading and writing skills as reasons to support the simultaneous teaching of basic, intermediate, and disciplinary literacies. Further, Altieri (2014) has posited that elementary students’ foundational literacy skills do not have to be developed prior to teaching more complex disciplinary literacy skills, such as engaging with high quality digital texts.

Disciplinary Literacies in Dance and Drama

To better understand and hone in on the specialized disciplinary literacies in dance and drama, we conducted a comprehensive literature review searching electronic databases such as ERIC and PsychInfo in peer-reviewed journals both in literacy and art education. We searched key terms such as literacy in *theater, drama, literacy in dance, literacy in performance arts*, as well as *disciplinary literacies in dance, theater/drama and performing arts and dance and drama*. We also searched for the key term of *content area literacy in dance/drama*. Since the field of content area literacy is more established we borrowed from these ideas, yet our search still yielded few results. We paused to understand, why is this the case? In short, dance and drama do not appear to have received the same attention as mathematics, science, and social studies in the fields of disciplinary literacy or content area literacy. Although disciplinary literacies in music (Buehl, 2011) and content area literacies in theater (Draper, Broomhead, Jensen, Nokes, & Siebert, 2010) have been addressed in secondary education, there is limited discussion surrounding disciplinary literacies in dance and drama.

The closest literature we found to the disciplinary literacies of dance and drama was included in the work of Kindelan (2010), Dils (2007), and Barton (2013), who argued that specific literacy skills are essential for the performing arts. For instance, Kindelan (2010) explained that performers should maintain written reflective journals in order to capture observations of a character’s struggle when facing a dilemma. Further, she claimed critical thinking and problem solving are required to analyze how social issues affect the psychology of characters.

Moreover, Dils (2007) shared how dancers must acquire language to develop dance descriptions and interpretations as students attend “to the kinesthetic properties of dance—bodily position, deployment of weight, sense of tension or freedom in the muscles—and retell their experience of the movement in evocative verbs” (p. 96). Additionally, Barton (2013) examined what it means to be “arts literate” by exploring the distinctive qualities of inquiry and structures for communicating meaning in the arts (p. 1). These examples clearly outline specific literacy skills related to dance and drama; however, these authors did not refer to them as disciplinary literacies.

While content area literacy and disciplinary literacies in dance and drama yielded minimal results in our literature review, much has been researched about art integration—as this is how the arts are often taught in K-12. We appreciate Remer’s (1990) taxonomy for teaching (a) *with* the arts, (b) *in* the arts, (c) *about* the arts, and (d) *through* the arts. In short, teachers who teach *with* the arts use them for instrumental outcomes such as behavior management; teachers who teach *in* the arts address the discreet principles and properties of the art form; teachers who teach *about* the arts may do so to establish historical or cultural contexts; and teacher who teach *through* the arts develop arts projects and processes to develop understanding and meaning about the world around us. In Remer’s taxonomy, all forms of arts instruction are viable and valuable to varying purposes and degrees; all have a place in education. Yet, the purpose of this study was to look closely at the disciplinary literacies unique to dance and drama taught through explicit instruction, which aligns with the second approach, *in* the arts, as described in Remer’s (1990) taxonomy.

To identify the disciplinary literacies *in* dance and drama, we took another direction in our literature review to ensure we conducted a thorough search. Thus, we outlined the major tenets of the disciplinary literacies pedagogical approach already established in the literature. Next, we searched dance and drama using the key terms situated within these main tenets, from lenses specific to each discipline (dance and drama). This proved to be more fruitful in yielding connections. We created Table 1 to illustrate these

connections. On the left side of the table, we list the five main disciplinary literacy tenets and on the right side of the table, we offer one specific example from the literature in dance and drama, revealing that disciplinary literacies must be attended to in each of these disciplines.

Table 1
The Instructional Tenets of Disciplinary Literacies in Dance and Drama

A disciplinary literacies instructional approach includes ...	For the creative dance and drama teacher this means ...
Providing instructional practices to teach comprehension when reading complex discipline texts (Buehl, 2011; Fang, 2013).	Creative dance and drama teachers draw upon multiple complex texts. Texts include theater production, live performances, video, music, body movement, set, scenery, lights, scripts, and costumes (Draper, 2008; Draper, Broomhead, Jensen, Nokes, & Siebert, 2010).
Providing instructional practices to support students who have academic knowledge gaps (Moje, 2011).	Creative dance and drama teachers must know the learning variability of their students, including background knowledge, abilities, preferences, identities, skills and attitudes so the teacher can provide options to best support student learning through creative dance and drama (Glass, Meyer, & Rose, 2013). Instructional strategies are needed to help scaffold students in learning dance and drama. It is also important for the creative dance and drama teachers to make time in their instruction for students to build their own knowledge as well, instead of the teacher filling those gaps (Moje, 2011).
Providing instructional practices to teach the academic vocabulary unique to the discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan 2014).	Vocabulary in creative dance and drama often sounds like everyday language. However, within the context of these disciplines, it takes on unique meanings. For example, newly developed National Core Arts

Standards (2014) articulate the expression of *body* in creative drama to include gesture, facial expression, character stance, and emotional state as expressed through strategies such as pantomime or tableaux (Neelands, 2000). As an element of creative dance, body includes the combination of parts, shapes and action as expressed through movement or stillness.

Providing instructional spaces for the inquiry process. Inquiry has many layers and should involve

- students generating their own questions;
- teacher role needs to evolve from question asker to question modeler;
- utilizing a Questioning the Text and Self-Questioning Taxonomy;
- deep study of the discipline so inquiry can occur from the lens of the discipline or disciplinary perspective (Buehl, 2011).

Providing instructional practices that utilize the customized literacy strategies unique to each discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

For creative dance and drama teachers the body is a site associated with the construction of knowledge. Thus, “dance can be a place of inquiry and its generative possibilities for deeper understanding” (Snowber, 2012, p. 54). Dance is especially powerful in posing questions through aesthetics, engaging audiences in dialogue through art (Borstel, 2007). Additionally, dancers who take up inquiry develop their own variations of body motion, time, space, and energy to explore and imagine expressive movement possibilities (Stinson, 1988).

Dance and drama teachers greatly benefit from using customized literacy strategies such as side coaching (Spolin, 1986) through which a facilitator narrates or calls out challenges and corrections to enhance imaginative play. In drama, students are mentored into the “invisible literacies” required to analyze scripts for character objectives and tactics through embodied experiences (Draper, 2008, p. 75).

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Embodied Literacies

Finally, we explored embodied literacy because all the participants in this study continuously referred to it throughout the semester. We examined how this notion was relational to the disciplinary literacies in dance and drama. Turning to the literature, embodied literacies takes on various definitions. For example, Jones (2013) speaks of the visceral response of the body with literacy experiences—some positive and some negative. She exemplified her point by explaining the physical way one’s heart may race at the idea of having to read in front of the class during round-robin reading. In another study that bridged the concepts of disciplinary literacy and the body—specifically gestures, Wilson, Boatright, and Landon-Hays (2014) examined the discipline specific ways teachers used gestures to communicate ideas. They defined gestures as “arm, hand, and/or gross whole body movement used to communicate disciplinary content, whose meaning was cued or complemented by verbal speech or other modes” (p. 237). While they did not refer to this as embodied literacies, this research brings attention to how the body is important within the disciplinary literacies approach.

Additionally, we felt compelled to follow Jones’ (2013) call to “tend to the literacies embedded in, performed through, and experienced as bodies” (p. 525) as students use their bodies to perform critical engagements with a multitude of texts (Johnson & Vasudevan, 2012). These expanded views of what counts as text align with the principles of content area literacy and the disciplinary literacies approach because nontraditional texts are encouraged and promoted (Alvermann, Gillis, & Phelps, 2013; Draper et al., 2010; Hinchman & Moje, 1998).

Borrowing from these ideas, we define *embodied literacies* in two ways. First, it is a meaning-making tool across all disciplines. Second, it is one of the disciplinary literacies in dance and drama used as a specialized means for communicating ideas through the body. Our understandings derive from both the literature and our findings that we share later.

Note. On the left side of the table, we list the five main disciplinary literacy tenets and on the right side of the table, we offer one specific example from the literature in dance and drama, revealing that

Theoretical Framework

Method

Our theoretical framework draws from social constructivism—a theory that heavily emphasizes the social aspects of learning. Many scholars who conceptualize their work using this theory draw heavily on Vygotsky’s *Thought and Language* (1986) in which he argued that a child’s development could not be understood by a study of the individual. That is, scholars must examine the external social world in which that individual life has developed because learning is social and meaning making is situated in a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Smith (1992) summed up these social aspects of learning in seven words: “we learn from the company we keep” (p. 432).

Moreover, learning occurs and is constructed through dialogue (Vygotsky, 1978).

Thus, through discursive practices, individuals interact with a multitude of knowledge sources in social settings and actively take part in reconstructing knowledge within their own minds. Bruner (1986) expounded the notion of constructivism as an active process in which individuals construct new ideas or concepts based on existing knowledge. This aligned with our study as we observed the preservice teachers’ discursive interactions with their dance and drama instructor and with one another as they made meaning of the new dance and drama knowledge connecting it to their existing knowledge.

Finally, Au (1998) explained there are many forms of social constructivism, yet “at the heart of constructivism is a concern for lived experience, or the world as it is felt and understood by social actors” (p. 299). In other words, we learn by *doing*. Overall, the main tenets of social constructivism we employed to examine the disciplinary literacies in dance and drama were (a) learning from *others*, (b) learning through *dialogue*, and (c) learning by *doing*.

This qualitative case study was conducted over one semester wherein we collected and analyzed multiple data to answer the following question: How do preservice teachers socially construct meaning of disciplinary literacies in dance and drama? According

to Yin (2009), our inquiry met three conditions suited for case study methodologies: (a) we asked a “how” question; (b) our study did not require control of behavioral events; and (c) our study focused on a contemporary phenomenon rather than historical events. We defined this instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) as one cohort of preservice teachers enrolled in a performing arts methods course, in a single university setting, over the course of a semester. This study builds a general understanding of the disciplinary literacies in dance and drama through the particularities bound by this case (Stake, 1995). Further, case study

methodologies align to a social constructivist framework by allowing the reader to construct meaning and draw conclusions from “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973, p. 213). Stake (1995) succinctly explained the constructivist underpinnings in case study methodologies as “providing readers with good raw material for their own generalizing” (p. 102), which is congruent with our framework.

Context

This study took place at a research university in the Pacific region of the United States. The undergraduate elementary education teacher preparation program at this university implements a cohort model. That is, a group of full time preservice teachers take all of their courses together over two consecutive years and are supervised by a cohort coordinator who observes them in the field and oversees their progression. During the first semester of the program, these preservice teachers were required to take a 3-credit performing arts methods course, a 3-credit visual arts

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methods course, a 3-credit introduction to teaching course, and additional 6 credits from the department of special education. Moreover, they spent two days a week in local elementary schools for field experiences (which included observing and teaching at least two formal lessons for observation). The field placements for the preservice teachers were in rural, suburban, and urban areas. Some were placed in schools serving affluent neighborhoods and some were placed in schools serving disadvantaged neighborhoods in order to provide a wide range of field experiences. For our purposes, we only focused on the performing arts methods course and their field-based teaching experiences.

The performing arts methods course addressed three arts disciplines: music, dance and drama. The course syllabus focused on standards-based teaching *with, in, through, and about* music, dance, and drama, which aligned with Remer's (1990) taxonomy of arts education and integration. Course content and assignments often incorporated creative expression overlapping between dance, music, and drama; however, there was more specialized attention brought to dance and drama. Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, we focus on the disciplinary literacies of drama and dance.

Researcher Positionality

We are teacher educators at the college of education where the study took place. Charlotte and Jamie are outsiders, and Stephanie, who served as the Cohort Coordinator, is an insider, thus we characterize our work as a reciprocal collaboration with insider-outsider teams (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Due to Stephanie's role and to overcome subjectivity issues, we made some strategic steps. However, we agree with postmodernist theory that even if you are an outsider researcher "it is never possible to divorce the 'self' from either the research process or from educational practice" (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2005, p. 8).

For background, Charlotte and Stephanie began this collaboration due to a shared interest in disciplinary literacies. Charlotte is a secondary literacy teacher educator (Grades 7-12) who initiated the study because of her experience and knowledge in disciplinary literacies. Stephanie became deeply

interested in how disciplinary literacies could be applied in the elementary context, which provided the impetus for joining efforts. Again, Stephanie became the insider within the elementary context because she served as the cohort coordinator for the elementary preservice teachers who ultimately became participants.

Stephanie's relationship with the preservice teachers in the field had the potential to lead to issues of power (Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007). Charlotte, serving as the outsider, helped alleviate this concern because she was neither tied to the participants' coursework nor fieldwork. Furthermore, these roles were explained explicitly when we introduced our study and invited the preservice teachers to participate. To further balance issues of power, our consent forms clearly stated that there would be no penalty for nonparticipation; we asked another colleague to collect the consent forms and securely file them away until after grades were submitted for the semester; and we provided students the option to opt out of the study at any time (Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007).

Charlotte and Stephanie shared equally in all data collection. Once we entered the data analysis stage, Jamie was invited into the process because of her dance and drama research expertise, yet she did not have any connection to this cohort. Consequently, Jamie truly became an outsider who provided additional objectivity. Jamie also supported Charlotte and Stephanie with the review of the literature in dance and drama. This decision was congruent with previous research that demonstrated how collaboration between literacy educators and discipline-area teacher educators had yielded deeper understanding of the content and pedagogical approaches of the discipline (Draper, Broomhead, Jensen, & Nokes, 2012).

Participants

All 17 female preservice teachers who were placed in a cohort model in their first semester of an undergraduate two-year teacher preparation program consented to our study. This all female cohort ranged between the ages of 20 to 29, with ethnic diversity representative of the local population (e.g. Pacific

Islander, Asian, Caucasian, and African American). Their backgrounds in dance and drama varied greatly.

Throughout the findings, we specifically spotlight the work of 11 preservice teachers. While all 17 participants informed our findings, the examples from this subset provided the clearest evidence for two reasons. First, two preservice teachers chose to teach music lessons. While this was part of their performing arts course work, our analysis did not focus on this phenomena. Second, the remaining four preservice teachers' lesson plans were similar to others that we provided as evidence and therefore we felt it would be redundant to highlight these findings. Table 2 provides additional information, revealing important aspects of the participants such as their field experience context and grade level, the discipline and specific content they taught, and some of their notable background experiences in dance or drama prior to taking this methods course.

Table 2
Eleven Participants Spotlighted in Findings

Preservice teachers (all names are pseudonyms)	Field setting context	Discipline and content of lesson	Previous experience with drama and/or dance
Moriah	3 rd grade in urban, Title I school	Drama: Tableau	University level theater course; Teaches sign-language dance
Allison	5 th grade in rural, Title I school	Dance: Body Levels and Pathways of Movement	University level beginning acting course; worked backstage for plays in high school; teaches dance lessons to students in summer camp

Nicole Marie	2 nd grade in suburban, Title I school	Dance: Choreographed Dance	No previous coursework or experience in dance or drama
Elizabeth	2 nd grade in suburban, Title I school	Drama: Freeze Frames	University level theater and dance coursework ; Involved in dance and drama in high school
Amy	6 th grade in suburban, Title I school	Dance: Choreographed Dance	University level theater course
Grace	5 th grade in rural, Title I school	Drama: Tableau	University level theater course; performed as dancer and in plays as a child
Blakely	Kindergarten in urban, affluent school	Drama: Pantomime	University level dance course
Christina	5 th grade in urban, Title I school	Drama: Statues	University level dance course; Previously involved in jazz, ballet, hip-hop, and tap dance
Elise	6 th grade in suburban, Title I school	Drama: Scenes with Props	University level theater course; involved in theater and dance as a child
Heather	5 th grade in urban, Title I school	Drama: Dialogue for Scenes	University level costume and theater

			design course
Bella	3 rd grade in urban, Title I school	Dance: Choreographer Dance	University level theater course; Family involved in theater

Note. Title I is a federal program of the United States Department of Education that provides financial assistance to schools that serve high percentages of children from low-income families (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965).

Annemarie, the instructor for this Performing Arts method course, also agreed to be our participant. Annemarie has an eclectic background. For instance, she has worked as a drama specialist at a local theater company, she knows and taught sign language, was a therapist specializing in using drama as a form of therapy, and taught performing arts in the K-12 setting prior to working in the elementary teacher education program where she has taught undergraduate methods courses in performing arts for the past eleven years. Her peers have recognized her for excellence in arts education.

We observed Annemarie apprentice the preservice teachers to teach dance and drama as discrete disciplines, helping them to plan for dance or drama integration given the realities of their field placements. We highlight one example to provide a snapshot of how the preservice teachers were exposed to nontraditional texts such as videos of dance performances. In one class session, Annemarie used the cooperative literacy strategy, jigsaw, to engage students in a video as text analysis of three strikingly different ballet performances: the traditional version of *The Dying Swan* (Fokine, 1905) performed by Anna Pavlova, a comical version of *The Dying Swan* with a man dressed as the swan performed by the Trocadero Ballet Company (Fokine, 1905), and a street performance of *The Dying Swan* by Lil Buck and Yo-Yo Ma (Jones, 2011). The preservice teachers used a print-based advanced organizer to analyze the videos using a framework offered and customized in the discipline of dance: B (body) E (energy) S (space) T (time).

Data Collection

Case study methods rely on multiple sources of data for triangulation (Yin, 2009). We collected data from multiple sources, including (a) observation notes from the performing arts course, (b) observations notes from the field practicum, (c) artifacts, and (d) focus group interviews. Charlotte and Stephanie simultaneously observed and took ethnographic notes from the performing arts method course for fourteen weeks of the semester, for a total of 35 hours. We also observed the preservice teachers in their field placements a minimum of two times each so that we could later analyze how they constructed and reconstructed new meaning of their dance and drama methods content as it played out in their own teaching practice. Artifacts included lesson plans, teaching videos, observation notes from lessons they taught in the field, an attitude/experience questionnaire in the performing arts, and several other course assignments that Annemarie created for assessment purposes. Moreover, we conducted the focus group after the semester ended to further our interpretations, especially surrounding the preservice teachers' conceptualizations of what impacts their understanding of dance and drama. We organized all of our data using the electronic software HyperRESEARCH (Version 2.8.3; ResearchWare, Inc.) for efficient analysis and retrieval.

The focus groups included seven of the preservice teachers and followed Creswell's (2013) protocol. We invited these seven participants after we developed profiles for each of the original 17 participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Specifically, we wrote biographical sketches for each to describe several variables including gender, age, ethnic background, attitude towards and experiences with dance and drama, teaching dispositions that were observed in the field, and dispositions. Juxtaposing these variables allowed us to better see whose profiles were emerging in similarities and differences surrounding their use of the disciplinary literacies of dance and drama. Thus, we selected the seven focus group participants purposefully to elicit a range of perspectives from individuals who were communicative about their experiences and had fully interacted with the concepts and practices introduced throughout the

course. This face-to-face focus group interview consisted of five open-ended questions with the assumption that the social context of the group would grow a richer discussion and enhance data quality (Patton, 2002). For example, we asked: (a) Is there a need for dance and drama in the classroom? If yes, in what manner will you continue to teach dance and drama to your classroom? (b) What are your ideal notions around teaching dance and drama? (c) What are your realistic notions around teaching dance and drama? Not only did we audio-record the interview, Charlotte and Stephanie conducted the interview together to ensure detailed note-taking and effective facilitation of the group conversation (Krueger, 1994).

Data Analysis

We strategically analyzed our data by combining conventional and directed content analysis tools (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Strauss, 1995). We also used the writing process as an analytical “way of knowing” (Richardson, 2000, p. 923). Each of these analysis tools served us in a particular way—resulting in more robust findings.

Directed content analysis. The directed content analysis tool is appropriately applied when prior research or existing theory about a phenomenon “is incomplete or would benefit from further description” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). Further, this structured tool requires the use of predetermined categories derived from existing theory or relevant findings. Since the research examples on disciplinary literacies in dance and drama are limited, we pulled the predetermined categories from the established field of disciplinary literacies where we identified the five instructional tenets that are promoted for all discipline areas (see Table 1).

We began with this coding process because we wanted to verify if the preservice teachers were indeed attending to these tenets outlined from the field of disciplinary literacies. For example, when we coded for a directed analysis, the key words were derived directly from Table 1: (a) instructional practices to teach comprehension with the complex discipline texts; (b) instructional practices to support students who have academic knowledge gaps; (c) instructional practices to teach the academic vocabulary unique to

the discipline; (d) instructional spaces for the inquiry process; and (e) instructional practices that utilize the customized literacy strategies unique to each discipline. As we coded for each of these areas, the predetermined categories populated quickly with the exception of (d) instructional spaces for the inquiry process. Nevertheless, this code still had enough evidence to warrant a finding.

Conventional content analysis. Although our predetermined categories provided us with ample evidence to understand this phenomenon, we were not satisfied. Our goal was to grow the literature, specifically in disciplinary literacies in dance and drama; thus we also applied conventional content analysis to discover other aspects surrounding the disciplinary literacies in dance and drama. This tool allowed us to code for inductive category development (Mayring, 2000) that allowed “new insights to emerge” (p. 1279). For precision, we employed Strauss’s (1995) three-step analysis using the process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding because “codes are derived from the data” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1286). The open coding phase allowed us to code with no restrictions as we carefully read the words of each of our observations notes, all artifacts, transcripts, and notes from the focus group interview. For trustworthiness, we collaboratively coded—meaning we “reached agreement on each code through collaborative discussion” (Smagorinsky, 2008, p. 401) and assigned units of meaning to each piece of data. In doing so, we started to notice similar words and phrases. We organized these words and phrases as specific codes (Strauss, 1995). For example, the phrase *embodied* was used multiple times yet expressed in different ways by the participants. Again, in collaboration we employed axial coding (Strauss, 1995) techniques to assign conceptual categories to the meaning of *embodied*. In short, we clustered the open codes around an “axis” or point of intersection (p. 32). For example, these units described as *embodied* then fit under the axial code of *meaning-making tool across all disciplines and specialized means for communicating ideas through the body*. Finally, we used the “selective coding” process (Strauss, 1995, p. 34) to systematically decide how the categories related to each other and the findings they revealed. Then, we linked these findings to the theoretical framework, thus arriving at the idea

that embodied literacies is one of the specialized literacies of dance and drama.

Writing. Finally, after we completed our coding and determined our findings, we used the tool of writing as a way to work through and refine our analysis. Richardson (2000) advocates that qualitative researchers should spend a great deal of writing as a “way of knowing” (p. 923). Hence, we wrote numerous drafts together in order to “revise our thinking” (Makaiau & Freese, 2013, p. 145). In writing together, our analysis strengthened as we reevaluated, and reflected on our methods as we also considered both confirming and disconfirming evidence. Finally, we conducted a member check (Stake, 1995) by asking Annemarie and the preservice teachers to read drafts of the paper for accuracy and the trustworthiness of our findings, which they were able to corroborate.

Findings

Overall, our analysis showed that the preservice teachers connected with the ideas they learned in their methods course as they constructed and implemented lessons that foregrounded the disciplinary literacies of dance or drama. Considering how they were apprenticed from Annemarie in their methods course, these findings were not entirely surprising. However, given the limited research in elementary disciplinary literacies in dance and drama, the specific examples we uncovered contribute to this research gap. Furthermore, we did not predict how significant the notion of embodied literacies would be in the preservice teachers’ instructional practice. That is, regardless of their implementation, all of the preservice teachers used embodied literacies as we described in the literature review. This finding was critical as we postulate that embodied literacies are a critical attribute in the dance and drama disciplines. Moreover, our findings show that embodied literacies serve as one of the specialized ways individuals communicate and make meaning of content through the use of the body (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008), or the physical interpretation of communicated ideas while engaged in dance and drama. As we share our findings, we will highlight the embodied literacies examples that provide important insight for disciplinary literacies in dance and drama.

Preservice Teachers Utilized Instructional Practices to Teach Comprehension with the Complex Discipline Texts of Dance or Drama

Buehl (2011) posits that teaching comprehension with complex texts is a major tenet of the disciplinary literacy approach. First, in the disciplines of drama and dance, complex text takes on many forms—both traditional, print-based forms, and non-print formats. Most often, the body is a literal text in dance and drama because it is a tool to communicate and make meaning of ideas (Snowber, 2012). Thus, the body as text takes on dynamic forms while one is engaged in dance and drama, depending on one’s point of view. The body is an embodied literacy for the performer as she/he communicates meaning, and it becomes a text for the audience as they interpret meaning. The interconnectivity of text and the body in drama and dance emulate dynamic roles as one makes and communicates meaning. The preservice teachers constructed a variety of ways in which they took up this disciplinary literacies instruction of the complex texts described below.

For example, Bella incorporated a variety of complex print-based literacies and embodied literacies as she taught the third grade students the elements of dance (e.g. B (body), E (energy), S (space), and T (time) in order for them to embody and perform the stages of the water cycle (the science content was previously taught). In the example we previously shared in the methods section, of the three interpretations of *Dying Swan*, Bella, similar to Annemarie, selected a video of the musical ballet entitled *Shine* by Billy Elliot (2013) as a text for the third grade students to analyze the elements of dance. Bella overtly pointed out what parts of the body were moving, the energy behind the body movements, the space in which the body moved, and how the body moved in relation to time to support the students’ comprehension. Next, the third graders used an advanced graphic organizer as they worked cooperatively to identify how the dancers in the video used their body, energy, space, and time to communicate meaning in the dance. The jigsaw instructional strategy further supported students’ comprehension of the musical performance as each group focused on one particular element of dance (body, energy, space, and time) prior to sharing evidence of their assigned element to peers. Indeed,

this ballet performance was a complex text that required specialized instructional strategies and scaffolding in order to comprehend the complexities it contained. Further, Bella built off this lesson for a subsequent lesson by utilizing the students' knowledge of the elements of dance in order to embody the water cycle where the students' bodies became a text for their peers—communicating their representation of the stages of the water cycle.

Another common complex text that we observed the preservice teachers work with in their methods course taught by Annemarie was a dance map. A dance map is a visual plan, similar to a storyboard, of a choreographed dance. This text captures the dance through simple drawings of lines or geometric shapes (e.g. zigzag, spiral, or circular), action words (e.g. squirm, reach, gallop, twirl), words to describe the level of the body (e.g. high, medium, low), and words to describe the tempo of the movement (e.g. sudden, accelerate, decelerate). Dance maps as a text communicate very specific instructions for moving the body and require “specialized reading skills” (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008, p. 48). Amy, Bella, and Nicole Marie all used dance maps in their field-based lessons. Again, their take up of this was not entirely surprising as it connected to their methods course work.

While more dance lessons were implemented overall, our data showed that when the preservice teachers taught drama lessons they used the body, props, and video as complex texts. Again, we observed Annemarie apprentice the students into the ways dramatic performers used body to convey emotions and ideas through techniques such as statue, pantomime, freeze frames, and tableaux. Elizabeth specifically took up the body as text as she taught the second graders how to capture emotion of music through facial expressions and frozen gestures. She said, “Today we are going to explore what different moods may look like using our bodies. We are going to make statues to show this.” Whereas Elise used props as her text to teach math content, and Heather utilized video to provide historical context for students' script writing and dramatic performances. More importantly, all three of these preservice teachers provided drama discipline specified instruction to ensure comprehension of these

complex texts. For instance, Heather showed several silent films from historical events (e.g. building the transcontinental railroad, America's first football game, and Neil Armstrong walking on the moon) and asked the fifth grade students to demonstrate understanding of the video-text by creating a scene that included a script of dialogue between two of the characters in the film.

Preservice Teachers Supported Elementary Students who had Academic Knowledge Gaps in the Disciplines of Dance or Drama

Supporting students who have academic knowledge gaps is another tenet of disciplinary literacy (Moje, 2011), and our data provides evidence that the preservice teachers addressed these gaps. Further, we found that the *body* was most often used as a more accessible text to scaffold student learning—further closing the academic knowledge gap.

Again, in the methods course, we observed Annemarie apprenticing the preservice teachers on the many ways their body could be used as a tool to build students' knowledge of the discipline or specific technique. For example, Annemarie taught them the skills necessary to create a tableau by providing experiences with the concept of statue, then pantomime (telling a story with the body), and then the concepts were merged together as students used the body to tell a collaborative story through frozen gestures in a tableau.

Moriah took up this approach to address the third graders' gaps in the use of academic vocabulary in her drama lesson that focused on tableaux. To close this gap, she provided embodied experiences for the students as a way to scaffold their learning on the difference between the techniques: statue and tableaux. Students enacted various statue poses prior to creating a tableau for a birthday party (an experience in which she knew they all had prior knowledge) as a performance task to demonstrate understanding of the skills required in successful tableaux (e.g. group cohesion, facial expressions, different levels of the body). Through tableaux, the elementary students communicated their understanding through the bodies and they worked collaboratively to capture emotions and actions.

While these academic gaps were being filled, we noted how many of the preservice teachers were foregrounding instruction. For example, when Grace taught the fifth graders tableaux, she first introduced and let them experience the academic language and techniques needed in order to create a tableau. This required careful scaffolding and planning on her part as she not only had to have academic knowledge of tableaux, but she also had the fifth graders create tableaux utilizing the content from the print-based text they had read, *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare, 1983). Grace reported that the fifth graders demonstrated a deeper understanding of the novel as they embodied the characters and scenes from the novel in their tableaux. In doing this, they had to attend to the emotions of the characters, the dialogue, the setting, and the actions in their selected scene. Grace's example highlights two of Remer's (1990) ideas presented in his taxonomy for teaching. Grace taught this lesson *through* the arts and *in* the arts. But we assert that without her teaching the disciplinary literacies *in* the arts of tableaux, the fifth graders would not be as prepared to participate *through* the arts. These complexities are important to reveal if closing academic gaps are to come to fruition.

Preservice Teachers Taught the Academic Vocabulary Unique to the Disciplines of Dance or Drama

Students must be taught the discipline specific, academic vocabulary of dance or drama in order to effectively engage in the techniques of the discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). It was evident that the preservice teachers taught the elementary students the specialized vocabulary of dance and drama. In fact, we noted that this academic language was often taught through embodied experiences. For example, Moriah explicitly taught the third grade students about the drama technique called tableaux. During her instruction, she took up the discourse and actions of a tableau performer using specialized vocabulary (e.g. pose, interpret, statue, levels, facial expressions). Through experiences with creating a tableau for a birthday scene, the third grade students came to understand the concept and term *tableaux*.

In another example, Allison apprenticed the fifth graders by teaching them the specialized vocabulary

surrounding the special ways a dancer's body moves from high levels to low levels depending on their interpretation of the music. The academic language she used in the lesson aligned with this enactment. For example, she taught *rhythm, movement, spatial awareness, waltz, music beats, contemporary piece, ¾ time, and drumbeat* through embodied experiences enacting each concept. Students demonstrated their understanding of this academic language and the concept of varied body levels through waltz dancing as well as dancing to Katy Perry's contemporary piece entitled *Roar*. Their bodies moved to the beat, capturing the energy of each song through dance.

Switching gears, we observed Annemarie teach the preservice teachers the specialized vocabulary of drama such as *props, sets, and ensemble*. Annemarie made these terms come to life through a field trip to visit a local theater that performs for the youth. In this context, the preservice teachers were required to analyze specific components of the complex text in drama (e.g. props, the set, body, makeup, costumes). An explanation of the academic vocabulary for drama was foregrounded prior to the field trip. For example, to teach *ensemble*, Annemarie had them view a video-text on the behind-the-scenes decisions that led to the production of *Wicked* (OfficialWICKED, 2014). The preservice teachers watched the video and then discussed the complexities of an *ensemble* going beyond simply defining the term, rather gaining a conceptual understanding. We highlight this example because Annemarie offered an experience to help the preservice teachers solidify the academic language, which we think influenced the preservice teachers' examples previously discussed.

All disciplines have academic language that must be comprehended to thrive in the discipline. Dance and drama are no different. Literacy (meaning making) is constructed and learned most often through *doing*, a critical component of the social constructivism theory of learning. We always observed Annemarie model and provide a space for the preservice teachers to *do*, and, in turn, this notion was taken up by the preservice teachers as they taught elementary students the academic language through dance and drama experiences—most often, through embodied experiences.

Preservice Teachers Included Instructional Spaces for the Inquiry Process

According to Buehl (2011), a disciplinary literacy approach includes instructional spaces for the inquiry process. As we highlighted in Table 1, inquiry has many layers that reside on a continuum in the ways a teacher can facilitate the inquiry process to include more depth. That said, we did not expect to see inquiry taken to deeper levels in their lesson plans because the preservice teachers were only required to teach a minimum of two lessons for the semester, as their context (in the field) would afford this time. Nevertheless, our data still showed that some hints of inquiry were explored in the preservice teachers' lessons, which we did not predict.

Starting with their methods course, Annemarie apprenticed them into how the inquiry process could look and sound like in drama and dance by taking the preservice teachers to a local cultural site. Once at the site, they worked in small groups as they engaged in the inquiry process to explore essential questions of their choice about the native culture and the natural environment. Once they learned the content by exploring the property and outdoor grounds, Annemarie invited them to construct their new knowledge through embodied literacies. Each group performed a dance that reflected a combination of the content from the cultural site and the content from their methods course. A debriefing followed this experience where Annemarie facilitated a class session on student-generated assessment criteria.

In seeing this work that Annemarie did firsthand with the preservice teachers, it was easier to connect how Christina took up these strategies in her own lesson by engaging the fifth grade students in a more teacher-directed inquiry. She activated the students' prior knowledge on what they knew about statues and

recorded a socially constructed list of qualities that morphed into the criteria by which the students evaluated their own performances later in the lesson. Again, Annemarie modeled this same process in the methods course when she asked the preservice teachers to consider what criteria made a good choreographed dance after their learning trip.

Earlier we shared Bella's lesson that apprenticed the third graders as dancers by requiring that they embody the water cycle in a performance that incorporated the elements of body, energy, space, and time. Examining the lesson from a lens of inquiry, we were able to analyze how Bella also touched on elements of inquiry in this lesson. To reiterate, the third graders worked cooperatively to select types of pathways of movement and action words to describe the movement, levels of the body, and tempo of the dance that would embody each stage in the water

cycle. For example, one group of the third graders embodied the evaporation stage of the water cycle through spiraling pathways, squiggly movements, levels that began low and moved to high, all moving at a slow tempo. With the freedom to create their own dance maps and movements, Bella

allowed students to take an inquiry approach to their learning. They were allowed to explore how to best use their bodies in order to emulate the water cycle.

Preservice Teachers Used Customized Literacy Practices Unique to the Disciplines of Dance or Drama

Customizing literacy strategies and skills that are unique to the discipline is a crucial tenet in the disciplinary literacies field (Moje, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Our data showed that dance and drama teachers have many customized literacy strategies to select from as well as some generic literacy strategies that would be best aligned to

Customizing literacy strategies and skills that are unique to the discipline is a crucial tenet in the disciplinary literacies field (Moje, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

support students' making meaning of their discipline. While many were demonstrated, we share four specific ones taken up in the preservice teachers' lessons most often.

Earlier, we introduced dance maps as a complex text. In our data we also saw that dance maps were being utilized as a specialized literacy strategy (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). For example, Amy's disciplinary literacies instructional approach was explicit as she modeled a dance map herself. The students then used this instructional tool to help support the creation and performance of a dance (see Figure 1). The dance map strategy supported the students' ability to plan a choreographed dance through explicit steps that included a planned pathway, action words to describe the movement, levels of the body, and tempo of the dance. Next, Amy connected the dance map to football playbooks and had the students perform their dance map with the addition of catching a football at the end of the performance. Group members collected data on the number of passes caught by the team and then converted their raw data to ratios and percentages. Each group reported their data to the class by embodying a sports reporter. In the end, the sixth graders in Amy's class learned discipline specific literacy practices of dance and drama by creating and performing as they generated authentic data for which they applied mathematical concepts.

Another literacy strategy to which the preservice teachers were exposed and then took up in their practice was a method of analyzing text through a traditional print-literacy technique called *sentence framing*. Research on this strategy suggests that the use of frames helps writers focus on the meaning that they are trying to convey and use the academic vocabulary of the discipline (Graff & Birkenstein, 2010). The preservice teachers were given a set of sentence frames as a tool to help them analyze a dancer's body movements in the music video entitled *Bad Romance: Women's Suffrage* (Corum & Grant, 2012). The video is a historical parody of Lady Gaga's version of the song and music video (i.e. *Bad Romance*). While sentence frames can be considered a "generic literacy" strategy (Fang & Coatoam, 2013, p. 631), Annemarie altered the sentence frames to serve as a specialized literacy strategy to support the

preservice teachers' analysis of a video-text that focused on the body.

*I see _____(body part)_____ (verb/adverb).
The _____ (same body part(s))_____ are making
a(n)_____ shape.*

Amy and Bella appropriated the sentence frame strategy as a way to support elementary students' construction of text and comprehension of text, respectively. Amy used the sentence frame strategy in the same format at Annemarie, however for a different purpose. In Amy's lesson, sentence frames were used to help students develop and describe their dance maps (see Figure 1), thus supporting their construction of the dance map text.

Bella, on the other hand, used the strategy in a modified format but for the same purpose Annemarie used the strategy in class: to support comprehension of text. In the example we previously shared, Bella supported the third grade students' comprehension of a video of the musical entitled *Shine* by Billy Elliot by providing them an adaptation of the sentence frame strategy. Bella supported the students' comprehension of the text through guiding questions which served the same purpose as the sentence frames Annemarie used to support the preservice teachers' comprehension of the *Bad Romance: Women's Suffrage* (Corum & Grant, 2012) video previously discussed. Bella posed questions surrounding each element of dance and provided students with a set of sample responses to help guide their thinking: "How is the body moving? Weight (heavy/light), Attack (sharp/smooth), flow (free/bound; tight/loose)." While Bella did not organize the prompts into a frame, the support she provided mirrored the sentence frame strategy she learned to use in her methods class.

As we observed Annemarie apprentice the preservice teachers into the disciplines of creative dance and drama, she used gradual release of responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) in order to mentor and model ways that dance and drama experts in the field think, act, and speak. Buehl (2011) posits that this method of instruction is effective in apprenticing readers, writers, and thinkers, too. We noticed that Annemarie adapted this method of gradual release of

responsibility that was more tailored to dance and drama because it used embodied literacies. We refer to her specialized approach as *embodied scaffolded instruction* as it supported the preservice teachers' understanding of concepts, vocabulary, and techniques through embodied literacies. Nicole Marie took up the same approach as she apprenticed the second graders in developing a choreographed dance. She used the dance map strategy to first model how to create and read the map through enactment, then she guided students through a class-generated example and guided enactment, and finally she asked students to develop and enact their own dance map to represent a marine animal of the group's choice. Below she describes the sequence of events:

I gave my students direct instruction on how the lesson would be structured today. We produced our own pathways and action words, and that showed me that they understood the concepts. We created our own dance map as a class, and I demonstrated the dance for them, and then had each group come up, one by one, and follow our dance map. They understood the concept, so I moved on to let them create their own dance maps in their groups.

The fourth discipline specific literacy strategy we noted was *side-coaching* (Spolin, 1986). This observed literacy strategy was used in both the drama discipline and the dance discipline. In this technique, the teacher provides specific, descriptive, and positive feedback to students as they are learning new skills and doing informal performances as a group. In the disciplines of dance and drama, side-coaching serves a formative assessment and a model of how to use the academic language of dance and drama. Side-coaching was used in many of the preservice teachers' lessons as a strategy to support elementary students' dance or drama performances. Grace explains how she used side-coaching to deepen the students' understanding of tableaux and comprehension of *The Sign of the Beaver*:

I facilitated interactions among students by circulating the room and side-coaching. While all of the students were working in their partner groups, I was walking to each individual group to see how they were doing and asking probing questions. I helped them

to apply representations of the characters they chose to portray. I asked them questions to help them represent their character better. I asked them where the scene was taking place, and what had happened just before and just after their scene.

Blakely also used the side-coaching strategy during her drama lesson on statues with kindergarteners:

When the students were making movements for the characters I called out, I continued to tell them to change levels and that if they just used a low level, to try and use a higher one. This way, they were using all three levels and they could deepen their understanding on what each one meant.

The side-coaching strategy provided individualized support for elementary students as they learned the techniques, vocabulary, and concepts of dance and drama. Further, the use of this strategy provided formative assessment data to the preservice teachers to help guide their instruction.

Discussion and Implications

We have identified two critical discussion points and implications that grow our knowledge of disciplinary literacies in dance and drama. Our first discussion point surrounds our examination of the preservice teachers' construction of embodied literacies. This finding is important because we assert that the embodied literacies emerged as one of the "specialized literacies" (Fang & Coatoam, 2013 p. 628) unique to dance and drama. We think this finding continues to build upon Wilson et al.'s (2014) literature that connects body movement with disciplinary literacy. We too aim to deepen the connection between literacies of the body with relation to the discipline specific literacies of dance and drama. We assert that without understanding the notion of embodied literacies, one could not be considered as a disciplinary expert in dance and drama. In our conventional content analysis of the data, we found that the concept of embodied literacies was socially constructed through the discursive practices not only spoken from Annemarie, but also from the preservice teachers, as they were all socially constructing together what the embodied literacies

meant to them. This content arose most frequently while coding the data. The preservice teachers not only dialogued about this notion in their methods course; they also learned it in the *doing*. In other words, Annemarie's weekly instructional practices allowed the preservice teachers to engage in the actions needed to make meaning of the embodied literacies. Given this finding, we assert that embodied literacies should be formally acknowledged as one of the disciplinary literacies in dance and drama.

Our second discussion point shows that in a supportive environment elementary preservice teachers can socially construct disciplinary literacy learning experiences in dance and drama. This finding is important because the literature in disciplinary literacies in elementary grades is underrepresented and even disputed (Brock et. al., 2014; Heller, 2010; Moje, 2010). Moreover, it is even more scant in dance and drama. Yet, the preservice teachers in this study proved to have learned from the company they kept (Smith, 1992). In fact, our findings also show that the company they kept prior to this methods course (i.e. additional course work, childhood experiences) also influenced their knowledge and abilities in teaching the disciplinary literacies of dance and drama as exemplified when we discussed Bella and Moriah's lessons. Both of them (and others) had studied dance or drama in their own K-12 or through prerequisite courses prior to entering the elementary education program. From a social constructivist lens, they were able to construct more meaning of the dance or drama content due to these prior experiences because our background knowledge relates to the "mental resources that enable us to make sense" of what is going on around us (Smith, 2004, p. 13). Yet, we want to point out that several of the preservice teachers credited one particular dance instructor they took for a prerequisite as being most influential, and we could see how these former experiences further aided to their understandings of dance because the same content was explored in both the prerequisite class and Annemarie's class.

On the other hand, Nicole Marie had never taken this prerequisite dance course and was still able to construct two dance lessons that addressed some of the disciplinary literacies instructional tenets (see

Table 1). However, in Nicole Marie's own words she admitted:

If I had had performing arts when I was younger, I feel that I wouldn't have an aversion to it. We stop, at a very young age, promoting expression through our bodies, and it's really like, "Sit. Listen. Be quiet" in the classroom. If I had had that [dance and drama], I wouldn't be so intimidated and scared by it. That's why I do want to use dance and drama in my future classroom.

Overall, our findings suggest that these experiences are socially constructed and with more spaces to learn the dance and drama discipline, one can feel more comfortable teaching the disciplines of dance and drama.

We also want to point out that when we shared the preservice teachers' lesson examples according to the five disciplinary literacy tenets (see Table 1), our goal was not to select the perfect lesson plan upholding some kind of gold standard for the disciplinary literacies in dance and drama. Indeed, in our findings we saw a range of what was socially constructed, as we recognize that preservice teachers are novices only in the beginning phases of their certification journey. In particular, one disciplinary literacy instructional tenet that was the least constructed surrounded the inquiry process (Buehl, 2011). Again, this was not too surprising, considering that the preservice teachers had less instructional knowledge in the inquiry process. And even if they had more knowledge, they were not afforded the instructional time in their field placements to construct long-term inquiry learning opportunities. Nevertheless, even with these limitations our analysis shows promise for instructional inquiry development in dance and drama at the elementary level based on the lessons that Christina and Bella socially constructed.

Due to these findings, first we suggest that more emphasis be made on Remer's (1990) taxonomy that highlights the *in the arts* approach as this aligns with our argument. Again, while we value all the methods explained in the taxonomy, we suggest elementary performing arts teacher education continue to make space for supporting the foregrounding of disciplinary

literacies in dance and drama. We agree with Brock et al. (2014) who also argue that the “why”, “what” and “how” matter in disciplinary literacies in elementary education. In this study, the preservice teachers apprenticed their field practicum elementary students into “why” dance and drama matter and then foreground their discipline instruction by teaching the students the “what” of dance or drama. Again, they did this by emphasizing the unique vocabulary, content, and norms unique to dance and drama. Furthermore, we assert that understanding the “how” is also critical, and in our study the embodied literacies unlocks the “how” as it emerged as one of

the specialized attributes to disciplinary literacies in dance and drama. Finally, we end by recognizing that the preservice teachers explored and prioritized these embodied literacies either *in* the arts or *through* the arts (Remer, 1990) because it was a course requirement. In other words, they were socially set up to implement these embodied literacies. We are hopeful that they will continue to use the embodied literacies *in* the arts and/or *through* the arts and grow in their dance and drama discipline knowledge as they progress through the elementary teacher program and their profession.

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