CHAPTER NINE

Performative teaching and learning: On the instruct-ability of kin/aesthetic properties

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Abstract: The chapter investigates instructions, instructed and instructive actions in the theatrical dance studio. Focusing on performative learning as the instructed production of expressive, aesthetic conduct such as dancing, I explore its instruct-ability and the role observability and intersubjectivity play in that. I examine how and when teachers intervene with directives, hints, corrections, and demonstrations, which can be produced along with, after or by interrupting the performance. Different instructions require different temporal and sequential organization, multimodal format, and recipient design. Verbal, vocal and gestural prompts punctuate dancers' performing. Corrections concerning what to enact when are easily accomplished verbally, and produced during dancing, whereas how to perform often requires (re)demonstration, hence postponing the correction or interrupting the enactment. Instructive actions are equally important and include the dancing of fellow practitioners,

whose conduct is consulted continually to learn just-what to do (”copying”) and for confirming whether one is moving properly (comparing). Self-monitoring and self-initiated correction are crucial and sustained by the mirror as an intersubjective technology. The ”pan-visual” organization of activities in the dance studio makes instructed actions instructive themselves and supports a collaborative component, as dancers also offer explicit instructions (peer-to-peer coaching).

Introduction

”Dance is to a large extent taught by way of imitation […]. Observability is absolutely crucial […] participants are placed in a way that enables a view of the teacher(s)” (Keevallik 2010, 403, 416 *passim*; see also Douglah 2020). In dance classes as much as rehearsals, the instructor is both the primary object of visual attention whenever enacting the dance, and the primary watcher of the other dancers' actions to identify moves that are correctable. However, dancers are continuously monitoring other co-participants to know what to do, when and how – a self-initiated correction is as important as an other-initiated one. A practitioner compares their moving body not only to that of the teacher but also to those of (selected) fellow dancers. Performative learning is grounded on mimicry and differentiation, in a dialectic of bodily and visual understanding (see Wacquant 2003, 118) that does not work simply dyadically (from trainer to trainee), but also collectively. The mirror contributes to the constitution of the dance studio as a ”pan-visual” environment where each one sees everybody else, as well as themselves, and everyone knows if, when and who is looking at, or addressing (e.g., instructing), her or another participant. The enhanced visual field the mirror establishes allows for collaborative interaction in a context where, at most times, none of the participants is visually oriented to the other(s). This also means that self-vision co-occurs with alter-vision – an unusual condition in everyday life, yet crucial in training expressive action.

This chapter builds on previous ethnomethodological studies on instructed perception (Goodwin 1994; Nishizaka 2014); instructions, instructed action and understanding in apprenticeship (Lynch and Jordan 1995; Macbeth 2011; Becvar Weddle and Hollan 2010; Hindmarsh, Reynolds and Dunne 2011; Arnold, 2012; Lindwall and Ekström 2012) and in

other training settings (Sanchez Svensson, Luff and Heath 2009; Mondada 2011; Zemel and Koschmann 2014; Arminen, Koskela and Palukka 2014; De Stefani and Gazin 2014); and embodied directives, instructions and corrections in everyday life (Cekaite 2010), routine work (Mondada 2014), sports (Evans and Reynolds 2016; Råman and Haddington 2018; Evans and Lindwall 2020) and dancing (Bassetti 2009a; Keevallik 2010; Broth and Keevallik 2014). This literature largely focuses on instrumental activities. However, dancing is not just a matter of jumping, for instance, from here to there, to avoid a puddle, but of jumping with a given bodily shape, energy, rhythm, and a number of other kinaesthetic properties. Merleau-Ponty refers to the latter as abstract movement (1945) and notes how artistic moving and expressive gestures amplify while continuing ordinary locomotion and grasping gestures (1960, 182). When an aesthetic bodily doing such as dancing – not just skillful action but expressive, performative action meant to be aesthetically appreciated – is concerned, its qualities are more important than its instrumental outcome, and the teleology of action regards engendering a given (kin)aesthetic effect – a percept – in the viewer. This means that whether an end has been accomplished or not cannot be assessed just by looking to the phenomenal world ”outside”, but requires the performing self to be part of such a phenomenal world. Consequently, learning to dance is not just about the visibility and observability of one or more instructors, teachers and fellow dancers, but also – and comparatively – of one’s own performing body. That is the background against which the praxeological validity (Garfinkel 2002; see also Lindwall and Ekström 2012) of instructions is assessed when expressive action is concerned. This study focuses on the instructed production of such an aesthetically appreciable conduct – i.e., on performative teaching and learning – and explores questions of instruct-ability, observability and intersubjectivity.

In what follows, I consider dance classes that involve various levels of advancement and professional companies. In addition to discussing differences, which I mention whenever possible, I focus on common aspects. A relevant issue in instructing performance is that of distinguishing performative action from the surrounding conduct. To pursue that issue, I examine, first, the preparatory work through which participants frame activities and their participation formats. In so doing, I also offer an introductory sketch of the setting. I then consider how and when teachers intervene with instructions such as directives, hints, corrections, and demonstrations for progressively (re)specifying the detailed properties of dance actions. Attention is paid to the different *instructables* of dance action and the multimodal formats that, based on the circumstances, are variously employed for *teaching-to-perform*. Explicit instructions can be produced along with, after, or by interrupting the performance, and can be aimed at prompting or correcting. In the latter case, a teacher needs to identify an action that is correctable (Weeks 1996), and to decide when the benefits of correction merit disturbing the dancing flow. I also focus on what dancers do for *learning-to-perform* and particularly, how they exploit co-participants' actions, which are instructed and instructive at the same time. Their conduct is consulted continually to learn what to do when and for confirming whether one is moving correctly. Finally, I look at *peer-to-peer instructing*, which emerges either unsolicited, or by implicit or explicit request. The mirror features prominently in the organization of all activities considered in this chapter.

Data and methods

This chapter stems from an ethnomethodological ethnography I conducted on the world of Western theatrical dance. Although I encountered many styles, the research primarily focused

on modern and contemporary dance. Data include field notes, video recordings (75 hours), in-depth interviews (25), and documentary material. Empirically, the research took place in Italy, but I also spent three months at the Dance Department of a U.S. university. In Italy, for a period of two years, I observed the everyday activities of two dance companies and two schools, and I participated in a variety of events such as festivals, competitions, fairs, master classes and stage performances all over the country. These allowed me to enter the backstage activities of several national and international companies and academies.

Additionally, for the first time in my life, I took part in dance classes and shows (modern, contemporary and theatre-dance) as a complete member of this social world. Similarly to Sudnow (1978), I went through a learning process myself, engaging in what I call becoming-the-phenomenon-based ethnography (see Bassetti 2021, 25–35). In adhering to the unique adequacy requirement of methods, I adopted an embodied, rather than just embedded, perspective and I maintained a focus on the process of becoming alongside being and belonging.

What follows is grounded on the analysis of video recordings and fieldnotes. Fragments are transcribed following Jefferson's (2004) and Mondada's (2018) conventions; dancing movements are not annotated in detail, what is transcribed – ranging from nothing to only verbal to multimodal conduct, of the teacher, the dancing group or individual practitioners – depends on the local analytical aim and readability concerns. Transcripts and fieldnotes are translated from the original Italian, and employ pseudonyms. Selected ethnographic fieldnotes leverage my own learning experience to better depict self-monitoring and self-correction, or serve to illustrate interactional sequences too long to be reported with transcripts.

Framing dance action

Whatever their level of expertise, dancers need to know which activity is at stake at any moment; that is, a) which ”segment” are they in, e.g., exercising with academic steps, stretching, or choreography, and especially b) which participation framework is operative: attending to the teacher’s demonstration; enacting together with her, whose action is instructive; or performing under her scrutinizing gaze when co-participants’ actions are the only kinds available. Several resources are employed by participants to locally frame and mutually coordinate their situated activities (see Broth and Mondada 2013).

First, by *mentioning* academic steps (e.g., *plié*, *jeté*) and/or conventionally identified parts of the studio (”In the centre”, ”At the barre”, ”From the back”) the teacher provides explicit instructions on what is next. When verbalized between the current and the following segment, names of steps and areas function as markers of upcoming activities, since specific exercises are usually enacted in given areas: ”study sequences” of academic steps in the center or at the barre, diagonals ”from the back”; conversely, in the center one enacts academic steps and choreography, etcetera. Combined with local knowledge about the general structure of a dance class of a given style (and a given instructor), verbalizing steps/ areas is quite enough to provide information pertaining to the issue *sub* a).

Second, proxemics and formations (Kendon 1990) play an important role. The teacher’s *positioning* in the culturally marked space of the room and her orientation with respect to the mirror tacitly instruct dancers on the activity framework. A choreographer who is about to demonstrate or recap a sequence faces the mirror and takes a central position among dancers in the room. Otherwise, the choreographer stays at the borders and looks at

dancers' enactment, either directly or in the mirror. This use of the mirror is not discussed but is simply acted upon (see also Douglah 2020, 30).

Third, the teacher's bodily *posture* is informative. As the choreographer is about to demonstrate, she stands still for a fraction of a second in the starting posture for a given sequence. This move, which I call "isolation" (Bassetti 2009a), distinguishes the instructor's upcoming action from the surrounding ordinary movements, and frames it as dance action. Posture, therefore, not only serves to discriminate between enactment and observation; it also points to an exemplary demonstration, as opposed to a "marked"[1] recap or to the choreographer's co-occurrent non-exemplar bodily conduct, such as gesturing (I return to this in Extract 9.4). Bodily posture tacitly instructs on how to look at the teacher's upcoming action, and it distinguishes instructive action from instructional conduct. Given the subtlety of isolation, the visibility of the teacher to all dancers is crucial.

A fourth implicit marker of the activity at hand consists of playing music. Its absence indicates explicit instructions are about to begin – demonstration, recap, or correction following or interrupting dancers' enactment. In contrast, when music is playing, dancers are required to perform, with varying degrees and types of accompanying instructions by the teacher. The only exception is when a demonstration *of* the "dynamic" of dancing (rhythm of moving) is in place. If present, music also instructs dancers on when to start (Extract 9.1a); otherwise, the teacher must give verbal directives, such as "Go!" (Extract 9.3).

These four resources are sequentially organized in a recurrent format. The instructor first mentions the relevant step/area while dealing with music. Then, often in overlap with continuing talk/music, she takes a given position in the room and assumes a certain bodily

posture. An example of such multimodal preparatory sequences is offered in Extract 9.1a, where the teacher is about to observe dancers.

Extract 9.1a: Dance class, advanced

<EXTRACT 9.1a HERE>

The instructor directs dancers to exercises at the barre (line 1) but still has to provide information about the sequence at hand. She delays offering such information until she finds the relevant music piece. Accordingly, dancers move towards the front barre (near the mirror) but take the time for ”self-grooming” (Broth and Keevallik 2014, 114) (fig. 1, Extract 9.1a). It is only when the teacher utters ”Plié” and gazes away from the phone (line 3) that they take position along the barre (fig. 2, Extract 9.1a). Following this, the instructor starts the recorded music and takes an observational position and posture near the back barre.

Instructing dance action

Different instructions by the teacher or choreographer require different temporal and sequential organizations, multimodal formats, and recipient designs. Whereas their purpose – prompting or correcting – makes a difference, the most relevant variable is constituted by the different instructables, hence correctables, of dancing.

Instructables

There are three main kinds of instructables, concerning *what* to perform *when* – movement and tempo, e.g., ”jeté is on five”, ”développé starts during the turn” – and *how* to perform it,

that is (a) the modal properties of movement, i.e., its kinaesthetic details and dynamic, and (b) how to reach them, how to produce with one's performing body the required visual and (kin)aesthetic effect (where to put strength and energy, what to imagine or think while enacting,[2] etc.). Other dimensions, particularly relevant in rehearsing but which I cannot explore in this limited space, concern how to "dance together" (mutual positions, synchrony, etc., see Bassetti [2021, 69–75]) and interpretation. The following extract illustrates the main components of how to perform.

Extract 9.2: Company rehearsals

1	INS:	**Più netto ¥que¥sto giro¥**
		Sharper this turn
	ins:	¥…¥turns- - - ¥
2		**Pensa proprio ¥alle anche (0.3)¥ alla direzione delle anche**
		Think really to the hips(0.3) to the direction of the hips
		¥turns- - - - - - - -¥
3		**Non andare con le g¥ambe e ne¥anche col busto**
		Do not go with the legs and neither with the chest
		¥Rleg tendu- ¥

This is where the expressive character of dancing is evident, and the praxeological validity of instructions can be appreciated: one can see in the mirror whether her instructed action

(turning by starting movement from the hips) actually engenders the desired outcome (a ”sharp” turn).

Whereas what and when to enact is easily instructable along with dancers' performing, how to enact is only manageable that way to a limited extent, especially when it comes to corrections.

Prompting: along-with instructions

Along-with instructions include prompts, which consists of what I call (a) saying the sequence, (b) counting the tempo, (c) mimicking rhythm – all verbal and vocal instructions, i.e., *prompt talk* (Extract 9.3) – and (d) embodied prompting.

Saying the sequence amounts to naming movements as they unfold by uttering their names (e.g., ”plié”, lines 2, 3) or other indexicals (e.g., ”up”, line 3; ”stretch”, line 4) which work as directives. This is mixed with the enunciation of beat numbers – i.e., counting the tempo – and of vocables (Feld et al. 2004), or ”‘semantically empty' vocalizations” (Tolins 2013), which retain no meaning but a rhythmic one, as they mimic and contribute to conveying the dynamic of proper enactment (e.g., ”bum bum ta”, line 3; ”wha::m”, line 4). Thanks to prosody, prompt talk as a whole serves this purpose.[3]

Extract 9.3: Dance class, basic

1	INS	**Vai! E un do stai cinque sei sette stai**
		Go! And one two stay five six seven stay
2		**e un do stai cinque sei sette >e ↑plié<**
		and one two stay five six seven >and ↑plié<

3 **e un (.) e su (.) e >bum bum ta< plié**

and one (.) and up (.) and >bum bum ta< plié

4 **e stendi e wha::m**

and stretch and wha::m

Embodied prompting accompanies talk and consists, for instance, in moving one's hands/ arms so as to mimic the prescribed movements of the feet/legs, or in making noise (e.g., by clapping, by hitting one's hand one one's thigh) in order to mark the tempo, highlight an accent, initiate a suspension, or emphasize some other element of performing. Whereas the bodily conduct of an observing teacher fully consists in prompting, when she enacts her body behaviour can be described as dance action. Enactment, however, is complemented by talk, which works as a descriptor and prescript of the action. Embodied prompting also can be employed. Extract 9.4 provides an example: the teacher is demonstrating a sequence while dancers imitate her and follow her instructions (fig. 1); at a point, she partially abandons dance action in order to use her right arm for emphasizing the hip position characterizing the movement she is enacting (called "inch"). She does so both gesturally and sonically, tapping hand on hip (fig. 2, see arrow). Dancers clearly recognize this as "highlighting" (Goodwin 1994): nobody imitates the gesture. The teacher then moves her arm back to the initial posture for the "inch" movement and briefly stays – i.e., isolates – prior to repeating the movement and proceeding with dance action (line 2).

Extract 9.4: Dance class, intermediate

<EXTRACT 9.4 HERE>

Making this feature of the movement conspicuous does not only amount to make it visually available via enactment, but also to heighten the observability of such kinesthetic property while remaining bodily engaged in dance action. The highlighted property thus becomes performatively salient: visible and noticeable to be produced (see the difference between dancers' postures, hips and legs in particular, in fig. 1 vis-a-vis fig. 2.)

Correcting: (re)specifying kin/aesthetic properties

Corrections can be produced along with, after, or by interrupting dancers' performance. Along-with corrections are verbal (and gestural) actions produced in the interstices of prompt talk, as an intra-text, and mainly concern what and when to enact (Extract 9.5, line 2).

Extract 9.5: Dance class, intermediate

1	INS	**e fouetté du tre plié (.) e sei**
		and fouetté two three plié (.) and six
2		**>sei Sa↑ra: il cambio di ginocchia è sei<**
		>Six Sa↑ra: the change of knees is six<
3		**sette e un du tre ↑su plié e giro**
		seven and on two three ↑up plié and turn

Also corrections on how to move can be offered along with enacting them, provided that the modal properties at stake are easily conveyable. This happens, for instance, with the stable characteristics of academic steps,[4] such as the openness of the knee in a *retiré*.

Extract 9.6: Dance class, intermediate

1	INS	**Vai! (0.3) Sette otto (.) destra dietro apri**
		Go! (0.3) Seven eight (.) right behind open
2		**apri il ginocchio >di più sotto il sede:re<**
		open the knee >more below the bu:tt<
3		**e passa la punta avanti >guardate che sia apertissimo<**
		and move the tip ahead >see[ensure]that it's very opened<
		[transcription continues]
7		**Ancora! E su (.) coupé retiré apri il ginocchio Fede!**
		Again! And up (.) coupé retiré open the knee Fede!
8		**Apri apri (.) e passa in avanti: e sfiora::**
		Open open (.) and moves ahea:d and lightly touches::
9		**fino al coupé (.) >rimane apertissimo< e dita-collo**
		until the coupé (.) >stays super opened< and fingers-instep
10		**un e due (.) e sali apri sostieni sotto:**
		on and to (.) and raise open sustain below:
11		**>Cinzia sostieni avanti< Apri di più Sara:!**
		>Cinzia sustain in front< Open more Sara:!
12		**Apri di più Franci! Poi passo e**
		Open more Franci! Then step and

The issue is one of recipient design (Sacks 1992, Vol. 2, 438), and concerns the degree to which the properties of a given kinaesthetic configuration are (expected to be) known to participants. When the configuration is conventional and institutionalized, its properties get described and prescribed repeatedly during dance classes (and in textbooks, video-tutorials, etc.), so that, provided the recipient has a minimal level of experience, verbal instructions are most often enough. ”Open more” is perfectly understandable for intermediate level dancers practicing a *retiré* sequence.[5] The teacher mixes directives with individual corrections (”open the knee Fede!”, line 7; lines 11, 12) and collective ones (see talk within >…< in lines 2 and 3).

Conversely, the modal characteristics of less-codified or simply less-known movement configurations need to be conveyed rather than glossed or brought to the attention of dancers. This entails an activity framework and a multimodal format which can only with difficulty occur with the practitioners’ performance. Frequently, ”how” correctables call for interrupting the performance or postponing the correction as they require demonstration[6] – embodied instructions – and/or the manipulation of the dancer’s body, i.e., haptic, body-to-body instructions.[7] There is another reason why instructions of this kind come after dancers’ enactment. As each movement configuration holds manifold properties – ”abstract” moving is a syncretic, multilayered form of action –, these properties are specified progressively, based on the correctables the teacher identifies in the dancers’ performance. Extract 9.1b, continuing from Extract 9.1a, offers an example: the teacher is observing dancers enacting, when she interrupts them and the music (line 8) to specify the properties of movement. Accordingly, dancers interrupt their performance (line 9) and direct attention to the

choreographer (looking at her either directly or in the mirror) as soon as she takes a demonstration position, posture and gaze direction (line 10, fig. 4).

Extract 9.1b: Dance class, advanced

<EXTRACT 9.1b HERE>

Following this, the teacher brings about the correction: verbally, via demonstration, and with accompanying gestures (e.g., line 17, fig. 5, see circle). This also includes an instance of what I call *dichotomous differential demonstration*, an instructional format that is ubiquitous in the dance studio (Bassetti 2009a) and sport settings (Evans and Reynolds 2016). It consists in " bodily quoting" (Keevallik 2010) the incorrect version of the movement as previously enacted by dancers (line 18), and contrast that with the exemplar demonstration of the correct version (line 19). By comparison, dancers more easily recognize the minute details of rhythmical movement – another way to do highlighting. Indeed, in the considered example, although some dancers (D3, D4 and D5) started to practice the movement along with the teacher's demonstration (lines 17–19), other dancers will only attempt to adjust their enactment at the end of the differential demonstration.

When is it the case that a correctable leads to an interruption rather than postponement? First, when the improper performance gets repeated by one or more dancers. This mostly concerns how-corrections, and its importance increases with the increasing level of advancement. Whereas repeated proper enactment is the way through which a dancer embodies a given movement (and globally, a way of moving), which can then be performed " automatically",[8] repeated incorrect execution bears the risk of solidifying it: making the error

automatic or habitual. Second, interruptions are frequent when the mistake jeopardizes the exercize itself. This has mostly to do with study sequences, and may regard what to perform when, or how to enact it. In the former case, the issue is quite simple: if I do not recall the sequence of required actions, I cannot practice such actions. On the other hand, when a property is deemed *constitutive* of a movement, by not applying the property I do not practice that movement. When such circumstances emerge as widespread among dancers, the teacher may interrupt them to recap the sequence or, as in Extract 9.1b, to (re)specify a property. In short, interrupting emerges when correctable actions *jeopardize embodiment* directly, or as the expected offspring of practicing. On all other occasions, depending on the multimodal format the correctable requires, corrections are made along-with, in the midst of prompting, or ex-post.

Co-participants' instructive actions

Fellow dancers' conduct, visually available in the mirror, is also instructive, to see what to do when, and to comparatively assess one's performance, possibly leading to self-correction.

Copying

Dancers' actions instruct co-participants on what to do in the first instance, and/or when to do it, thereby helping each to build their own actions. For example, if one participant fails to hear a directive, or is unsure about "where" (at which point of a choreography) to start, they may consult the others' positioning and posture. More often, dancers' conduct is used to learn about "nexts" in enacting: what to perform next and when exactly to do that.

In Extract 9.7, a group of dancers is practicing a piece of choreography the teacher has introduced that day; they enact on music while she observes (fig. 1). Knowing a turn was the next movement to be performed but being unsure about when to produce it, a dancer (D1) turns her head – a movement not prescribed by the choreography – to look at co-participants in the mirror (fig. 2); she freezes for a fraction of second (fig. 3), and starts turning when she notices the other dancers doing so, thereby producing the movement in slight delay (notice the difference between D1 and D2 in fig. 4).

Extract 9.7: Dance class, intermediate

<EXTRACT 9.7 HERE>

In Extract 9.8, a dancer (D2) is unsure about what to enact, and ”copies” co-participants by looking at them in the mirror. When the sequence requires to turn one’s back to the mirror, D2 changes her head and gaze orientation to be able to keep seeing other dancers. She does so by turning her head to the right at the beginning of the turning movement (fig. 1), and then by looking left after having turned herself (figs. 2–3).

Extract 9.8. Company class

<EXTRACT 9.8 HERE>

Also notice how D2 gets back in synchrony by speeding up the movement which brings the arms from a V to a II position (fig. 2). Conversely, another dancer (D1), because he is early with the turn (fig. 1), stays still a little longer with his arms in the II position (fig. 2) before

enacting the *plié* (leg movement) in synch with the others (fig. 3). This is an example of self-initiated correction.

Self-monitoring and self-initiated correction

Self-monitoring and self-initiated correction are fundamental tools in performative learning, which is characterized by reflection-in-action (Schön 1983; see also Bassetti 2009b, who talks of reflexivity-in-action). This is evidenced by several aspects. First, individual corrections can work as collectively.

> [The teacher] asks us to practice independently and moves around providing individual corrections. These clearly work collectively as well. This is visible from the participants' bodies, mine included, that modify their posture and performance almost in unison any time she offers instructions to one of us. (Fieldnote 9.1: Dance class, basic)

Any instruction – verbal or not, thanks to the mirror – has the potential to heighten dancers' attention towards a particular element of enactment, making that element performatively salient. Participants are brought to check themselves in that respect, to see if they are making the same "mistake" or can improve their performance.

Second, based on self-monitoring and comparison, dancers themselves notice correctables in their enactment and ask for instructions.

> Federica asks the teacher for further instructions about a movement of the arms. The teacher demonstrates it while describing its properties: arms are ”soft”, including hands and fingers, yet the movement is ample, far reaching and … palms must be visible! To me, this is an epiphany. I finally understand why I did not like my arms in the mirror, why they were not producing the same visual effect as those of the teacher. The ”secret” is in the visible palms, hence the position of the wrists. (Fieldnote 9.2: Dance class, basic)

Once again, individual instructions also guide the action of other dancers. Notice, moreover, how the way to generate the viewer's impression sits at the core of participants' attention and effort with their embodied performance. To paraphrase Liberman (2013, 48), the cogency of the instruction is grounded in the contingencies of performing.[9]

Third, fellow dancers' instructed actions, easily available in the mirror, are themselves instructive, and may tacitly influence performance even when the teacher is not enacting those actions. It is not only a matter of *what* they are performing *when*, it is also – comparatively– a question of the extent to which they move properly. In fact, to maximise the instructive potential of co-dancers' actions, participants may rearrange their line-up with respect to the mirror (front or back row) based on situated competence.

> The choreographer asks if we did our homework (she refers to a sequence she introduced in the previous session). Embarrassed silence fills the room. When I nod, Fiona [a dancer and the choreographer's assistant], who was absent last time, asks me

to switch with her and ”go in front”. (Fieldnote 9.3: Dance class, intermediate-advanced)

Even beyond such rearrangements, dancers can select a situated model from among the surrounding moving bodies. Although proximity plays a role, favouring centrally positioned or ”nearby” dancers, practitioners can choose, at any given moment, the best-performing body with which to mimic and to (try to) match their own movements. Although within each class group there are participants who get recurrently selected as models, as they are considered better dancers, situated modeling constantly perturbs such hierarchies. Embodied experiences with choreographic roles also can be relevant, particularly in professional settings.

Peer-to-peer instructing

The enhanced visual field of the dance studio allows co-participants to offer explicit instructions to one another, thereby supporting a collaborative component. These instructions can be solicited by a dancer – self-initiating correction – or the choreographer, or can be made available in the absence of any request.

Unsolicited instructions usually emerge out of noticing another dancer struggling with a movement configuration or sequence, for which evidently – from a member’s point of view – she currently lacks understanding of what to do and/or how to achieve the required effect. This is visible in the dancing itself, but may be made salient by the behavior of the struggling dancer, who may use the interstices between collective performances to repeatedly attempt a given configuration. A struggling dancer may also accompany her interstitial practicing with

a peculiar kind of complaining. This is usually expressed non-verbally (e.g., grumbling) – although verbal complaining sometimes contributes – often apparently self-directed. Similar to self-talk and response cries (Goffman 1978), it is a display whose purpose is to defend one's face (I'm aware I'm not performing well),[10] thereby managing embarrassment, but which also works as an implicit plea addressed to everyone present and no one in particular. It is an open call –a "floor cue" (Goffman 1978, 804)– for somebody to perform *and* to communicate how to reach such a result. The one who can better determine who that might be, is the dancer who volunteers to do it. That is why there is no pre-selected recipient. When this kind of floor cue is present, we can talk of *implicitly solicited* instructions.

In Extract 9.9, while the teacher is dealing with music, a dancer (D1, partially visible in the images) practices a piece of the choreography; this attracts the attention of other dancers, particularly D2, D4 (quadrant 1) and later D5 and D3 (quadrants 2 and 3 respectively). Yet, only D2 and D4 explicitly instruct D1. As soon as she notices D1 who then stops moving, D2 suggests to her the next movement in the sequence by embodied and verbal means (quadrant 2). The movement is then enacted also by D5 (quadrants 3–4), who, however, proceeds to perform the sequence on her own, with its original dynamic. D4, instead, just marks the movement (see the difference between her and D2 or D5 in quadrant 3) and, as D1 does the same, starts enacting the next movement with slower dynamic (quadrant 4, see arrow). A peer-to-peer instructing sequence has started, as recognized also by D2, who abandons her posture and observes for a while (quadrant 4), then starts practicing on her own (quadrants 5 onward).

D4 goes on instructing with a demonstration and minimal verbal action. She systematically waits for D1's execution of a given movement before producing the next one

(e.g., quadrants 6, 7 and 9). As they proceed, the two dancers become more and more synchronized, yet D4's enactment always anticipates D1's execution. D4 never stops looking at D1 through the mirror (notice, e.g., the "weird" head orientation in exiting the turn that closes the sequence, quadrant 10). D4's instructional conduct is also visible from her gesturing, which does not belong to the choreography (quadrants 5–6), just like the teacher's gesture in Extract 9.4.

Extract 9.9: Dance class, intermediate

<EXTRACT 9.9 HERE>

Peer-to-peer instructing is present from the intermediate level onwards, and significantly increases during rehearsals. Expertise, self-confidence and members' interest in the overall quality of the performative artwork play a role. Formal and informal hierarchies, particularly within professional companies, also have an impact (mostly through some participants' refraining from coaching when they think it could be taken as offensive). Though subject to other contingencies, what brings a dancer to self-select for providing instructions is their capability to properly perform and their grasp on how to do so. Notice that this is not always the case for the choreographer, who, having created and demonstrated a sequence, perhaps months earlier, does not rehearse it as much as dancers do, and while aiming for a particular aesthetic effect may not know precisely how the dancers can practically reach it:

> Emma makes a mistake in her *pas de deux* with Ann. […] They repeat several times, with many instructions by the choreographer and some interventions also by Vivian,

> who does the same *pas de deux* in Emma's role but with Sara. Vivian's contribution ends up being crucial for solving Emma's problem with that movement. (Fieldnote 9.4: Company rehearsals)

In short, many dancers may notice that a co-participant is struggling, and many may have good reasons for helping, but not all of them provide instructions. As evidenced in Extract 9.9, a second determining factor alongside situated competence is proximity: as dancers aim to bring about this interaction without disrupting the flow of the collective activity, they do so within its interstices; therefore, the more the two (or three) are close to each other, the easier it is.

Similarly, when peer-to-peer coaching is *explicitly solicited* by a dancer and she thus has to select a recipient, who is near by is quite relevant, granting the opportunity to bring about interaction interstitially. However, choreographic role distribution, if present, guides the selection as an index of embodied experience:

> Ann keeps having a problem in enacting the lift with Emma. I see her grimacing in pain. […] Ann addresses Vivian, who enacts the same role as Ann but lifts Emily: "I keep burning my instep doing the lift, do you?". Vivian shakes her head, catches Emily's gaze and starts performing the lift with her while verbally illustrating to Ann what she is doing with her body. (Fieldnote 9.5: Company rehearsals)

Choreographic parts guide selection also when the choreographer is the one requesting a dancer to coach another. These role-related solicitations are less likely to be regarded by

members as establishing a general hierarchy among dancers, but are instead oriented to solving the practical matter of how to reach the desired aesthetic effect.

Discussion and conclusion

In the augmented interactional space of the dance studio, almost anything can work as an instruction and participants constantly exploit the co-present bodies as instructive resources (Table 9.1). Practitioners' actions are not just explicitly instructed by the teacher, and at times by fellow dancers, but also by the developing gestalt contexture in which these actions occur, and which includes co-participants' instructed conduct. Visibility and observability are pivotal for performative learning.

Table 9.1: Instructions and instructive actions in the dance studio

<TABLE 9.1 HERE>

Instructions and instructive actions are evident, first, in the multimodal preparatory work of the teacher or choreographer, whose visible action is fundamental, alongside talk, to guide participants (Extract 9.1a). The use of space (positioning), artifacts (music), and body (posture) tacitly instructs and organizes the participation framework at hand and ”isolates” instructive dance performance from the surrounding instructional conduct. In discussing ” embodied preparatory sequences” to instrumental action in instructional interaction, Arnold (2012, 282–83) focuses on gesturing. In describing the preparatory work before demonstration in a crochet class, Lindwall and Ekström (2012, 31) mention talk and

positioning. Bodily posture is likely to characterize pre-sequences to actions that, like dancing, require full body engagement and are meant for aesthetic appreciation.

Clearly, the visual availability of the teacher's action and demonstration is also crucial, particularly for exemplifying how the dancers' actions should appear. However, visible exemplary action is not enough to instruct performance. The *qualia* (Peirce 1997) building up to the required aesthetic effect are to be made conspicuous, highlighted as constitutive of a given movement (Extracts 9.2, 9.4, 9.1b, Fieldnote 9.2). From this perspective, the mirror not only enhances the visibility of the teacher, whose positioning and conduct when demonstrating or enacting moves maximizes precisely this potential, but it also makes the dancers visible to the instructor, allowing her to spot correctables in their actions – even when she too is enacting – and thereby orienting her in the progressive specification of movement properties. Kin/aesthetic details emerge as salient out of the contingencies of the evolving context, and are then objectivated through corrections.

These detailed instructive actions are produced with multimodal formats and temporal organizations which are differently designed depending on the different degrees of instruct-ability that different instructables – what, when or how to perform – present to differently experienced practitioners. Whereas what to perform when is verbally manageable along with dancers' enactment (Extract 9.5), this is only sometimes the case with how-corrections (Extract 9.6). More often, such instruction requires demonstration, even at the expert level and concerning choreography (Extract 9.2) as well as with elementary sequences (Extract 9.1b). The different degree of instruct-ability that the "how" dimension holds, also reflects how co-participants' exploit the situated production of one another's visible actions. When copying, dancers are interested in what and/or when to perform, and the observability

of co-dancers suffices, whatever the level of expertise (Extracts 9.7, 9.8). When how to perform is at stake, comparison in action – hence co-visibility and co-observability – are crucial.

When expressive activities are practiced, members must learn how to produce a visible impression for their audiences. The novice archeologist featuring in Goodwin's discussion of professional vision (1994), has to learn to take a measure in the correct spot, yet the graciousness or sharpness of the measuring gesture are irrelevant. She does not need to attend to the aesthetic figure of her own embodied action; instead, the primary figure is the phenomenal world of the soil horizon in the archeological dig; she does not need reflexivity-in-action (Bassetti, 2009b).[11] In performative learning, on the contrary, self-monitoring is fundamental, and the co-observability, hence comparability, of instructive and instructed actions is paramount. The mirror allows dancers to collectively attend the teacher's visible conduct alongside the instructed and possibly instructive action by co-practitioners. It also enables comparison during one's own enactment. This way, the dancers notice how their performance fall short of the desired aesthetic outcome, thereby opening them to sources of improvement. It is not only the instructor who spots correctables, but also the dancers, who can self-correct (Fieldnote 9.1) and ask for further instructions (Fieldnote 9.2).

Indeed, dancers continuously produce instructed actions which are available as objects of aesthetic evaluation to all participants, including themselves, and which may be instructive for fellow practitioners. Dancers are constantly monitored, monitoring and self-monitoring, all at once. The mirror works as a technology of intersubjectivity, allowing the simultaneous presence of self and other in its visual space. This is what enables performative learning, or to put it differently, the instruct-ability of kin/aesthetic action. Moreover, the

spatial and performative organization of the studio fosters collaboration by establishing an interactional context where the focus of attention can easily switch – and continuously does switch – from centralized to distributed, and from self- to alter-vision. Peer-to-peer instructing emerges out of noticing another participant struggling with a movement or a sequence (Extract 9.9), or out of grasping a floor cue in her visible conduct. As in everyday interaction (Kendrick and Drew 2016), the recruitment of assistance can be based on ”trouble alerts” or ”embodied displays of trouble”, alongside explicit requests or reports of difficulties (Fieldnote 9.5).

Overall, the instructed production of kin/aesthetic performance works systematically: anyone may provide instructions, although the teacher occupies a special place; anyone's action may be instructive, as long as observable; anyone may notice correctables, and self-initiated correction via comparison is always an available mechanism. Instructed actions are more than responses to explicit instructions, they configure as progressive adjustments of participants' actions that respond to emerging saliencies in the developing phenomenal field – which includes the acting self.

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[1] To ”mark” is to enact without fully dancing, to perform movement in a synecdochic manner, deprived of some of its properties. While saving energy, marking is used to recall, and ”serves a variety of communicative functions for the group and a variety of cognitive functions for the individual” (Saura and Kirsh 2010, 18).

[2] On the relevance and role of the imaginative dimension in dance training, see Bassetti 2009b. Becvar Weddle and Hollan (2010, 140) discuss the use of ”embodied conceptual metaphor” in dental hygiene training.

[3] On the rhythmical talk employed to teach rhythmical moving, see Bassetti and Bottazzi (2015, 463–65).

[4] Despite emerging out of classical ballet, academic steps are practiced and mentioned in other styles too.

[5] Lindwall and Ekström (2012, 28) observe: ”For someone who already knows how to crochet, the directive ‘make ten chain stitches’ might not be that much different from ‘can you pass the salt’.”

[6] Dancers may sketch movements by imitating the demonstrating teacher, yet their attention in such situations is mainly devoted to observation rather than enactment.

[7] Bateson and Mead (1942, 84–87) and Tarr (2008, 495) report on this practice in teaching, respectively, Balinese dance and Alexander Technique. Becvar Weddle and Hollan (2010, 128–34) talk of ”molding”. In Western theatrical dance, this is a sort of ”ultima ratio” for having the dancer understanding what is asked from him/her.

[8] This is how members define actions that have been embodied and do no more require proactive attention to be executed.

[9] Liberman’s (2004, 2015) work on Tibetan monks’ public philosophical debating – which, not by chance, he describes as ”logic made to dance” (2015) – is more generally relevant to the study of the learn-ability and instruct-ability of performative action, including concerted formal reasoning. Liberman compellingly shows how debaters’ quickly alternated enunciations are both instructing the co-participant’s contribution, thereby setting a rhythm, and instructed by such established rhythm.

[10] Considering self-talk by children, Goffman notices: ”An adult attempting to learn to skate might be equally self-talkative” (1978, 798).

[11] This is not to say that aesthetics has no place in scientific practices. However, even beyond the fact that, compared to other occupations, scientists are only limitedly allowed – socially – to explicitly care about and discuss aesthetic issues, the latter concern the world they study and the forms in which they represent it (e.g., Lynch and Edgerton, 1988); it does not concern, on the contrary, the aesthetic dimension of the scientist’s body or bodily action.

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