

Dance Department

2008 Program Review

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Section I

Purpose of the Program

The mission of the WWCC Dance Department is to provide a well-rounded dance education program that encompasses the ideology that dance as an art form incorporates the whole person. The department offers a progression of various dance techniques and encourages students to express their own ideas through the creative process of choreography. Furthermore, the program allows students the opportunity to study with guest artists (in both technique and choreographic experiences), perform with Desert Dance Theatre, and collaborate with the Musical Theatre Department for a well-rounded theatre experience.

Section II

Primary Learning Goals

The primary learning goals of the dance department are as follows:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of body alignment and how it serves the dancer and the art
2. Demonstrate knowledge of how technique serves the dancer as a tool for more efficient movement patterns
3. Demonstrate a working knowledge of Laban's Body, Effort, Shape, and Space as it relates to movement
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the language of dance based upon the different techniques and codified terminologies within each discipline
5. Experience dance as an art form through the creative process of choreography, performance, and by working with the different instructors/artist's teaching styles

The technique classes are taught in a progression to introduce the student to the language of dance and then developed throughout their two years at WWCC. The department uses a variety of ways to assess these goals including both direct and indirect internal and external evaluations. The direct method uses rubrics, written tests, and practical movement tests. These tools are meant to help the instructor and student to identify problem areas. The indirect method would be self evaluations.

Body Alignment is very basic to any dance class. Alignment refers specifically to the relationship of individual body parts to each other. Proper alignment defines the dancer before movement happens and will determine their ability to balance, turn, jump, leap, and move fluidly through space. An aligned body moves more efficiently with minimal strain to the joints thus preventing injury. With this knowledge the dancer can delay fatigue and challenge themselves to

improve their skills. Body alignment is a pattern that is practiced every minute of the day so changing this pattern is very difficult and takes time. Instructors should expect the dancer to develop an awareness of alignment before change can happen. The assessment of alignment is seen through the dancer's posture and is addressed in every technique class. Proper alignment is the same for any class with the specific style of dance layered on top.

The dance classes use movement exams where the student is given a combination to perform in class. Rubrics are then used to give feedback to the student about the overall combination. Many times the combinations are video-taped so the student can see what they look like dancing and use self assessment to evaluate their alignment. Awareness is the first step to change so it is important for the student to be able to distinguish the difference of what a movement feels like as opposed to what it looks like.

Technique as a Tool

Each style of dance has a specific technique even though they all begin with body alignment. In ballet, the focus is on outward rotation of the legs and learning the basic positions of the legs and arms. Modern dance opens the door to all movement including weight sharing, fall and recovery, and the use of upside-down moments. Jazz focuses on, among other things, isolating body parts, using syncopation with quickness. Technique becomes more difficult with complex movement but is imperative to a healthy and efficient mover. Injury prevention is the main reason why technique is so important for a beginning student and is a continuing process for the advanced student.

Laban's Body, Effort, Shape, Space

Laban's study of movement is used in many dance classes around the world. The system explains the "what, where, why, and how" of movement and breaks it down to its essence. The Body is the tool of the dancer and needs to be trained to move with fluidity and control, no matter what the style of dance. The Space refers to the stage as well as the dancers' personal space, the kinesphere, and is well defined in Laban's system allowing the dancer to feel comfortable exploring movement. The Shape the body makes while in motion or stillness is defined giving the dancer a common language that bridges all styles of dance. Effort defines the dynamic quality or energy invested in the movement and gives all movement texture.

Language of Dance

All the separate styles of dance also have their own vocabulary. Ballet is French with strong traditions that students must understand. The language is specific to certain steps and the vocabulary is extensive and carries over into all forms of dance. Tap has a special language also that carries over into jazz dance. Laban's system is the large umbrella that covers all forms of dance.

Art Form

Dance is a performing art. Even though it may not be possible for all students that study dance to perform on stage they do perform in the class for each other and the instructor. The students have the opportunity to take choreography class where they can create a dance on fellow students.

They also have the unique opportunity to study with guest artists and experience different teaching styles as well as interview these guests about life as a professional dancer.

Assess student's learning:

Goals/Course Objectives <i>What you will learn</i>	Strengthen These College Wide Goals	Outcomes/Competences <i>Student will be able to</i>	Assessment for Student Goals <i>How will the skill be measured?</i>
Develop an awareness of body alignment and how it serves the dancer	Develop Life Skills	Become aware of the benefits of good body alignment	Daily observation by instructors in all classes Self evaluation of the performance of combinations taken from video Rubric for each class
Develop an awareness of how technique serves the dancer as a tool for more efficient movement patterns	Develop Life Skills	Demonstrate technique throughout movement sequences	Daily Observations by instructor in all classes Rubric for each class Performance in class of combinations Peer evaluation
Develop a working knowledge of Laban's Body, Effort, Shape, and Space as it relates to movement	Course Specific Goal	Give peer evaluations using the language of Laban Use Laban's theories in developing movement patterns	Written assignment Movement studies and assignments
Develop a language of dance based upon the different techniques and codified terminologies within each discipline	Solve Problems	Acquire a working knowledge of different styles of dance	Each class has specific performance evaluations specific to the style of dance and technique involved Written tests
Experience dance as an art form through the creative process of choreography,	See issues From Multiple Perspectives	Experience the creative process of art making	Performance in the Desert Dance Theatre Spring concert

performance, and by working with the different instructors/artist's teaching styles	Solve Problems	Experience and learn different styles of dance form guest artists	Experience the choreographic process with different choreographers through rehearsals and performances
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The revised rubrics will address the goals stated above. (See Appendix.) The style of dance should not matter since technique and body alignment are required for all the dance classes. Each dance class has an attendance policy stated in the syllabus; most, if not all the classes, have a written component and all have a performance component. The instructor observes the students' progress every day, giving suggestions. Technique is a process that takes time to incorporate into the body. It is not expected that the students will perfect any technique but it is expected that the student be attentive in class and make some progress in learning and embodying the specific style and technique of the given class. The final movement combination should demonstrate that progress. The students in the choreography class are sophomores and are expected to teach the movement to fellow students and rehearse the dancers enough so they can perform the piece with confidence. This class challenges the student on many levels: communication of their ideas to fellow students, expressing those ideas through movement, understanding where the performers are in the process of technique, hold a rehearsal that is both efficient and effective, and finally the ability to be in control of fellow students and direct them.

Review of the suggested course in the catalogue:

The courses in the catalogue have been reviewed and revised. Computer Information Systems (COSC 1200) has been added. The Theatre Portfolio (THEA 2500) class has changed over the years so it is no longer required. The students take either Assessment Portfolio (HMDV 2410) or participate in Assessment Day. Core Conditioning for Whole Body Connectivity (THEA 1310) and Nutrition (HOEC 1140) were added to the suggested program in 2004 and College Level Math was moved to the first semester. Backgrounds in Dance (THEA 2200) was deleted since it had not been taught for many years. General Biology (BIOL 1000) was moved to the spring semester of the freshman year so the student would be ready for Human Anatomy & Physiology I in the fall to be followed by Human Anatomy & Physiology II in the spring. Interpersonal Communications (COMM 1030) was also added since many of the students are going to be teachers it is good for them to be comfortable speaking to a group.

Section III

Enrollment and Audience

The Dance Department has seen growth since 2003. (See Appendix.) This is connected to the growth in the Musical Theatre Department since most of the students in the dance classes are the musical theatre students along with the dance majors with some general majors. This year, 2008, there will be two students graduating with an AA in Dance. The Dance Department is actively recruiting and next year there will be another declared dance major. There are a few students enrolled that are not in the department but these students typically take the first year of dance and do not continue on the second year. The department is reaching out to the local studios to encourage their students to take the technique classes.

The enrollment would be helped if students on the Dance Team were required to take a technique class. The Dance Team is not under the dance department's direction. The students who participate come from different educational backgrounds and are pursuing many different degrees. As it stands now they are not required to take any technique classes yet use dance technique while performing.

It is anticipated there will be major changes in 2008-09 with the change in the Musical Theatre curriculum. It is not known how this will affect the dance department in regards to class size.

Section IV

Staff Development

The department has one full time faculty member and one part time faculty member. It is important to stay current in the field of dance since it changes constantly. Both faculty members spend the summer and use the guest artist classes staying current in the field of dance.

The full time faculty takes summer workshops and takes class with the guest artists when they visit campus during the year. The full time member is involved with the Wyoming Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (WAHPERD). She received the Dance Teacher of the Year award in 2003 from that organization. That same year she joined and attended the International Association for Dance and Medicine (IADMS) in Greenwich, United Kingdom. This organization presents findings from scientific studies concerning dance and has lectures concerning dance issues, many involving injury prevention and rehabilitation.

The department added Core Conditioning for Whole Body Conditioning class which uses Pilates to improve posture, alignment, and core strength. Pilates is the base for this class so the faculty member is taking any opportunity to study Pilates. In 2003 she spent 3 weeks studying Pilates in North Hampton, MA. She took a 2 day workshop while in London and a three day Pilates On Tour workshop in 2004 in DC. She is planning on getting National Certification in Pilates.

This summer she will be teaching a workshop in Rapid City, South Dakota. The hope is to connect to the students and recruit from that region. She will be attending the National Dance Educators Organization (NDEO) in Towson, Maryland this June. The workshops attended include also the Bill Evans Teacher workshop in Brockport, NY and the American College Dance Festival Association (ACDFA). During this conference WWCC students were adjudicated for a dance presented at the conference. The students also took classes from other professors of dance from different universities throughout the region.

The part-time faculty has attended workshops, conferences and trainings including the Bill Evans Teacher's Intensive workshop, the Unique Upper-Body with Irene Dowd and Peggy Gould, Muscle Release Technique with Michael Young, Making Effective Decisions, Luminary Series Workshop "Leadership From the Ground Up: Effectiveness in Changing Times", FrontPage completion certification, Accelerated Windows Vista training, as well as Office 2007 updating, customer service workshops (The Bear Essentials, FISH Principles) and the development and deployment of customer service training for Wingate Inn of Rock Springs, Blood borne Pathogen training, CPR certification, basic safety training, continuation of Neurodevelopmental Movement Training, and taking dance classes on a persistent basis on our campus and elsewhere.

Section V

Facility and Equipment

The studio is appropriate although the use of it has grown over the years with the addition of classes. It is in use just about every hour during the day for classes. The sound system is in the process of being up dated. The department purchased a Zune player (MP3 player) for use in the studio. The current sound system uses a CD player and a tape deck. The instructor in physical education is working on getting the tapes she uses in step class changed over to CDs because the tape deck is obsolete and will not be replaced.

Section VI

Printed Material and Website

The department has a website as of 2004. This was an area that was totally lacking in the 2002 Program Review. The dance program web pages were reviewed during the spring of 2008. They are updated, easy to find, and user friendly. Web users select the Courses and Programs Home link, then Visual and Performing Arts. There is a list of links to choose from including comments, careers, and guest artists. There is also an active contact link. The photos show action and highlight WWCC students. Overall, these pages grab readers' attention and provide useful information.

As for printed material, at one time there was a Fine Arts Brochure that highlighted dance, music, theatre and art but when the printed amount ran out it was not reprinted. The department has developed, through the recruitment office, a single page color flyer with pictures that gives

information about the department and has the curriculum listed on the reverse side. The departments of dance, theatre, and music will be developing a color brochure together advertising the performing arts this year.

The catalogue was updated this year with the changes made in the curriculum for the Suggested Program for the AA Degree with an emphasis in Dance. The course syllabi are up to date.

The rubrics for all the classes have been up-graded to reflect the Primary Learning Goals of the department.

Section VII

Recommendations from the Previous Program Review

The recommendation from the last Program Review was to lighten the load of the full time person and that has happened in some regards. The Theatre Department has hired a Costume Room Manager who is there during the days to manage the student interns working in the shop. There is still no full time designer but costumes are no longer part of the load of the full time dance instructor, although the instructor is now teaching stage makeup each semester which has again added to her load. The first semester dance classes are large so a section has been added, again adding to load. With only one studio, which is full, there is no real way to grow.

Section VIII

Strengths, Limitations, and Opportunities

Strengths

The dance department offers students the opportunity to study dance in a progressive sequence that develops both technique and their performance ability. The sequence challenges both the beginners and those who have had previous training. The faculty works to encourage students to become more articulate movers and more articulate communicators about dance as an art form.

The guest artist program gives students the opportunity to take technique classes and work in the creative process of choreography with professionals in the field of dance. WWCC is the only community college to have a guest artist program. This year the department hired a guest lighting designer who came to set the lighting for the spring concert.

Dance Tour gives the student the opportunity to perform in a variety of venues, either in a gym or a stage. The students set up the lights and sound for the performance, taking into consideration the space, giving them valuable experience in the technical aspect of dance.

Self-assessments from video using a rubric and peer assessment during class have been positive learning processes for the students. When students can see the improvement they have made over the semester or year they are encouraged and will work hard for more improvements.

Limitations

The lack of faculty is one major limitation. All the classes have been full and a second section was opened in the beginning classes due to the increase in musical theatre. While this is good for the department, it only adds to the load of the only faculty member since dance is a component of musical theatre. Another limitation is the lack of space. With the studio in use during most of the day there is a limit to offering new classes. At the moment, step aerobics is taught in the studio and takes up about 5 hours in the fall and 7 hours in the spring. Most of the classes offered in the studio are back-to-back so there is no place to actually prepare for a movement class. Unlike traditional classes, dance classes require a place to prepare the combinations to be taught in the class. At the moment this is happening in the office of the faculty person or the hall outside her office.

Opportunities

The dance department is strong. With the Musical Theatre Department hiring a new faculty member who is able to teach dance it is hoped this will lighten the load of the only full time faculty member in dance. One of the theatre instructors will be teaching the Jazz II class in the fall which will help with the load of the dance faculty person. In the future there is a possibility that he could teach more classes although space will soon be a problem.

The guest artist program continues to bring a depth to the program and the dance concert. It allows the students to broaden their dance training and dance tour allows the students the ability to broaden their performing experience. Many of the students performing in the concert had never seen a modern dance concert and did not really understand what modern dance was before coming to WWCC. After taking technique classes, performing in the Desert Dance Concert, working with the guest artist both in class and in the choreographic process, and talking with the artists about their art the students have all come away with an understanding of what modern dance is and have acquired an appreciation for the art form.

Planning

First Year Dance Department 2008-2009		
Task or Action	Purpose & Measure of Success	Who is Responsible?
Create/update the brochure for the department.	The old brochure is outdated and was combined with Art, Music, and Theatre. These could be used to advertise the department.	Deirdre MacDonald
Continue to recruit dance majors.	The Musical Theatre curriculum has changed and this could negatively affect the dance department in a performance aspect. With more dance majors the student's time will not be split between theatre and dance.	Deirdre MacDonald
Begin Implementing the Assessment for the Primary Learning Goals	Rubrics have been created for each of the dance classes. Present compilation of the information at the conclusion of the class.	Deirdre MacDonald or class instructor

Second Year 2009-2010		
Task or Action	Purpose & Measure of Success	Who is Responsible?
Continue the recruiting effort	To increase FTE in the department	Deirdre MacDonald
Evaluate the assessment of the primary learning goals for each class.	To support the purpose of the program. Success of the learning goals in each class is imperative to the overall success of the program.	Deirdre MacDonald
Continue to acquire evaluations from the Guest Artists.	To have an outside external qualitative method of assessment. The success of each residency improves the department and spring concert.	Deirdre MacDonald and guest artists

Third Year 2009-2010		
Continue the recruiting effort	To increase FTE in the department	Deirdre MacDonald
Revise earlier action plans and add new actions as needed	Provides the opportunity to revisit earlier goals and allows for flexibility.	Deirdre MacDonald

Appendix

- WWCC Program Data Information FY2003-FY2007
- Dance Rubric Evaluation scale
- Rubrics for each class
- External Evaluation Letters for various guest artists

Dance Rubric Evaluation Scale

Score

- 4 Exhibits a full understanding in this area. Performance consistently demonstrates application of concepts.
- 3 Exhibits a strength and understanding in this area. Performance is inconsistent in demonstrating application of concepts.
- 2 Exhibits an average understanding in this area. Performance demonstrates difficulty in application of concepts.
- 1 Exhibits limited understanding in this area. Performance demonstrates difficulty in application of concepts.
- 0 Does not understand the concepts as related to movement and is therefore unable to apply.

Modern Dance
Performance Skills Assessment

Name: _____

Date: _____

Did the student demonstrate:

the correct sequence of steps throughout	4	3	2	1	0
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the entire combination/sequence

the correct use of body alignment and positions	4	3	2	1	0
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a good variation of energy dynamics throughout	4	3	2	1	0
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the sequence as related to phrasing

a clear of understanding whole body shaping	4	3	2	1	0
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a clear use of Space: personal kinesphere,	4	3	2	1	0
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reach space (far/mid/near), floor space/patterns and levels

a good sense of musicality	4	3	2	1	0
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Comments:

Ballet Rubric
Performance Skills Assessment

Name: _____

Date: _____

Did the student demonstrate:

correct sequence of steps	4	3	2	1	0
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correct use of rotation and body alignment	4	3	2	1	0
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ability to use the basic positions of the feet while moving through the space center floor	4	3	2	1	0
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correct use of upper torso while performing center floor	4	3	2	1	0
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a good sense of musicality	4	3	2	1	0
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Comments:

Jazz Rubric
Performance Skills Assessment

Name: _____

Date: _____

Did the student demonstrate:

that he/she knew the combination?	4	3	2	1	0
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the correct use of technique	4	3	2	1	0
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a dynamic structure with variations of energy	4	3	2	1	0
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a clear sense of shape and line	4	3	2	1	0
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an effective use of Space	4	3	2	1	0
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a good sense of timing and rhythm	4	3	2	1	0
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Comments:

Tap Rubric
Skills Performance Assessment

Name: _____

Date: _____

Did the student demonstrate:

a knowledge of the combination	4	3	2	1	0
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clear sounds	4	3	2	1	0
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correct rhythms	4	3	2	1	0
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stay true to the tempo of the music	4	3	2	1	0
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an effective use of the space	4	3	2	1	0
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Comments:

**Dance Rubric
Choreography Assessment**

Name: _____

Choreographic Intent	4	3	2	1	0
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Dynamic Phrasing; variation of energy	4	3	2	1	0
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Originality of Movement	4	3	2	1	0
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Clarity of Shape and Design	4	3	2	1	0
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Use of Space	4	3	2	1	0
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Sense of Timing	4	3	2	1	0
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Technique; alignment, correct use of body, etc.	4	3	2	1	0
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Lisa Niedermeyer's Review

My name is Lisa Niedermeyer. I am an alum of WWCC from the graduating class of 1999 and a professional choreographer/dancer living in New York City. I have been asked to write an evaluation for the Dept of Dance at WWCC. I have had the opportunity to perform and teach in many different academic institutions throughout the United States, mostly while touring with Jane Comfort and Company, a Bessie Award winning modern dance company, of which I have been a member for 5 years. Of course each academic institution and its dance offerings are unique but I truly can say that what WWCC offers its students is above and beyond any community college that I have come across.

The Guest Artist Program, directed by Deirdre MacDonald, consistently brings in working professional choreographers across a variety of disciplines. These guest artists work closely with the students often creating original works on them, truly a wonderful experience for any young performer. The caliber and frequency of these guest artist residencies is very impressive, and Deirdre has continued to meet and bring in new artists, all with unique perspectives and backgrounds. Not only is this great exposure for students but is also important networking outside of Rock Springs. I can speak directly to this as I myself was a dance student who maintained the contacts I made with WWCC Guest Artists. When I first moved to New York City I was an understudy and eventually a dancer for a choreographer that I had originally met as a student at WWCC.

The performance opportunities for WWCC students at WWCC are also to be commended. Not only do students perform in faculty and guest artists work on the formal stage, they also get to perform on "Dance Tour" taking these performances on the road and getting valuable experience in a variety of venues. They create and perform in each other's works as well, often something that only a junior or senior at a four year school would get to experience this. It is very valuable and empowering for students to experience the creative process as art makers themselves not just as performers.

I think it is important to point out that Dance at WWCC offers enormous cultural opportunities for ALL students, regardless of their major or future goals. Dance is presented as

an art form, rather than solely as entertainment for sporting events (this is often the only arena for dance on smaller campuses).

The experiences students have in the Dance Dept. at WWCC should be lauded and treasured as should its hard working faculty and staff.

Sincerely,

Lisa Niedermeyer

Monica Bill Barnes Review

I was very impressed with the quality of the dance department in my relatively short time there this January 2008. I have extensively experience teaching in universities across the country, ranging from strict conservatories like North Carolina School of the Arts to Liberal Arts College like Vassar College. I was immediately struck by the students' clear confidence and sense of themselves as performers in my audition. I felt that the students were open to new directions, brave in their choices and inventive in their performance.

As the week continued, I was able to react with the students in their modern classes. What I observed was a wonderfully strong work ethic, a generous spirit within the community of dancers and a sense of humility and humor about their own development. I believe that these qualities are essential to both good artists and good people. These qualities were instilled in the students by the faculty. I was impressed with the honest and thoughtful interaction that I witnessed between students and faculty. This was a wonderful place to work and I feel that this program is excellent is training both professional dancers and in giving students skills that we serve them well in whatever field they choice. Please free feel to contract me directly for any further conversation.

Monica

Kate Kosharek's Review

I spent a week at Western Wyoming Community College as a guest artist in the theater/dance department in September 2007. My residency included teaching modern and ballet technique classes, teaching a choreography class, and setting a work of choreography on four students who were selected through an audition process.

Most of the students I taught were theater majors and with that considered, I was pleasantly surprised by the amount of talent, focus and great work ethic many of the students demonstrated in the dance classes. They all had a good sense of class etiquette and respect for each other and their instructors. I observed that they took corrections very well and listened to what I had to say with intent in their bodies. In the beginning level classes, I noticed a lack of confidence in some students, especially when they are placed in smaller groups to move across the floor. Some of them were not interested or comfortable with my corrections and came across as having an attitude. This was not as common in the intermediate/advanced classes as I observed these dancers to be more comfortable with taking class in general—several dancers really owned up to the movement material I gave and had a great sense of attack across the floor. I observed many students struggling during the conditioning exercises in my warm up, showing an overall lack of strength and endurance. Many have not acquired the dancer physic of toned, healthy muscles that will serve to their benefit.

It was apparent during the audition that all the dance students have experience in theater. They danced with great dynamic in their faces and took on the movement with a sense of character (which is what I encouraged them to do). Many young dancers I've worked with have a difficult time embodying a character per say--it usually takes some convincing and suggesting on my part as a director--but these dancers at WWCC had it from the very beginning of the process!

The four dancers I ended up casting did a fantastic job being sensitive to the qualities and dynamics of the phrase material, showing a commitment to the work of art and to me as the choreographer. They paid close attention to the details I gave and helped each other out,

working as a team. I observed they had some struggles physically with some of the material; therefore, a sense of their ownership to the movement was lost during those times. There is a fine line between being humble and unconfident and I felt that line was crossed a couple times where I wanted the dancers to trust their own abilities.

Overall, I had a very enriching experience working with the students and faculty (Deirdre MacDonald) in the theater/dance dept. at WWCC. The students seem to get a lot of performing opportunity, which is vital in a performing arts education. The program is fortunate to have funding to bring in guest artists to teach and choreograph. It's a great experience for all who participate: the students, the faculty, the school, the community, and the artist.