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5.3

FEELING THE TOUCH

Integrating sensations into dance activities for the elderly with dementia

Szu-Ching Chang

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Introduction

In recent years, with the rise of the elderly community in Taiwan, health-related physical fitness and health promotion activities have been emphasized to maintain physical health. However, except for traditional folk dance and square dance which are mostly practiced by middle-aged and older women in community parks, most of the physical activities designed for the elderly focus too much solely on training their physical fitness. While the major intention is to maintain muscular endurance to delay the process of aging, little attention is paid to the importance of mental expression for the elderly. Although some activities, such as aerobic dance, are practiced with music, the purpose of the fast tempo is still to increase exercise intensity and cardiorespiratory endurance. The importance of the mental aspects and the balance between the physical and the mental in the activities for the elderly are largely ignored.

Dance, as an elderly- and dementia-friendly activity, as well as a pleasant intervention, has been developed widely in Europe and the United States. Dance-related senior programs, such as the Royal Academy of Dance's Silver Swans Ballet classes in the UK, dance in expressive arts programs for the elderly, and Creative Dance for seniors, all intend to introduce dance, in a form that combines physical movements and expressive arts to the elderly, maintaining both mental and physical wellness. Similar programs and considerations for the elderly are in the initial stages in Taiwan, such as the National Theater and Concert Hall's "Performing Arts Project for Older Adults" and Cloud Gate Dance School's "Life Rhythm for Seniors." In addition to learning from the experiences of other countries, the planners are constantly adjusting and improving the contents and pedagogies of the courses for the elderly, from the perspectives of local culture and lifestyles.

Very few educational implementations and studies have focused on sensational awareness and practices for seniors, and those with dementia, especially on the theme of touch. Compared with the visual, such as the attention to colorful photos, and the aural, such as the accompaniment of music, both of which attract a large amount of interest, the tactile inspires less attention. Even though dance and physical activities involve the implementation of corporeal dynamics, the touching of the skin and its sensation has largely been ignored in discussions. Especially in the traditional culture of East Asia that considers the body as a locus of individual spirituality, touch is the least sensation that people here notice and practice in daily life and culture. Even though in Taiwan some dance mentors noticed that a welcoming hug between the teachers and the elderly members could break the distance both physically and mentally at the beginning of the class,[1] there is still minimal focus placed on the importance of touch itself as a major element to be integrated into activities for the elderly and those with dementia.

This chapter discusses an initial project[2] in which I advised dance-major students to design dance activities for the elderly and those with dementia. This project is intended to improve the contents and the pedagogy of this dance class by introducing the theme of touching and emphasizes the aspects of experiencing and practicing in sensation awareness. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze and discuss the designed contents of the class, named "Uncovering Your Veil." The target participants are the elderly and dementia people with mild to moderate impairment. Therefore, most of the dance movements involved are practiced while sitting and while standing without locomotion. A silk scarf is used in this class for building the interactive relationship and connection between human beings and the prop. For participants, it is the medium to increase the sensation of touching and also to express emotions and feelings.

The initial application of this project is to teach six mild to moderate dementia participants in a daycare center. The

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The initial application of this project is to teach six mild to moderate dementia participants in a daycare center. The age range of these participants is approximately 50–70 years and all the members have been diagnosed with early-onset dementia. The teachers are two fourth-year dance-major students under my pretraining and advice; Cindy Tsai was the major teacher and Chia-Chi Chen was the assistant teacher for this class. This class "Uncovering Your Veil" was a 60-minute class taught on the morning of December 21, 2021. Before the implementation of this class, the two teachers had visited the daycare center twice a week regularly and spent at least one hour before the teaching accompanying members in their daily activities, such as watering the plants, on each visit. After teaching the dance activities, the two teachers also accompanied the members to re-cover the tables and other jobs until the preparation for their lunch. In other words, the two teachers built up a relationship of familiarity with these dementia participants when teaching this class.

From the perspectives of "Space" and "Shape" in Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), this chapter will analyze the movement elements incorporated and arranged in this dance lesson. I will also discuss the participants' reactions and movements in the process. By investigating both the lesson plan and the participants' movements,

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I will discuss, for future reference, the possible improvement in designing dance activities that integrate the theme of touch.

This chapter discusses the sensational stimulation and feelings of dance as a form of performing arts that requires largely bodily involvement, which can be introduced into the lives of the elderly and those with dementia. With imagination and creativity in the extraordinary context of dancing, we can enjoy our body movements, playful props, and interaction with others by which we experience and practice the sensation of touch from both our inner-self and outer-expression aspects. All these could bring mental and physical wellness to the elderly and those with dementia. Although the course described in this research is still in the initial stage, without quantitative materials to support the results of the participants, the mental and physical delegations from the participants in their dance practices created valuable feedback for this initial exploration.

Sensation and expression: touching without physical touch under COVID-19

Aging and touch

With aging, the acuity of all the body's senses decreases. This decline of sensory perception not only causes the inconvenience to the elderly in their self-care and daily activities but also reduces or delays their response to surrounding environmental stimuli, which often makes them feel uneasy and depressed about aging. Among all the senses, tactile aging is less noticeable but has a huge impact on the lives of older adults. For example, the aging of fingertips, which provides sensory information for postural stability, may cause the uneasiness in control of movements. The elderly have to use higher force on the meeting ground between skin and the object in order to "overcome the age-related loss in tactile sensation" (Wickremaratchi & Llewelyn, 2006, p. 303).

In addition to the effects on body movement and weight balance, the importance of touch systems on the dimensions of social engagement, emotions, and expressions – ignored in the past – has recently been explored. While the ability of recognition on touching declines, the need and the awareness of gentle touch from loved ones increases and it is more important to a quality of life for the elderly. As Sarah McIntyre et al. (2021) suggests, "the pleasantness of being touched has been founded to increase with age above 60 years in sharp contrast to the decrease in perceived intensity of touch, and the decline in discriminative tactile functions" (p. 56). With aging, the sensibility on affective touching or being touched is enhanced, so the psychological needs of the elderly for a friendly touch are actually higher. Moreover, "interpersonal touch is also crucial for strengthening bonds and communicating emotions" (McIntyre et al., 2021, p. 53). Friendly touch can make the elderly feel more valuable and confident, and also improve the responsiveness of interpersonal interactions. Therefore, although the function of the tactile system declines with aging, the elderly need more opportunities to practice and experience pleasant touching, and being touched with affective support, to maintain their physical and mental health.

Dance for the elderly

Dance and other expressive arts activities are beneficial to balance the elderly's emotions and maintain their social well-being. Integrating arts-based, human-interactive activities increases social engagement and reduces memory loss in older adults. Among all kinds of dances, community dance is widely applied to older adults. These community dance activities often rearrange simple preset steps for the physical and mental conditions of the elderly. This "gets people moving who may not normally dance" (Amans, 2017, p. 44) and allows them to dance together in a short period of time.

In addition to community dance, dance in the expressive arts uses free dancing to allow all seniors to participate together and use their own bodies to create and to share their feelings and thoughts with each other. Dance, as

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participatory arts, offers the opportunity and the medium for the elderly to have good communications and interactions with others, both socially and emotionally. Moreover, dance is an eyes-opened and mind-opened artistic practice that involves being curious about others, imagining possibilities, and offering expression and responses kindly. In this kind of dancing activity, "participants get the chance to engage with each other's expressions, experiences, and ideas" (Andersson & Almqvist, 2020, p. 268) and, therefore, as "democracy among people 65+" (Andersson & Almqvist, 2020). From this perspective, providing opportunities for the elderly to participate in dance activities embodies the ideal of inclusive arts.

There have been a few discussions about how dance instructors transform their dance professional knowledge into elder-friendly class content, pedagogical skills, or practical implementations. Kai Lehikoinen (2019) discusses how the dance profession can form a holistic approach to contributing to social change in this context. He suggests for a "mindful attention in encountering the other" (p. 6) and argues it is "a knowledge of how to be present in the moment and have one's senses open to different forms of information-auditory, visual, kinesthetic, affective-as one interacts with the other" (p. 6). In other words, dance teachers should be able to appreciate the diversity of each elderly participant and to maintain a flexible attitude and guided teaching methods. By the implementation of dance knowledge and "mindful attention," the dance artists or dance instructors could help the elderly to build up social relationships with peers and encourage them to enjoy their dancing with others.

Touch, dance and the elderly

Touch, both physical and imaged, is an essential vehicle to express and to connect in dancing. By experiencing the ways of touching and being touched, dancers acquire information and organize their responses quickly for self-reference or to

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interact with others (Brandstetter et al., 2013). Dancers are able to precisely move and perform movements in space by the means of touch and, accordingly, kinesthetics, without totally relying on visual reference. When it comes to expressing and interpreting emotions, dancers often look inward to explore how they perceive their inner selves. As a result, "touch – the sense that connects 'sensing' and the emotional 'feeling'/being affected – is closely related to processes of kinesthetic perception and empathy" (Brandstetter et al., 2013, p. 7).

The essence of touch is responsiveness, which forms a set of active call-and-response relationships. The moment of the touching and being touched while dancing with others is full of possibilities and multiple combinations that carries the interactions forward. In this process, touching and being touched are not only sensual perceptions but emotional communication and feedback. In additional to physical touch, "non-touching and touching before the actual (tactile) touch" (Brandstetter et al., 2013, p. 9) also contribute to the responsivity in the interactions of dancing. These touch-related perceptions initiate and trigger interpersonal sensitivity, and therefore, motivate the physical and spiritual energies flowing between the dancer and the others.

From the perspective of dance for the elderly, the inevitable tactile practice in dance allows older adults to engage with their inner emotions inwardly and interact outwardly with others at the same time. Moreover, this process may offer the opportunity for the elderly to gradually change their self-image and self-evaluation from the responses of others. As Tuure Tammi and Riikka Hohti (2020) argued,

> Touch also necessarily affects and changes those involved in touching . . . . Touch is thus directed toward bodies and worlds yet to come, and its improvisational and responsive nature entails that the futures present in touch are never fully settled.
>
> *(p. 16)*

As discussed previously, touching and being touched contribute to a dynamic process of understanding in which participants carefully explore the possibility and adjust themselves according to the feedback from the partners and from the environment. For the elderly who participate in dance, they could enjoy the valuable encounters in the process of touching and being touched, which expands their views toward themselves, others, and other beings in the world. With the opportunity of reflecting and creating in body movements, touching as well as dancing is "worlding" (Tammi & Hohti, 2020, p. 24) that renews the elderly's life.

The forbidden touch under COVID-19

Dance activities which were expected to emphasize tactile exercises encountered the impact of the epidemic COVID-19. Touching soon became a prohibited and demonized action. After deciding to use the silk scarf as the medium of touch, the participants' active touch, especially on their own bodies, becomes the choice in this situation. Active touch, also called "*tactile scanning*," produces "variations in skin stimulation . . . caused by variation in his motor activity" (Gibson, 1962, p. 490). Through active touch in different paths, the participant's hand like an eye scans the contact zone and generates various stimuli during this exploration. The stimuli felt by both touching and being touched are fed back to the participants' brains at the same time and are interwoven into the next moment's choices and feelings. In the self-touch of the participants, they have new discoveries and deeper feelings about the physical states and inner feelings of their own bodies.

Another kind of touch practice is also used for purpose of sensitization. By blocking the vision temporary, the participants are engaging in "blind movement" that can concentrate on feeling the movement (Brandstetter et al., 2013, p. 7). While most people's lives depend heavily on visual feedback, other senses are less likely to be perceived and applied. Covering the eyes briefly during self-touch allows the participants to carefully experience the tactile sensation from the skin. With previous discussions about the psychological needs of affective touch for the elderly, the gentle self-touch with concentration on their own bodies and minds provide the participants emotional feedback to comfort their loneliness and isolation during COVID-19 protocols.

The dance lesson designed for the elderly and those with dementia

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Analysis of the quality and motion of the silk scarf

There were several major considerations for choosing the silk scarf as the medium to awaken the sense of touch in the dance activities for the elderly. First, the material of the silk scarf is light and delicate with light transmittance. Compared to a towel that is often used in daily life and physical fitness exercise, the silk scarf provides and strengthens the sensitive feeling in the touch between the material and skin. Also, the silk scarf has a flexible role as a well-used medium in both inner and outer explorations of sensations and space throughout the whole class. Finally, for older adults, the silk scarf is a well-acquainted item often used in Chinese traditional culture. Compared to the props from foreign countries that are often used in physical fitness activities, such as yoga balls, the silk scarf is widely used in folk dance and temple festivals. Its variety of dazzling and bright colors also enhances the attention and enjoyment of participants when dancing with it.

To discuss the possible variety of dynamic motions of the silk scarf, we analyze it from the aspect of Effort in LMA. The silk scarf is light in weight and either Direct or Indirect in Space. It is also either Quick or Sustained in Time. Its tendency to flow is free because it is difficult to fully control its movements.

From the previous analyses in Effort, we continuously discussed the possible ways to feel the touch of the silk scarf. Considering the perspective of Effort Action Drive, the possible combinations to feel touch are Glide (Light-Sustain-Direct), Flick (Light-Sudden-Indirect), and Float (Light-Sustain-Indirect).

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Considering the participants' habits of body movements and the interaction with the prop, we decided to let the silk scarf Glide on the skin of different body parts as the major motion to awaken and experience the gentle sensation of touch. We also included the movement of "lightly rub" (Light-Sustain) to prepare the participants to be aware of the material of the silk scarf and to feel its detail.

Introduction of the lesson plan "Uncovering your Veil"

The content of this class adopted the title and the music of a Chinese folk song "Uncovering your Veil" and the meanings of the lyrics "uncovering your veil, so I can see your face." The target participants include sub-healthy seniors and those who are mildly disabled and mildly living with dementia, but could also be extended to seniors in general. For the safety of participants, most of the dance movements are practiced on a chair. The latter parts of this class encouraged the participants to dance while standing and include simple locomotion, such as one step to the right and one to the left. The content is described as follows. The instructions are written in the style of verbal prompts.

1. *Warming up*
   Massage with hands. After rubbing both hands together to warm them, gently massage and rub all body parts. Guide the participants to gently rub in the order from the face, neck, arms, torso, legs, etc. The process of this warm-up activity is about five minutes.
2. *Throwing the scarf to welcome the healing I: the sensation of touch*
   Following the warm-up, this activity focuses on the feeling of the inner self and the awareness of touch. First, with guidance on breathing, rub your veil gently to feel the soft texture of the veil. Then, let us spread the veil over our heads and pull it down gently to feel the veil brush across our faces lightly. Later, hold the veil with the right hand and slowly move up from the left foot, through the left calf, through the knee to the thigh, and then from the fingers, wrist, arm, to the shoulder, to the air above our heads. Let us repeat from the other side.
3. *Throwing the scarf to welcome the healing II: the interaction with space*
   Following the practices of touching, this activity focuses on the feeling of the Outer Space and the awareness of interaction with the air and with others. First, spread out the silk scarf and hold one corner with your right hand. Throw it into different directions in your personal space. Like setting off fireworks, throw the scarf straight up, right, left, and also diagonally. Then, with the throwing into space on our upper body, we incorporate the stepping of the lower body. With each throw in one direction, we then take two strong steps. Later, imagining the scarf is our pen and the space is our paper, let us draw patterns in the air, drawing one and then another circle on your right side and repeating it on the left side. Let us draw several "S" shapes in the air, then weave the scarf above our heads like saying "Hi."
4. *Dance with the folk song "Uncovering your Veil"*
   Matching the meaning of the lyrics, the teacher uses the movements that have been practiced in the class and choreographed into a short repertoire. Leading the participants, all the movements are made while standing. The first part of the dance is weaving and throwing the silk scarf. The second half is a duet, dancing with a partner face to face. The two connect by holding each other's silk scarves in their hands and weaving them up and down together. The whole dance ends in interesting interactions with the partners.

The analyses of movement elements and teaching implementation

Warming up awakens the body

Gently rubbing the skin with the palm of both hands awakens the body's awareness of the stimulation of touching. Sparking touch as the tinder, the participants can feel their own body and body parts inwardly through their own skin,

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Sparkling touch as the under, the participants can feel their own body and body parts inwardly through their own skin, the largest receiver in the human body. From observations, under the introduction of gentle music and breathing, most participants were in a situation of inner awareness and maintained the status of Shape Flow. They sensed their own bodies and revealed the inner feeling of each of their body parts. They also inspected their hands, making a connection with their skin and body parts by which the sensations of the body started to materialize gradually.

Occasionally, there was a period when the participants departed from their inner sensations. It was when the participants looked at the teachers' movements and tried to imitate the routes of the hands moving on and touching their skin. Because of the intention of touching different body parts, the participants performed the hand functionally with the task of moving in particular ways. Therefore, the participants may show Arc-Like Directional in Shape and reveal the outer relationship between themselves and their bodies. However, the intention of designing this warming-up activity is to emphasize the inner touching and its following sense of connection with the self, without putting too much attention on the Outer Space.

Body	Effort	Shape	Space
Upper body Hand-Initiated	Light Indirect/Direct Sustain	Shape Flow/ Shortening and Hallowing Arc-like Directional Shape+ /Spoke-like Directional Shape	Sagittal Plane

FIGURE 5.3A BODY, EFFORT, SHAPE, SPACE chart

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Introducing healing with touch

Lightly rubbing the silk scarf with the hands, the tactile sensations are concentrated on the palms and fingers. Initiating the feeling of the texture of the scarf more intimately, we carefully sense the soft flowing material without a fixed shape and the feeling of it sliding over the skin of the hands. The action of covering the head with the silk scarf allows the whole head and face to feel the touch of the silk scarf, which brings fresh insight. When slowly pulling down the scarf and letting it slowly slide down the skin of the face, the dynamic motions of the scarf intensify the tactile perception of brushing across the face.

Covering the head with a silk scarf, similar to a hide-and-seek game, is a process from unseen to seen. This experience caused the participants to feel anticipation and interest. The instructor, Tsai, points out that, "It may be because that when the head is covered, the light is dark. Then it suddenly brightens when the scarf is pulled down, which makes the participants surprised" (Tsai, personal interview, 2022). As a result, the covering and uncovering of the face motivated the sensations of visual side-by-side when feeling the touch of the silk scarf.

The gliding of the silk scarf on different body parts enables realizing the different feelings of the skin on certain body parts. The sensations of touch differ from one body part to the other – and the practices of distinguishment are important.

However, in the actual teaching implementation, it was found that the participants with moderate to severe dementia encountered difficult challenges when they tried to control the routes of the silk scarf with one hand. As Tsai observed,

> The hand, without touching the skin directly, was supposed to hold the silk scarf and only the silk scarf touch and flick the body part. But those participants who cannot control the movements well had difficulty, so their silk [scarves] were completely suspended without touching the skin.
>
> *(Tsai, personal interview, 2022)*

Therefore, Tsai changed her instruction so that these participants could really touch their body parts with their hands, similar to the warm-up activity but with the silk scarf. The silk scarf is located between the hand and the body, and it becomes a towel-like wiping touch, which slightly increases the frictional force compared to the original flicking action. Thus, although the content of this part still maintained a more introverted Shape-Flow state, like in the warm-up activities, there were also some Direct and Indirect effects on the quality of their touch, from the perspective of Effort.

Regarding the aspect of Space, the Sagittal Plane was widely used when the silk scarf flicked the lower body, in the order of the feet to the calves and thighs to the waist, abdomen, chest, and other parts of the torso. The participants have to bend their upper body forward and then gradually strengthen upward. Besides the purpose of the successive glides through the adjacent body parts from the lower body to the upper body, which is to awaken the sensation of touching, it is also intended to increase the connectivity of these body parts, which is emphasized as an important connection for people to rebuild the sense of subjectivity in the theory of LMA.

Body	Effort	Shape	Space
Upper body Hand-Initiated Arms	Light Direct Quick	Spoke-like Directional Shape	Sagittal Plane/Vertical Plane Central spatial Pathway

FIGURE 5.3B BODY, EFFORT, SHAPE, SPACE chart

Throwing out the scarf and feeling the surrounding air

The throwing of the silk scarf straight from the center of the body to its surroundings is a breakthrough in Space and a more positive outward energy. The force of the silk scarf's motions creates frictional contact between the hands as

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more positive outward energy. The focus of the silk scarf's motions creates kinetic contact between the hands as well as the arms and the space surrounding the body. The arm feels the resistance and pressure of the air and generates the strength to actively break through the resistance. Because of the variety of the participants' movement abilities and the texture of the silk scarf, the motions of throwing the scarf may show Light or Strong in Weight, from the perspective of Effort. Thus, the different levels of Weight, combined with Direct in Space and Quick in Time, contribute to the Effort Action Drive "Flick" and "Slash," both of which are qualities of movements that the elderly with dementia often use in their daily lives.

The operations and combinations of limbs and silk scarves in Space, including direction, routes, and levels, from spatial visual images, arouse the interest of the participants. The first part of throwing the silk scarf uses the Central-Spatial Pathway and the Spoke-like Directional Shape to allow the participants to practice within the safe range from the center of the body to near-reach distance. Later, through the extensive weaving of the silk scarf, the participants are encouraged to reach out to the Middle-Reach distance in Space. Due to the great differences in the physical state of the participants, it can be seen that those spatial paths offered opportunities for challenges and repeated practice. Tsai noticed that "Some participants have weak muscles on their arms. They only raised their hands and cannot throw the [scarves] out" (Tsai, personal interview, 2022). The instructor changed her pedagogy immediately so that the participants can adapt the High-Low level difference to achieve the action. For those participants who were unable to throw the scarf, the instructor encouraged them to wave it from a low level to a high level repeatedly. After mastering the feeling of throwing the scarf, they further use the bending and straightening of their elbows and wrists to gradually perform the pattern of throwing the silk scarf.

From the perspective of space, the Sagittal Plane (upper front, front, lower front) and the Vertical Plane (upper right, upper left, lower right, lower left) were selected because they are easier for those sitting on chairs with backrests to move. The outward directions of throwing, which move from the center of the body to the multiple directions in the Space with lively and rhythmic folk songs, correspond to the

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projecting of their emotions from the inside outward, and therefore produce the enjoyment of expressing their inner feelings. However, just as the diagonal line is the last mature development of the human developmental model when aging, the direction of the diagonal crossing also tends to become difficult to achieve at first. “They experience more difficulty in executing this when they use the right hand to throw to the left, or vice versa.” (Tsai, personal interview, 2022). As a result, the instructor encouraged them to spend more time practicing these diagonal movements.

Body	Effort	Shape		Space
Upper body Hand-Initiated	Light Indirect Sustain	Shape Flow/ Shortening and Hallowing Arc-like Directional Shape		N/A

FIGURE 5.3C BODY, EFFORT, SHAPE, SPACE chart

Discussion and conclusion

Results from observation and analyses

The practices of touching for participants with dementia

According to observation and analysis, the perception of touch on the skin was aware of and perceived by the participants. Through the warm-up to the main activity, the awareness of touch is magnified and practiced multiple times. After being given time and certain movements to experience the sensation of touch, the participants seemed to have a new understanding and discovery of their own body and skin. However, among the practices of these different types of touch, it can be clearly seen that the participants have different reactions to active touch, passive touch, and being touched by others. The participants seemed to feel a little hesitant and doubtful when guided to intently experience their self-touching. It may be that because the participants need to focus on the inner feeling of their own initiative to touch themselves, they may feel relatively unfamiliar with the set of relationships that occur at the same time as touching and being touched. They are more surprised or amused by being touched accidently by someone else or someone else’s scarf. In the context of dance and games, this feeling of being unexpectedly touched may bring more excitement and fun to the elderly, especially in situations when they are familiar with each other.

Other aspects of interactivity and connectedness were also observed in the process of practicing touch. The senses of adjacent parts of the participant’s body seemed to be connected as the silk scarf was flicked across these parts, one by one. Participants often performed separate repetitive actions one by one in past physical activities, but in this activity, the touch track of the silk scarf made the entire movement a continuous action journey. The hand with the silk scarf not only visited carefully but also interacted with different body parts that altogether composed their own body. Similarly, participants waved their scarves into their personal space, allowing their bodies to engage in a contact improvisation with their surroundings. Body parts and the surrounding air both contributed to a dynamic motion that connects and interacts with each other at the same time. Because throwing the scarf requires traveling through personal space, the air exerts a weighty pressure on the skin of the hand to make the resistive contact between them more apparent and perceptible. This kind of touch requires both piercing and resistance, and the resulting interactivity makes the participants find the activity more engaging, fun, and fulfilling. Silk scarf played an important role as tactile mediators and visual assistive device in the practices of touch.

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The dance pedagogy for guiding the practicing of touch

The way that the dance instructor incorporated dance professional knowledge into dance pedagogy is shown in detailed movement disassembly, sequential guidance, and repetitive movements. She performed good demonstrations and patiently allowed sufficient time to repeat movements that allowed the participants to understand the pattern without feeling frustrated. She also paid “mindful attention” to encourage the individuals and responded quickly with adjusting her teaching methods and the movements taught. Also, it is important that the major instructor, the assistant instructor, and social workers, as well as volunteers, all worked almost one-on-one with the participants with dementia interactively. Adequate and complete attention and concern are the main keys to working with people with dementia.

Last but not least, the established reliance and friendship between dance instructors and the participants is essential for guiding the activities on the practices of touching and being touched. Although in the pandemic situation, the dance instructor did not actually touch the participants with dementia, a large number of active self-touching and being touched guided by the silk scarf still requires the participants’ trust and willingness to follow the actions. Therefore, in addition to compiling the teaching content with professional dance knowledge, establishing a reliant relationship in advance, understanding the physical and emotional conditions and characteristics of the elderly with dementia, responding flexibly and instantly during the activity are all keys to a successful dance pedagogy on the theme of touch.

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Reflection and feedback

The introduction of breath and Shape Flow in the practice of touch

In the process of implementation, it was found that the instructor's guidance on breathing was relatively simple and short, and the participants in general were less able to enter a stage of gentle breathing applied with movements of touch by listening to the oral guidance. From the perspective of LMA, breath is the first stage and also the most important development for human beings, and it therefore is important to be aware of this and practice breathing in order to bring the body into a whole. The participants may concentrate more on their inner feelings and sense more details from the touching and being touched in deeper breathing. With careful breathing, they may also explore their feelings on the skin more and be aware of the subtle changes on every inch of skin while the scarf is moving. The incorporation of breath into the practices of touch could also bring Shape Flow of the body. When Shape Flow is integrated, this is the time for them to work deeply with their inner feeling to express through their bodies. In other words, Shape Flow could be the connection to bridge the inner feeling and outer expression and move their practices of touch forward, from physical touch to emotional touching and being touched.

The exploration of and discussion about the sense of touching

Due to the limited time of the course, the guidance and reminder on tactile perception are still not sufficient in this class plan. The time to practice touching can be extended and the movements designed can be more varied. Especially for different types of touch – such as active touch, being touched, and being touched by others – each of them can have different movements and exercises developed. The observations from the dance instructor Tsai shows that the participants with dementia have different reactions to and perceptions of different kinds of touch, which should be explored more. The further study of different types of touch and exploration in transforming them into dance activities require further development.

Suggestions for future development

From class to course: developing connectivity between inner and outer

The time and content of a single class are too short to properly guide the perception and exploration on the theme of touch. Such a brief lesson also has insufficient time and depth to bring out participants' attention to their inner and outer connections, which is an ultimate purpose of practicing touch in these dance activities. Especially with activities designed for the elderly with dementia, it is often necessary to deconstruct and simplify the steps of practice and then give sufficient time to repeat the short dance sequences. From one class to at least three classes, the future design of the course on the theme of touch could focus on different kinds of tactile sensations; each should be guided to explore and practice separately, and appropriate dance activities or physical games should be developed from them. Further discussions and expressions should be integrated into activities to allow the participants to share their feelings and thoughts. These feedback sessions could be in other forms that these participants are good at, such as oral expressions, movement creation, drawing, or singing. Moreover, with the focus on the connectivity between the theme of Inner and of Outer through the practices of touching and being touched, the designed curriculum should focus and notice the sequence and coherence among these dance activities in articulating and arranging the orders. The step-by-step explorations of touch may gradually touch the inner emotions of the participants, and the accumulated sense of trust in this process may also enhance their willingness to share with others.

Improvement of teaching strategies and guidance

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Because the teaching experience and methods of the student-teachers who implemented the course are still relatively unskilled and immature, there is still a lack of teaching strategies for establishing interactive relationships in the guidance process, even though the participants were already familiar with them. For the elderly with dementia, gradually deteriorating memory often makes them feel uneasy and unable to cope with changes in their surroundings. Therefore, interpersonal interactions and relationship building applied in dance activities are the important teaching methods to erase their anxiety and enhance their willingness to respond. which should be pretrained and practiced in advance by the dance instructors.

Just as touch is the most indispensable interaction between dancers and themselves and among dancers, the dance instructors should be able to make the participants feel moving and moved during the dance teaching process on the theme of touch. Dance instructors should sincerely teach and pay attention to the diversity of each participant, just as the movers need to carefully feel the various information of every inch of skin in the process of touching and being touched. When professional dance artists transform dance knowledge into a dance course for the elderly with dementia, in the practicing of the physical and mental touching and being touched, we are feeling, experiencing, and bringing in “the world” altogether.

Notes

1. In a lecture, Yunyu Wang and Ruyuan Tseng once shared that they led students to offer elderly peoples’ dance activity in the nursing center of Guandu Hospital. They would start the warm-up activity by physically hugging their participants.
2. This study was developed from the researcher assisting the University Social Responsibility (USR) project in dance department in 2020–2021. This project, titled “Accompanying

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Love and Art: Dancing the Vitality of the Weak and Bringing Up the Care for Dementia," hosted by Chan Chia-Hui and co-hosted by Szu-Ching Chang, is to provide dance for the underprivileged groups and the elderly with dementia. I led the students to participate in the observation of the demented elderly group, to enter the day care as the site, and to develop relevant teaching materials as a brief result of this project. This project is meant to test the diverse possibilities of dance as a physical and mental health activity for the elderly.

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