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Deconstructing pedagogies of African cultural heritage dances: Reflections, rationalities, and practices of dance teachers in central Uganda

Alfdaniels Mivule Basibye Mabingo

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Dance Studies, the University of Auckland, 2018.
Abstract

This thesis provides a critical examination of how dance teachers rationalize pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in varied nonacademic environments in central Uganda. The study examined the reflections and practices of eight cultural heritage dance teachers to reveal how application of these pedagogies is a method of thought and inquiry – knowing and thinking, framework of ‘transformance’ – becoming, system of cultural practice – being, and means of creating and expression – doing and embodying. The study was guided by the following key question: How do the dance teachers rationalize pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in various nonacademic environments in central Uganda? Grounded in the Ubuntu worldview and the theory of constructivism, and using a phenomenological qualitative research inquiry, this study was carried out over a period of eight months. The research data was gathered through semi-structured phenomenological interviews, storytelling sessions, and participant and nonparticipant observations. The findings showed that as an idiom of thought, pedagogy facilitates complex epistemological links between the dance teachers, learners, the content knowledge and skills of the dances, and the communities of dance practice in which it is applied. The rationalization of pedagogy by the dance teachers value the individual learners as knowledgeable others, celebrate their abilities to construct meanings from embodied and reflective experiences, embrace the community as an epistemological resource, and integrate the diverse content knowledge of the dance traditions. Individual dance teachers claim agency in processes of locating and deconstructing the dance episteme as thinkers, doers, collaborators, knowers, and inquirers. Pedagogy as a system of knowledge production draws on the multiplicity of dance traditions, individual talents, and cultural identities, and mediates the reciprocal interplay between individuality and communality. The study also explored how the dance teachers situate their pedagogies in the contemporary local phenomena, evolving dance traditions, complex ethnic demography, and emerging institutional frameworks such as schools, dance troupes, and universities. This inquiry sought to reveals the complexity and rational depth of pedagogic thought and its applications in and implications for cultural heritage dances in order to expand perspectives and enrich existing discourses on dance education policy, theory, pedagogy, research, practice, and curriculum development.
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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my late Dad, Mathias Banaalekaki Tulabiddaawo. You raised me to live with a clear sense of a well-defined destiny. A destiny that seeks to create a better world that humanity has always imagined. Through the light of this destiny I now walk!
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** All images were acquired with the consent of cultural heritage dance teachers who were the research participants in this inquiry.
Chapter One: Introduction and background to the study

1.1. Introduction

This thesis provides a critical examination of how the individual dance teachers who constituted the research participants of this inquiry rationalise pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in varied environments central Uganda, East Africa. The inquiry deconstructed pedagogy as a system of inquiry – thinking and knowing, a framework of ‘transomance’ – becoming, a method of cultural practice – being, and means of creation and expression – doing and embodying. Using the Ubuntu worldview (see 2.1.1) and the theory of constructivism as frameworks of analysis, I analyse how the dance teachers had agency as knowers, thinkers, constructivists, doers, inquirers, and collaborators in pedagogic processes of cultural heritage dances in central Uganda.

Communities in Uganda have continued to engage in cultural heritage dance practices as forms of cultural identity, individual expression, and artistic innovations. Cultural heritage dances are part of knowledge paradigms in different communities in Uganda to where the dance teachers live. With more than 40 different ethnicities, the country boasts a wealth of dance practices that reflect and celebrate people’s social, cultural, religious, ritualistic, historical, political, celebratory, and economic ways of life.

Some of the cultural heritage dance forms include rite of passage dances, children’s dances, wedding dances, funeral dances, ceremonial dances, harvest dances, royal dances, war dances, and courtship dances. Examples of the dances include Baakisimba, Runyege, Owaro, Larakaraka, Kizino, Kitaguriro, Ding, Ding, Maggunju, Mbagga, Imbalu, Bwola, Ntogoro, among others. Practices in cultural heritage dance education existed during the pre-colonial period. Some patterns of dance performance, choreography, and education
have continued to evolve in postcolonial communities in central Uganda (Mabingo, 2015b, Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2003, 2005).

Currently, the contexts of dance practice in central Uganda have expanded to include schools, where dances are mostly taught as a co-curricular activity; non-governmental organisations, where dance is used as a tool to address community based challenges such as conflict and illiteracy; charity organisations such as orphanages, where dances are applied as a therapeutic tool; political activities, where dances are applied as an instrument of political mobilisation; and dance troupes, where cultural heritage dances are re-arranged for local and international performances (Ainomugisha, 2015). This expansion has allowed individual dance teachers to apply pedagogic ideas in different environments. Since cultural heritage dances embrace and “value individual variations and improvisation” (Demerson, 2013, p. 100), I examined how the individual dance teachers rationalize pedagogies as individuals working on varied local communities.

1.2. Deconstructing the statement problem

African dances and the bodies of African dancers have been homogenized, exoticized, and characterized as physical objects devoid of deeply rooted intellectual foundations (Gottschild, 2003). Commonly, in teaching and learning processes of these dances in academic environments, emphasis is laid on the physical attributes that students seek to gain such as getting low, becoming physically fit, learning how to shake the bums, and exploring polyrhythms (Mills, 1997). The process of acquiring these dances is considered to be instinctive and imitation due to this obsessive focus on the physicality and exotic nature of the African dancer’s body. As a result of these reductionist perceptions, the dances, dancers, and processes through which African communities transmit and create
dance knowledge is delegitimized and the bearers of this knowledge dehumanized. The consequence of this pattern of perception is that African dances have been subjected and made subservient to Euro-American pedagogic paradigms in local African and Western academies (Ekadu-Ereu, 2012; Green, 2011; Mabingo, 2015c; McCarthy-Brown, 2009; Monroe, 2011). This neglect of the epistemology and ontology of pedagogic frameworks of African dances and the agency that individual teachers and learners claim in advancing this knowledge has denied students, teachers, researcher, theorists, and a wide range of dance practitioners from tapping into the wealth of knowledge and skills that the dances offer.

Drawing on Bruner’s (1996) views that “pedagogy inevitably communicates a conception of the learning process and the learner. Pedagogy is never innocent. It is a medium that carries its own message” (p. 63), I examine pedagogies of the dances as complex phenomena and processes through which knowledge and skills are developed, rationalized, shared, and negotiated. Examination of the agency of the individual dance teachers is predicated on the notion that “the world [including African communities] consists of multiple individual realities influenced by contexts” (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006, p. 26). The research reveals the voices of the local dance teachers on how they engage thought to rationalize pedagogy as a system of inquiry – thinking and knowing, a framework of ‘transfomance’ – becoming, a method of cultural practice – being, and means of creation and expression – doing and embodying undergirded by Ubuntu philosophy.
1.3. Contextualizing the problem statement: Perceived rational deficit in African dances

My inquiry into cultural heritage dance pedagogy was triggered by the autoethnographic experiences I have encountered as a cultural heritage dance performer, teacher, researcher, writer, and scholar in Uganda, the U.S., Europe, and New Zealand (see Section 6.4). Commonly, the questions and comments that people have shared with me about African dances have tended to characterise these dances as monolithic practices without intellectual underpinning. Although these autoethnographic encounters have been varied and span my entire artistic, social, and academic life, there are some that are still fresh in my memory, which I will share for purposes of this analysis. In these following sections, I discuss some of my autoethnographic experiences in social and academic environments. I explore how they nourished the intellectual curiosity behind this inquiry.

1.3.1. Why the hell are you studying dance?

On a visit to my ancestral village, Mbuuikiro, I met Mukasa, a family friend and member of the village. In a conversation we had by the roadside about my studies, Mukasa said:

“Mzee yatugamba waganda kusoma Makerere. Nti era osoma ddiguli mubya mazina”, he remarked.
“Mzee mutuufu byennasoma era nnaakamala degree. Kituufu birimu okuzina, naye ate tusoma ebintu bingi ebyetaaga okulowooza, okusoma n’okuwandiika. Ebyamazina birimu ebyafaayo, ebyobuwangwa, ennyimba naamakulu gaazo, neebintu ebirala bingi”, I responded.

Translation
“Your dad told us that you are pursuing a degree in dance at Makerere University”, he remarked.
“But what do you exactly study? I thought dance is just moving. Does that require someone to pursue a university degree in it? Does studying dance include reading and writing?” Mukasa further asked.

“My dad is right, I answered. I am pursuing a degree in dance. It is true that it included practical dancing, but it also covers a lot of theorisation, writing, and reading. The subject encompasses history, culture, music, and many more”, I added.

This narrative from the dialogue that I had with Mukasa is one of many in which my status as a dance scholar at a university was questioned. It discloses a reductionist perception that is constructed around dance as a discipline of academic demesne. Although education is highly encouraged in Uganda where only 0.4% of the entire population access tertiary education (Businge, n.d), dance as an academic subject at the tertiary level still attracts condescending viewpoints.

Mukasa’s observations reflect a common pattern in discourses about dance education, which perceive dance as just a physical activity in institutions of higher learning. In relation to this, La Rocco (2007) has also reported that at Harvard university, “while students there can now earn a minor in dance, there are no professorial dance positions and no classes on theory; courses focus on the physical side of dance” (n.p).

1.3.2. Is studying dance that relevant?

Fresh from a dance performance at a cocktail party at Sheraton hotel, Kampala, on a Friday evening, I met one of the guests at the function. Glad in a black suit and holding a glass of water, he walked to me for a chat:

“Where are you from?” he asked.
“Makerere University”, I answered.
“How come you are here dancing? Is it your profession?” he further inquired.
“No, I am a dance student. I am pursuing a bachelor’s degree in dance at Makerere University. We normally get opportunities to perform”, I replied.
“Really? You are studying dance at Makerere University? Why do you study dancing when everybody can dance? Why did you choose dance other than courses such as law, public administration, and mass communication,
history, political science? How do they even teach dance?” He continued to inquire.
“I have seen people who have never been to school doing dances perfectly in communities, weddings, on streets. I never thought study dance is that serious”, he further remarked.

This excerpt questions the place of dance in academia. The conversation shows how dance is seen as just a community activity, for which rationalisation is limited to embodied community practices. As a student of dance who had already interacted with the pedagogies of dance, I felt that these comments lacked deeper appreciation of the complex rational foundations that underlie the African dances. The remark “I have seen people who have never been to school dance perfectly” shows that engaging dance scholarship at a university level is seen as an endeavour not worth academic pursuance.

Studies and writings on dance education in Uganda reveal that academic subjects that constitute the music, dance, and drama programmes in schools and universities in Uganda are commonly referred to as musiru ddala ddala, which translates as ‘he or she is very stupid’ (Pribyl, 2016; Pribyl & Johnstone, 2011; Johnstone, 2010; Wasswa, 2007). These perceptions by local Ugandans can be linked to Nicholls’s (1988) view that “The perception of societies in which art is practiced for life's sake is that the artistic forms are reduced and treated as instinctive (organic) behaviours, part of the people's natural condition, which is devoid of any artistic merit” (p. 149).

1.3.3. Africans are innate dancers

It was a Friday night in the summer of 2015. At around 11:30 pm, I entered a dance club for social dancing. After about 40 minutes of dancing to hip-hop songs, other dancers in my vicinity suddenly drew their attention to me. Many of them stopped dancing, created a circle around me, looked at me, and started clapping for me as I was dancing. Because I had experienced similar incidents in the U.S. and being used to cyphers, I just continued dancing. When I retreated away from the cypher, a woman told me, “You Africans know how to dance. Rhythm and dance is in your body. Whenever
I see an African I see dance in their body. The way you dance looks so natural”.
“What do you mean by natural?” I asked.
“Whenever an ‘African’ dances, I see a body full of life and music. You Africans have dance in your bodies”, she replied.

This anecdote adds to a litany of incidents I have encountered as a black African dancer in social settings in Europe, the U.S., and New Zealand. The reflection discloses implicit objectification of the bodies of dancers of African origin and homogenisation of African dance practices (Mabingo, 2012). The characterisation represented in the statements, “Rhythm and dance is in your body” and “Whenever I see an African I see dance in their body”, represents perception of African dances as corporeal action devoid of rationality.

Personal and unsettling as these reflections may appear, they catalysed my inner search for the true meaning of what pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in African communities mean. This curiosity has caused me to reflect on the following questions: 1) How do these pedagogies weave cultural philosophies in environments where the dances are practiced? 2) How are the pedagogies of cultural heritage dances domains of knowledge that related to the people, experience, and environments of practice?

The aforementioned marginalising views have shrouded general dance practices. In the article titled Mind and Body at Yale, Claudia La Rocco (2007) observed that “dance scholars consistently cite challenges in being taken seriously by colleagues and administrators”. These scholars, as La Rocco (2017) further noted, reported that dance is seen merely as an enjoyable break from rigorous courses, as ornament instead of structure. What is more, La Rocco (2017) added, many dance professionals working within academia reinforce the prejudice that there is nothing intellectual about dance, by focusing too much on movements and paying less attention to the philosophical and theoretical depth of the dances. According to Mills (1997), American and Asian students in her classes said they
enrolled for “African dance because they have been told that it will help them get a sense of being grounded …and experience a sense of free-flowing movement; they just want to move” (1997, p. 150).

1.3.4. Writing about African dances as instinctive forms

The reductionist perspectives of dances from African cultures also have roots in some discourses on African knowledge systems in the literature. In these literatures, African epistemologies are portrayed as just activities with inadequate intellectual agency in individual practitioners. Nicholls (1988) concurred that:

In general, the scholars who have written about African dances have often been unable to conceptualise the dances beyond their perceived notions of art in African culture, analysed and discussed African art, especially dance, from an etic perspective in which Western standards of form and ideas about art dictated what the visual perceiving system revealed to them. (p. 152)

Perspectives in the literature lack extended analyses of African dance practices beyond etic interpretations of corporeal action. As Nicholls (1988) has further stated, “Analysis by dance and anthropological scholars that African dance is primitive and its dancers rely on no technique but are capable of masterful demonstrations in the use of their bodies and capable of demonstrating purposeful and creative movement has undermined the very discussion of African aesthetics” (pp. 153-154).

The perspectives that have characterised African dances as less academic have exasperated the Cartesian mind-body dichotomy. Macauley (2010) commented about this continued objectification of dances from African communities:

The clichéd view of “African dance” goes like this: It uses the pelvis all the time and in a much livelier way than the dance of any other continent; the dancers wear wonderfully bright costumes; there’s a lot of drumming (the word “polyrhythms” may be added here); the costumes are bright; and of course, it’s all perfectly marvelous (New York Times, May 18, 2010).
These characterisations stem from inadequacies in theorisation and research on dances from African communities. Nzewi (1999) has observed that even within academia, a number of teachers, researchers, instructors and analysts have often assumed that a systematic approach to teaching African dances and music is nonexistent simply because there is no unnecessarily verbal theorisation or written tradition by native communities.

My decision to carry out this scholarly research was motivated by the desire to critique the above-mentioned intellectual biases and unveil the complex philosophical and theoretical bases of cultural heritage dance pedagogies. As a dance practitioner, I have always felt alienated and devalued by these reductionist experiences. Hence, carrying out this research for me was a moral cause, an intellectual responsibility, and a theoretical obligation. I examined pedagogies as a process that entailed what Shuman (1987) has referred to as “pedagogic reasoning” (p. 20), to “dissolve what the dance field views as a false distinction between practice and theory” (La Rocco, 2007, n.p).

1.4. The research questions

My pursuit of this inquiry was in part inspired by Gray’s (1989) observation that “Because the critical issue in discerning which features of dance are central to the dance learning process, and vice versa, it is more important to study the actual processes of dance teaching and learning rather than their respective merits and contents” (p. 1). From this perspective, I designed the research questions to illuminate the intricate pedagogic rationalisation of pedagogies by the dance teachers. The main question was: How do the individual dance teachers rationalise pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in varied environments in central Uganda? To expand this line of inquiry to elicit relevant information, I pursued the following additional questions:
1. How did the dance teachers acquire content knowledge and skills of the dances?
2. How do the dance teachers select material for their dance classes, prepare for dance classes, assess and provide feedback to learners?
3. How do the dance teachers use music as a pedagogic mechanism in teaching cultural heritage dances?
4. How do the dance teachers negotiate teaching diverse cultural heritage dances to varied populations and environments in central Uganda?
5. How does application of the pedagogies of cultural heritage dances relate to and derive from the complex contexts and environments in central Uganda?

1.5. Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are divided into two categories: a) main objectives, and b) other objectives.

1.5.1. Main objective

1. To investigate how the dance teachers rationalise pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in varied environments in central Uganda.

1.5.2. Other objectives

1. To explore how the dance teachers acquire content knowledge of the cultural heritage dances that they teach.
2. To examine how the individual dance teachers prepare for dance classes, develop teaching plans, mediate teaching of movements, songs and drum rhythms, teach background information of the dances, provide feedback to learners, and assess and provide feedback to learners.
3. To investigate how the dance teachers use music as a teaching mechanism that is inseparable from dance.

4. To examine how the dance teachers facilitate teaching diverse cultural heritage dances to diverse populations in varied environments in central Uganda.

5. To explore how application of pedagogies of cultural heritage dances relates to the complex contexts and environments in central Uganda.

1.6. Significance of the study

Research in cultural heritage Ugandan dance is still very limited. Specifically, studies focusing on how teaching and learning practices of cultural heritage dance draw from cultural heritage philosophies are inadequate. This research adds to the existing scholarly body of knowledge about dance education and pedagogy. Hence, the inquiry acts as resource that dance researchers, writers, choreographers, instructors, and educators can use in teaching, learning, researching, writing, and creating dances.

Dance teacher training in Uganda is still inadequate. The country does not have any teacher training institutions, resources and programmes to prepare dance teachers. Although Makerere University and Kyambogo university have programs in music and dance, focus if put on performance, composition and theory and no emphasis is put on dance education. This thesis offers views that policy formulators and implementers in the education ministry, academic institutions, and nongovernmental organisations can use to develop programmes in dance education and pedagogy in local communities.

Interest in dances from nonwestern traditions is increasing in academia and community practice. This is in response to calls for diversification of curricula and pedagogy. The pedagogic thoughts, theories and ideas presented in this thesis offer
foundational knowledge that provides new pedagogic insights the academy can use to pluralise curricula and diversify teaching methods.

1.7. Definition of key terms

The following section defines how key terms have been operationalised in the thesis:

1.7.1. Rationalisation of pedagogy

Application of embodied, reflective and thought processes in delivering knowledge and skills of the dances, such as movements, stories, songs and drum rhythms among others.

1.7.2. Internative identity

In this study, concept ‘internative’ is derived from my feeling of home/less/ness as a result of my extensive experience in different cultural environments, which I refer to as nativities. Internative identity represents the different overlapping identities that I carry into or assume in each environment that I inhabit.

1.7.3. Cultural heritage dance

Ugandan dance traditions that are created, celebrated, and performed by communities, and which continue to be altered as a result of ever evolving social and cultural realities.

1.7.4. Transformance

The cultural, intellectual and artistic changes, which the individual dance teachers experienced as a result of exposure to and participation in a diversity of dances.

1.7.5. African dances
In this analysis, I use African dances instead of ‘African dance’ to demonstrate that the dances from African cultures are heterogeneous, not monolithic. The concept ‘African dance’ creates an impression that African dances are uniform. This is misleading and fails to represent the diversity of the dance forms in varied communities in Africa.

1.7.6. Dance pedagogies

There are instances in the thesis where I use dance pedagogies instead of pedagogy. The aim of this application is to reveal that teaching methods of cultural heritage dances are complex and unique and cannot be rolled into a singular concept called pedagogy.

1.8. Dancing into pedagogic rationalities: Overview of the thesis

This thesis is composed of eight chapters, which provide a critical examination of the key fieldwork discoveries. The study explores the contextual foundations, methodological frameworks, philosophical considerations, literature and theoretical orientations, and critical analyses of pedagogic applications by the dance teachers.

The first chapter provides the contextual background of the research, exploring the place of cultural heritage dance practices in central Uganda. The discussion also draws on my autoethnographic experiences to problematise the research topic. I present the research questions and study objectives used as the lens of inquiry and analysis. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the significance of the study to dance research, scholarship, policy, and practice and definition of operational terms.

Chapter Two examines the philosophy of Ubuntu, illuminating how it provides an epistemological and ontological framework of analysis for this study. In particular, an illumination is made of how Ubuntu defines the ways through which individuals and communities reciprocally interact and produce knowledge. The discussion also covers how
Ubuntu participates in mediating deconstruction of abstract and embodied dance knowledge and skills through experiential, reflective, and embodied teaching and learning processes.

Within Chapter Three, a review of the literature is conducted to expound on scholarly and theoretical viewpoints about dance education and pedagogy. I draw on a wider body of perspectives on dance education and pedagogy, assessment and provision of feedback, pedagogies of dance from communities in Africa, and teachers’ teaching competences to locate the themes of the study within existing scholarly discourses. The discussion examines the literary gaps that the inquiry seeks to fill.

Chapter Four explores my internative positionality in the fieldwork. I explain how my academic, professional, cultural, and social exposure spanning experiences in the U.S, Europe, Australia, Uganda, New Zealand, the Caribbean, and a number of countries in Africa, constructed my internative fieldwork identity. I discuss how my internative identity placed me outside the dual identities of either outsider or insider researcher. Drawing on this formulation, I critically examine how I applied the theory of constructivism, philosophy of Ubuntu, and the phenomenological research paradigm to elicit the embodied, reflective, and lived experiences of the dance teachers. The discussion also covers how I used storytelling, interviews, participant and nonparticipant observations to gather data. The chapter further explores methods of inductive data analysis, the limitations that emerged during the fieldwork, and how I addressed them.

Chapter Five accords the dance teachers an active voice in the thesis by revealing their biographical information. The discussion provides a detailed trail of each dance teacher’s journey into the world of dance. The discussion discloses the complex experiences and depth of knowledge of each dance teacher. Since the study was carried out
using a phenomenological lens, these individual stories unveil the heterogeneity of the lived, embodied, and rationalised pedagogic experiences of the dance teachers.

Drawing on the idea of pedagogic content knowledge, Chapter Six discusses the complex learning experiences of the dance teachers. The discussion covers how the learning experiences of the dance teachers nurtured them into pedagogues. Environments such as home, village communities, schools, dance troupes and university are examined as contexts in which the dance teachers learned the dances as individuals operating within communities of practices. The discussion also explains how reflective and inquisitorial observation, storytelling sessions, practical experimentation, and exploratory performances immersed research participants in the distinct skills and knowledge of diverse dances from different cultures. The chapter explains the environments in which the dance teachers explored knowledge and skills of diverse cultural heritage dances, and how this enhanced their pedagogic content knowledge of the dances.

Chapter Seven examines the complex ways through which the dance teachers rationalise pedagogies of the dances in different environments in central Uganda. The discussion explores how the pedagogies are frameworks of transformance, systems of inquiry, methods of cultural practice, and means of creation and expression. Analyses are made of how these preparatory activities transform pedagogic thoughts from abstract into concrete ideas. I explain how the dance teachers use cultural games, singing and drumming, and structured movements exercises to initiate learners into teaching and learning processes. The chapter further examines how practical demonstrations, verbal explanations and remarks, reflective imagery, storytelling, peer modeling, and vocalised rhythms and sounds form the dance teachers’s pedagogic rationalisation. The discussion also covers how the dance teachers use verbal remarks, relational practical demonstrations and peer
assessment to facilitate aid teaching and learning. I also consider how the dance teachers use drum rhythms, dance songs, and vocal sounds as cultural heritage dance teaching aids. The chapter concludes with a critical examination of how the dance teachers teach diverse dances from different cultures to learners in varied environments, and the dilemmas they encounter in this cross-cultural education.

Chapter Eight offers concluding considerations of the thesis. The key themes that emerged from the research findings are summarised, illuminating the key discoveries of the study. The discussion also covers the key questions that future researchers can pursue, which are beyond the purview of this current inquiry. The chapter concludes with the implications of this study for policy, practice, research, and education as interrelated domains in different sectors in the economy.

This thesis is a culmination of my autoethnographic experiences, literary discourses, and empirical findings from fieldwork. Sitting at the intersection of constructivism theory, the phenomenological lens of inquiry, and Ubuntu worldview, this study examines the complexities of rationalising cultural heritage dance pedagogies in central Uganda. Pedagogy is investigated as a system of thought and inquiry, a means of creation and expression, a method of cultural practice, and a framework of transformance. By unveiling these complex pedagogic practices, I seek to repudiate the objectifying notions that have characterised dance practices in African cultures as domains without profound intellectual manifestations.
Chapter Two: Ubuntu worldview and cultural heritage dance practices

2.1. Introduction

Let the West have its technology and Asia its Mysticism! Africa’s gift to world culture must be in the realm of human relationship (Kaunda, 1967, p. 22).

This excerpt from Kenneth Kaunda reflects that African communities have philosophies that define human interaction and civilisational progress. Rooted in postcolonial thought, Kaunda’s viewpoint is that although African systems of knowledge and ways of intellectual organisation were disrupted during colonialism, African communities retained philosophical thoughts that were essential to human realities. These thought systems engrain loci of self-discovery, self-affirmation, and collective thought and identity (Taylor, Charles, Anthony, Jürgen, Steven, Michael, & Susan, 1994).

Kaunda’s view echoes the viewpoint that experiences, civilisations and knowledges are complex across cultures (Bhabha, 1994; Eisenstadt, 2000; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1981; wa Thiong’o, 1986). This inquiry is founded on the premise that the pedagogies of cultural heritage dances are anchored in thought that is rooted in their tradition, civilisation, reality, and experience. This section examines Ubuntu as a philosophical frame to deconstruct pedagogy as a process that sits in between individuality and communality. Various African scholars have described Ubuntu as a component of a broader body of African philosophy (Bell, 2002; English & Kalumba, 1996; Gyekye, 1987; Lajul, 2014; Mbiti, 1969; Mabovula, 2011), which illuminates an Afrocentric worldview (Asante, 1988, 1990, 1991).

2.2. Ubuntu: Between individuality and communality

Ubuntu has long been held as a philosophy that defines and reflects ways of knowing, being, doing, thinking, and relating within African communities (Botha, 2005; Louw,
It is both a descriptive and prescriptive term that describes human existence as being-with-others, and the relational dynamics that sustain these individual connections (Cillier, 2008; Gade, 2012; van Niekerk, 2007).

From a Heideggerian perspective, the philosophy of Ubuntu seems to address the question: What makes it possible for me to have an awareness of the fact that I exist? In the Ubuntu view, the answer to this question lies in what Heidegger has referred to as existentials. Existentials are not a result of “an abstraction from an experience; rather they are assumed in an experience by an individual and makes that experience possible” (cited in Gelven, 1970, p. 8) and comprehensible. In pedagogic practices, the existential state may be interrogated as a framework of agency that enables interplay between individuality and communality.

As a system of thought, Ubuntu defines individual and collective reciprocal agency. Venter (2004) has warned that celebration of the philosophy of Ubuntu in African communities is not monolithic. Individuals and communities have different ways of celebrating the philosophy of Ubuntu depending on their cultural realities, environments and experiences. If Ubuntu serves to show “the extent that all people have a philosophy that guides the way they live, their perceptions of others, and decisions and choices that they make about aspects of their lives”, as Letseka (2000, p. 179) has observed, how is this consideration reflected in the ways individual dance teachers rationalise pedagogies? The complex pedagogies can be understood from the perspective of Ubuntu because Ugandan dance practices celebrate the fluidity and reciprocity between diverse individualities in the communities of practices. Hence, in the context of this study, interrogating how the philosophy of Ubuntu positions the dance teachers as experiential and reflective agents in teaching and learning processes is necessary.
In advancing the case of Ubuntu as an African way of thinking, Louw (2002) has revealed that the idea of particularity is key in mediating how an individual interacts with other people in different forms of social engagements. He has noted that Ubuntu means a human being becomes a human being through the otherness of fellow human beings. I experienced this aspect of particularity through the creative dance and music encounters that I had as a child growing up in my native village, Mbuukiro, on the shores of Lake Victoria in central Uganda. As children, every time we walked down and up the hill to fetch water or collect firewood for home consumption, we would engage in creating music instruments, sing songs, and navigate movements to go with the music. We were always in a group of more than 5 people. One of the most popular music that we created was kazoo music. Each one of us would make his own kazoo from pawpaw leaf stalks. Then each person would play their instrument and aim to create unique tunes that fitted into the tunes of all other player. We added movements to the music created. This practice became a daily occurrence. Playing in groups brought a unique characteristic to the ensemble because each player created a different tune that blend into other tunes.

The different individualities that each one of us brought to this creative synthesis created collective artistic pieces of work. Each individual’s creativity added a unique character and quality to the overall communal artistic enterprise. Particularity in this case defined the individual in consideration of other individuals. Dance was a medium of creation and expression, system of inquiring into embodied realities, method of cultural practice, and means of becoming and belonging. Louw’s viewpoint and my childhood experience raise questions regarding how the individualities (I am) reciprocally weave into
communities of dance practices (we are). What does this mean to for dance, the teacher and learner?

Louw (2000) further observed that the interaction between an individual and the community, as a basis of Ubuntu thinking, is at variance with Descartes’s Cartesian model, which believes that an individual could exist on his or her own, hence the expression “I think, therefore I am”. The ontology of Ubuntu, Louw has noted, is reflected in what he refers to as shosholoza (work as one), which is a Zulu concept that reflects a web of reciprocal relations that shifts an individual “from solitary to solidarity, from independence to interdependence, from individuality vis-à-vis community to individuality a la community” (Louw, 2002, p. 15).

Ubuntu situates individuals in “collective existence and intersubjectivity, serving as the basis of supportiveness, cooperation, collaboration and solidarity” (Khoza, 2005, p. 226). It is within the realm of communality that an individual is capable of self-realisation as a person. Individual progress happens in the community where cooperation, inclusion and contribution of others lead him or her to understand and bring fulfillment to their own personality (Botha, 2005; Metz, 2007a; Mnyaka, 2005; Nafukho, 2006).

Hence, the rationality that sustains the reciprocity between the individual and the community is: I am because I belong, I participate, I learn, and I share (Murithi, 2006). Mbiti (1970) emphasised this interaction in Ubuntu by observing that whatever “happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual” (p. 108). In this dialogic communitarianism (Christians, 2004), there is “ontological interdependence” (Praeg, 2008), where the complexities of personalities correspond to a sense of being and the multiplicity of relationships in which an individual participates (Bangura, 2005; Gyekye, 1987).
These discourses, which seem to emphasise forms of social interaction, can be used to analyse how such narratives are reflected in pedagogic practices. In the context of cultural heritage dance pedagogies, issues relating to the interplay between individuality and communality can be examined. How does interactivity between individuality and community seep into pedagogy as a system of thinking and knowing, framework of becoming, means of creating and expression, and method of cultural practice?

In line with dance practices as an embodied body of knowledge and skills, McGann (2002) wrote, “I dance (with you), therefore I am” (p. 19). McGann’s expression relates directly to cultural heritage dance education and pedagogy. Since African dances are reflective and embodied narratives and socially and communally articulated realities, a cultural heritage dance teacher may pursue the viewpoint that since knowing, doing, and dancing is the only way in which he or she relates to the world, the self must reflect the totality of the way in which they exist (Gelven, 1970, p. 12). In terms of cultural heritage dance education, I was curious to re-contextualise McGann’s dictum to examine whether rationalisation of pedagogies by the dance teachers reflects, “I teach (you) dance, therefore I am, and since we learn dance therefore we are”. I also drew on Gergen (1985) explanation that dance “is an artifact of communal interchange, which is concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves)” (p. 266) to analyse how the dance teachers explore pedagogy as a rationalised system of knowledge production.

Some scholars have argued that Ubuntu is also an epistemological framework in which knowledge is created, shared, organised, and negotiated. Bangura (2005) has coined the term Ubuntugogy to refer to the “art and science of teaching and learning undergirded by humanity towards others” (p. 13). In other words, Ubuntugogy is a way of seeking to
know, an inquiry and a method for knowing, investigating, and even making acquaintance with others (Mudimbe, 1986, 1988, 2008). The ways and systems of knowing in Ubuntugogy are conceptualised as circular, organic and collectivist, rather than linear, materialistic and individualistic (Swanson, 2007). Bangura’s theory of Ubuntugogy does not delve into detail about how pedagogic frameworks can be developed that integrate its ethos. Ubuntugogy is founded on the ability of individuals to recognise the diversities of others in a learning environment, construct meanings and explore various ways of knowing and doing depending on the discursive and subjective interrelationship between identity, body, ideology, knowledge and contexts (Swanson, 2007).

This thesis engages Ubuntu as an alternative to the Kantian definition of enlightenment. Kant defined enlightenment as “a man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity, where immaturity meant the inability to use one’s understanding without guidance from another” (cited in Praeg, 2008, p. 372). I argue that Ubuntu thought enables individuals to construct their realities and experiences from the complex forms of interactions with other people and their general environment of existence. I trace this form of constructivism and individual rationality by examining pedagogic practices of the dance teachers as forms of knowing, thinking, doing, being and becoming.

2.3. Individuality and communality in cultural heritage dance practices

Historically, cultural heritage music and dances have been key to the day-to-day life of the African people (Aniakor, 1997; Gonye, 2013; Gorer, 1994; Hanna, 1977, 1974, 1965a, 1965b; Onwuekwe, 2009). In different communities, dances embody and exude complex meanings relating to the experiences of the people (Aguilar, 1997). Regardless of their age, gender, and economic and social status, individuals participate in the dance
experiences as dancers, spectators, drummers, singers, and storytellers.


In Africa, the queen dances, the king dances, the farmer dances, the philosopher dances, chief of staff dances, Mandela dances, fetishist dances, judge dances, minister dances, emperor dances, pharaoh dances. So, dance is an important component of African culture, and to understand dance is to understand the African people. (n.p.)

These diverse individuals that Tierou talks about operate within a cobweb of community and dance traditions. There is interplay between the individual dancer and the community of dancers, which reflects the Ubuntu worldview (see Section 2.1.1). Although Tierou’s analysis highlights the centrality of individuality in dance practices, it does not explore how pedagogy as a domain of dance practice bridges between the individual learner or teacher to the community of practitioners.

Dance illuminates the criticality of an individual in community practices. According to Green (1994), the interaction between different members of communities connects them to one another. In this convergence of embodied realities, people “translate everyday experiences into movements” (pp. 13-14). The experiences that emerge during dance activities project the individuals into the collective creative, performative, and artistic body politic, and vice versa. The question that stems from this consideration is: How do individual dance teachers rationalise pedagogies as a method of inquiry, framework of transformance, system of cultural practice, and means of creation and expression that celebrates individuality and communality?

Although dances from African cultures have been characterised as monolithic – carrying similar characteristics such as improvisation, segmentation of movements, orientation towards the earth, use of drum as accompaniment (see also Segy, 1953), and
emphasis on communality (Green, 1996; Welsh-Asante, 1985), these dances are as complex and diverse as the communities that create, perform and celebrate them. Primus (1996) underlined the heterogeneity of African dances: “African dance ranges from the subtlest and most lyric to the movement of the most dynamic, from the most Sophisticated choreographed presentations to the simplest… it varies from the slowest and stateliest of court dances to those which move so rapidly the eye cannot hope to register all that is happening” (p. 4). Hence, the inquiry set out to examine the rationalisation of pedagogy as a complex process that involves teachers as individuals and as participants in the communities of practice.

In pursuing the subject of pedagogy in this study, I drew on Kealiinohokomoku’s (1974) argument that some communities have dance cultures, not just dances. According to her, a dance culture is “an entire configuration rather than just a performance in the implicit as well as the explicit aspects of the dance and its reasons for being: the entire conception of the dance within the larger culture both on a diachronic basis of the several parts occurring at the same time” (p. 99). I also drew on the philosophy of Ubuntu to examine pedagogy as a configuration that includes systems of thinking and knowing, frameworks of becoming, methods of cultural practice, and means of creation and expression.

2.4. Music as dance and dance as music: Locating the Ubuntu connection

The inseparability of music and dance in artistic experiences and practices in African communities has been widely covered by scholars, researchers, writers and ethnomusicologists (Blacking 1977; Clarke, 1999; Felföldi, 2001; Gholson, 2004; Mason, 2012; Naveda & Leman, 2009; Sanger, 1989). Kaeplepler (1996) wrote that “the visual
dimensions of music are usually referred to as “dance” – in ordinary speech as well as by musicologists and ethnomusicologists unprepared to deal with the importance of human movement…“music” and “dance” are cognitive categories applied to specially marked sound and movement systems within specific cultural traditions” (p. 133). Music provides individuals with multiple pathways to collective artistic voices. This thesis argues that one of the ways through which dance knowledge is pedagogically rationalised is music – the songs, drum rhythms, and vocal sounds.

Kartomi (2004) introduced the terms dancer-musicians and musician-dancers to demonstrate the interconnectedness between music and dance. She describes dancer-musicians as “artists who are primarily dancers, but also use their bodies as percussive and vocal instruments to produce body percussive music while performing body movements” (p. 1). For musician-dancers, she refers “to drum musicians who also use their bodies as percussive and vocal instruments between bouts of frame drum playing and body movement” (p. 1). In Kartoni’s view, music and dance can be constructed simultaneously through participatory engagement. If music and dance are deeply intertwined in African artistic experiences, how then is this synergy addressed in pedagogy?

Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2015) theorised that dance is simply music seen and not heard. She used Benesh notation to reveal the dialogic interaction between music and dance movements in Baakisimba dance. In her analysis of Baakisimba dance performances and interviews with dancers, Nannyonga-Tamusuza demonstrated that “rather than having a mere accompanying role and offering a supportive background, Baakisimba musicians are in musical conversation with dancers and vice versa” (p. 93). She concluded that the drums, drummers, singers, music sound, and dancers are all integrated in one unit of performance in Baakisimba dance. The interdependence between a dancer and musician is underlined
by the expression, “I am because you are and because you are therefore I am”.

In ethnographic research carried out by Mans (2002) comparing the performance of children’s song and dance in native and contemporary Namibian education, she found that “children are likely to be introduced to music and dance at an early age through routine exposure [and] being integrated into almost all social events” (p. 73). Her research findings revealed that music and movements in cultural heritage dances such as Oudano, omukwenga, and ondjongo allow children to independently create, perform and acquire skills in morality, character, economic activities, and values and norms of culture. Mans’ account supports Nzewi’s (1999) consideration that in African communities, children undergo the three stages of pulse sense, rhythm sense and general musicianship in preparation for collective artistic activities such as dances.

Underscoring the inseparability of music and dance in African practices, Nketia (1965) cited dances from Ghana to elaborate the interrelations of African music and dance. He illustrated this intersection between music and dance using the example of the Eseni dance of the Ijaw of Nigeria, in which the movements are fixed to the rhythms of a song and repeated afresh with every repetition of the song.

The nature of complementarity between music and dance mirrors the essence of interdependence between individuals and ideas in cultural heritage dance traditions. Cultural heritage dances derive their meaning from music. A dancer needs a musician and vice versa. If the basis of Ubuntu philosophy is ‘I am because we are, and because we are therefore I am’, it can be deduced that the Ubuntu worldview is at the intersection of musicality, rhythm and movement. Hence, how dance teachers engage rhythm and musicality can be examined as an aspect of pedagogic rationalisation.
2.5. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the philosophy of Ubuntu and examined how it can be used as a framework to analyse cultural heritage dance practices. I have argued that the Ubuntu worldview defines the tone, essence, and nature of the interplay between individuals and the community, which extends into dance practices. The reciprocity between individuality and communality varies from one community and individual to another. The tensions and harmonies formed as a result of the interplay are also means of knowledge production.

The dances are part of the local sociocultural fabric and allow individuals to experience realities in embodied corporeal activities. Whether during rituals, ceremonies, competitions, rites, and worship, the dances place an individual at the center of communal forms of interaction. The practice of dance also integrates music as an inseparable domain of knowledge. This furthers the reciprocal interface between individuals within communities of practice in the process of rationalizing pedagogies.

The Ubuntu worldview is a highly complex, not monolithic philosophy. This is more so for dance pedagogies because they carry specific unique qualities. I considered Ubuntu as a thought underlying the individual and collective practice and a philosophical driver of pedagogy as a knowledge domain informed by local theory, context, communality, rationality, and individuality.
Chapter Three: Deconstructing a diversity of scholarly narratives on dance education: A literature review

3.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to the research topic. Since dance education is a distinct body of knowledge (Hanna, 1999), I engaged literary perspectives on dance education, illuminating the gaps in these narratives, which this inquiry seeks to address.

This chapter covers five sections: The first section reviews general literature on dance in formal education, in particular examining how researchers, teachers and writers theorise the place of dance in education environments. This section is followed by an examination of discourses of dance pedagogy. The literature on cultural heritage dance pedagogy, critical dance pedagogy, and culturally responsive dance pedagogy is reviewed next. Following this is a critical examination of perspectives on pedagogies of African dance in educational contexts inside and outside Africa. Fourth, scholarly viewpoints on assessment and feedback as key aspects in application of pedagogy are explored. Lastly, the chapter provides a review of prevailing voices in the literature on dance teachers’ teaching competencies and how these relate to pedagogy. The review seeks to illuminate how the existing literature relates to or reveals the absence of pedagogic perspectives, voices, and reflections on dance education and pedagogic practices in African communities. Specifically, my attention was drawn to identifying the links between these viewpoints and ideas about dance teachers’ rationalisation of dance pedagogies. I consider how the current literature frames pedagogies as a site where “formal identities, thematic continuities, translation of concepts, and polemic interchanges” (Foucault, 1972, pp. 126-127) between teachers and learners are rationalised.
3.2. Dance in education

The process of reviewing literature begun with critical reflection on the following general questions that Shulman (1987) has posed on teaching and learning: “What are the sources of knowledge base for teaching? What are the processes for pedagogic reasoning and action? In what ways can these sources be conceptualised?” (p. 1). For me, diving into literary discourses provided a point of departure from which I conceptualized ideas on teaching and learning from dance education perspective. In the process of reviewing literature, I noticed that scholarly perspectives have generally focused on dance education in academic settings (Ashley, 2010; Buck, 2003, 2006; Mabingo, 2015c, 2015d; Rowe & Buck, 2013; Rowe & Martin, 2014; You, 2009), private studios (Gilbert, 1992; Langley & Buck, 2011) and learning dance informally in community settings (Eddy, 2002; Khoury, Martin, 2013; Rowe, 2015). Although this literature covers dance contexts outside Uganda, it still provides perspectives that are relevant for this inquiry.

Literature on dance education within the context of formal education covers a wide range of themes. Buck (2003) has observed that the concepts dance (Shapiro, 1998), dance education (Kraus, Chapman-Hilsendger & Dixon, 1991), dance in education (Smith-Autard, 1994), dance as education (Fowler, 1977), and dance and education (Hanna, 1999) have been used interchangeably to refer to teaching and learning processes of dance. Adshead (1981) explained that teaching dance is vital in illuminating the coherent collection of theoretical ideas, objects, and experiences of people.

Green (1999) reported that the initial aim of dance education is to achieve normative corporeal behaviour. Training in dance techniques provides a means for self-surveillance; space where teachers can check students and students can check their bodies and movements and whets their technical practicality. Teachers and students put emphasis
on refinement of body alignment, posture, physical outlook, artistic demeanor, and movement precision, perfection, and agility through intense, repetitive physical exercises and preparations (Koff, 2005). As such studies look at these elements through the prism of the Western pedagogic canon, addressing the question of which elements constitute the pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in central Uganda is vital.

The perception of dance education has evolved from being a form of “disembodied knowing to embodied and theoretical knowing” (Shapiro, 1995, p. 15). New ideas such as Rudolf Laban’s creative dance education (Adshead, 1981, Bloomfield, 1988; Smith-Autard, 1994) have expanded the methods that teachers use to teach dance. Dance education is considered a space where dance learners can draw on dance concepts, models, and schemas to test, question, experiment, and develop agency in the construction of knowledge and experiences (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000; Koff & Warner, 2001; Schwandt, 2000). As some dance education ideas have been incorporated in higher education in Uganda (Mabingo, 2015a), this inquiry investigated how local dance teachers approach pedagogies in environments with varied dance education influences.

To expand the rationalisation of dance education as a body of knowledge in formal education, teachers have developed and applied teaching paradigms that emphasise the processes of creating, performing and appreciating dance as an intricate art form (Preston-Dunlop, 1980; Smith Autard, 1994). In particular, Smith-Autard’s (1994, 2004) midway model, which bridges professional dance training (focus on the product) and dance education as a process, has gained prominence as a blueprint for learner-centred and product and process-oriented dance education. The midway model stresses that throughout “the learning process, the learner is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative,
and constructing meaning” (AEE, n.d, cited in Estes, 2004, p. 142). Smith-Autard’s model shows that teaching dance is an intricate process that weaves content, environment, intention, and culture. Building on this consideration, I examined the extent to which the pedagogies that the dance teachers use expand knowing, being, thinking, doing and becoming for individuals within communities of practice.

3.3. Dance pedagogy

In my review of the literature, I also analysed perspectives on pedagogic knowledge (Shulman, 1986a, 1986b, 1987) in dance education. I examined how dance pedagogies offer “ways of talking, showing, enacting, thinking, becoming, knowing, doing, relating or otherwise representing ideas so that the unknowing can come to know, those without understanding can comprehend and discern, and the unskilled can become adept” (Shulman, 1987, p. 7). I engaged literature on pedagogy to establish how dance is “that body of understanding and skill, of dispositions and values, of character and performance that together underlie the capacity to teach” (Shulman & Sykes, 1986, p. 5). The review raised the following questions: 1) what does pedagogy mean to dance teachers in central Uganda? 2) How does the Ubuntu worldview influence pedagogies of cultural heritage dances? 3) How does pedagogy act as a system of thinking and knowing, means of creation and expression, method of cultural practice, and framework of transformance?

Davies (1994) noted that pedagogy in dance learning and teaching environments “involves a vision (theory, set of beliefs) about society, human nature, knowledge and production, in relation to educational ends, with terms, concepts, materials, and rules inserted as to the practical and mundane means of their realisation” (p. 26), acknowledging pedagogy as a domain that combines thought and action. My study has drawn on this
premise to examine how the pedagogies that the dance teachers use integrate thought, action, and philosophy.

Underscoring the centrality of pedagogy in cultivating experiences, Burnidge (2012) mentioned that “it is not what we teach, the content of dance, but how we teach, the methods we use, that are of utmost importance in creating change toward more constructive, more contemporary pedagogical environment in dance” (p. 46). In other words, pedagogies are spaces where “meanings are absorbed, recognized, understood, confirmed, taken further, and sometimes dismissed” (Simon, 1992, p. 59). To expand these analyses, I sought to investigate how pedagogic rationalisation processes encompass “forms of conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria” (Bernstein, 1999, p. 259), and how the cultural heritage dance teachers “transform their content knowledge into pedagogical formats suited to the characteristics of the learners and settings in which they teach” (Fortin, 1993, p. 38).

3.3.1. Traditional pedagogy

The definition and application of traditional pedagogy in teaching and learning processes of dance has been widely discussed (Coe, 2003; Enghauser, 2007; Gray, 1989; Kerr-Berry, Clement & Risner, 2008). According to this pedagogic approach, teaching methods focus on schooling for obedience, conformity, and reproduction with regard to what students receive from the teacher (Green, 1999; Radell, Adame, Cole, & Blumenkehl, 2011). Teachers emphasise externally provided instruction for kinesthetic adherence. This teacher-centred approach to teaching and learning reflects Freire’s (1973, 1974) idea of the banking model. The banking model considers the learner’s body as an empty vessel and docile entity (Foucault, 1984a), which has to be filled with content knowledge. If
traditional pedagogy focuses on conformity to a sole teacher through kinesthetic conformity, what kind of pedagogic applications do cultural heritage dance teachers in central Uganda use?

Melchior (2011) has equated traditional pedagogy to “transmission teaching, which is focused on product or delivering knowledge – the teacher has the knowledge and passes it on to the students, who passively receive it” (p. 125). Traditional dance pedagogy elevates the teacher as an authority in teaching and learning environments and the learner as an imitational follower and depository of movement knowledge. Examining the literature on traditional dance pedagogy raises the following question: Do the pedagogies used by cultural heritage dance teachers reflect traditional pedagogy?

Some teachers who apply traditional methods to teaching dance have been reported to also use dance mirrors as a teaching aid. The mirror acts as a tool that intercedes between the learner and his or her corporeal movement outlook (Radell, Adame & Cole, 2002; 2004). Dearborn and Ross (2006) carried out research on the impact of learning dance combinations with and without the mirror. Their findings revealed that “the participants found learning the combinations easier without the mirror, but the information was also more easily lost over the week. In contrast, the mirror learners did not do as well initially, but did improve their performance one week later” (p. 114). In environments like central Uganda, where mirrors are not traditionally used to teach and learn dance, what pedagogic mechanisms do cultural heritage dance teachers apply to support learners’ acquisition of dance knowledge and skills?
3.3.2. Critical dance pedagogy

Dance scholars have noted that as the diversity of students, dance genres, and teachers has grown in academia (Dye, 2009b; McGreevy-Nichols, & Scheff, 2000), dance teachers have pursued new ways of applying dance education pedagogy (Hanna, 1999; Buck, 2003). Critical pedagogy disrupts the power structures constructed around gender, race, and social classes. The reforms in dance pedagogy aim to centre teaching so that learners are empowered to partake in teaching and learning processes. These empowering pedagogies engage with dance as a domain of reflective, experiential, embodied, conceptual, cognitive, and constructivist knowledge and skills (Antilla, 2008; Davidson, 2004; Hahn, 2008; Jackson, 1983; Kazan, 2005; Pakes, 2003).

Critical dance pedagogy views the learner from the perspective of what Bruner (1996) has called the knowledgeable other. In this framework, the teaching and learning “process might allow for the emergence of multiple pedagogues, or contexts in which the roles of dancer and trainer are interchangeable, so that many points of view might contribute to the improvement of how a specific dance is executed” (Rowe, 2008, p. 15). Teaching and learning is cyclical, not linear; sources of knowledge and skills are multiple, not singular and nourishing experiences are multidimensional, not one-dimensional. This inquiry looked at the complexities of pedagogic applications, emphasising the place of the teacher, the learner, content knowledge, and thought.

Critical dance pedagogies are grounded in sociocultural learning theories of constructivism (Bronfrenbrenner, 1994; Gardner, 1983; Bruner 1960; 1961; Dewey 1938; Freire, 1970/1996; 1998; Kolb, 1984; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Piaget, 1961; 1964; 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). These theories acknowledge pedagogy as a location where knowledge is embodied, expressed, represented, experienced, negotiated, and constructed. Pedagogies
also “emphasize beginning where students are and moving forward with what students unearth about what they want to know, to learn, in conversation with the teacher’s prerogative for content to be covered” (Risner, 2008, p. 96). From the standpoint of cultural heritage dances, this inquiry pursued how pedagogies connect the teacher and learner in the process of exploring content knowledge.

Burnidge (2012) has stated that she applies critical dance pedagogy by integrating practical dancing, discussing, writing, sensing and creating in teaching processes, discussing the what, why, and how with students, creating opportunities for group, partner, and individual explorations and facilitating discussions during class activities to explore ways of empowering students according to their gender, race, and cultural background. Additionally, to make this pedagogy more meaningful, she asks students open-ended questions such as: “What if you tried . . .?”; “Does that change your experience?”; “What if you allowed . . .?”; “How does this inform . . .?”; “What are your goals for this exercise?”; and “What is the purpose of this exercise?”. Such interactive and inclusive approaches invite learners to be at the centre of teaching and learning.

Within the same framework of critical pedagogy, dance teachers have developed and applied somatic dance pedagogies to teach dance (Eddy, 2002, 2006; Green, 1999, 2002, 2003; Kazan, 2005; Shapiro, 1998). This pedagogy emphasizes the connection between mind and body and critiques the Cartesian body-mind split in dance learning processes (Burnidge, 2012). Schmidt and Lee (1999) noted that with somatic dance pedagogies, a set of internal processes associated with practices and experiences occurs, leading to relative changes in the capability of corporeal memory and expression.
In a study on student teachers in dance, Green (1999) offered insights into how somatic pedagogy could be a space where bodies in dance can be socially inscribed. She engaged students in somatic creative processes to enable them to:

1) Interpret how they perceived their bodies in relationship to society and the dance world, 2) determine if and how they found a relationship between somatic practice, their awareness of their socially inscribed bodies, and creative expression, and 3) understand how somatics may help them become aware of issues regarding gender and the social construction of bodies. (p. 82)

This pedagogy transcends viewing dance as just an embodied body of knowledge. It illuminates dance as a system of knowing, thinking, doing, being and becoming. The narratives on somatic pedagogy gave me insights into how I could dissect cultural heritage dance pedagogy beyond considering it as just a kinesthetic activity.

3.3.3. Culturally relevant dance pedagogies

Another pedagogic framework advocated for by dance scholars is culturally relevant/responsive dance pedagogy (McCarthy-Brown, 2009, 2014, 2016; Melchior, 2011). This approach rests on integration of teaching and learning methods that reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of learners and teachers. Culturally relevant dance pedagogies can adequately address the ever-increasing cultural complexities of dance students and teachers (McGreevy-Nichols, & Scheff, 2000). These pedagogies encompass techniques of teaching and learning, which enable learners to assert, explore, and question complex cultural worldviews (Banks, 2013).

McCarthy-Brown (2009) drew on her autoethnographic experience to present the journey that she had taken as a dance teacher to embrace culturally responsive pedagogy in a dance classroom. To implement this pedagogy, she developed a teaching philosophy, which seeks to: “meet the students where they are - accept their movement vernacular;
accept their culture; accept them” (p. 122). McCarthy-Brown’s approach advocates pedagogic empathy. Culturally relevant pedagogies cultivate complex social, cultural, and kinesthetic experiences. They also allow the values, meanings, and personal histories and experiences of the learners to interweave.

McCarthy-Brown (2009) observed that in order for a dance teacher to honour culturally relevant pedagogies, he or she needs to integrate “culturally relevant material…create a class culture that incorporates other cultures and establishes new customs…and reflect on culture in the classroom” (p. 122). This view highlights the centrality of culturally relevant pedagogies in exposing learners to complex cultural insights. This analysis became instrumental for this study, which examined the complexities of pedagogies in ethnically dynamic places like central Uganda.

Melchior (2011) conducted a study that sought to illuminate the reflections of teachers and students about “implementing the dance curriculum into the classroom programme within meaningful cultural contexts for learning” (p. 124). Seeking to articulate how culturally relevant pedagogies can reflect the worldviews of Maori students and culture, Melchior discovered that integrating Macfarlane’s (2004) Educultural Wheel, which is divided into five parts – whanaungatanga, rangitiriatanga, manaakitanga, kotahitanga, and pumanuratanga, offers possibilities for students to culturally, reflectively, and “conceptually understand, question, and rationalize dance, dance teaching, dance learning, somatic experiences, dance analysis, definitions of techniques, choreography, community experiences, collaboration, and performance” (Banks, 2016, p. 294). Melchior’s research illuminates the possibilities for indigenous thought processes in informing how individual dance teachers apply pedagogy.
3.4. Pedagogies of African dances

Gray (2006) explained that transmission of dance skills and knowledge outside academia has been part of historical development in different communities. In these communities, teaching and learning weaves the perspectives, experiences, contexts, and histories of the people, dance traditions, and the environments of practice. This section analyses literature on pedagogy and education in African dances.

3.4.1. Pedagogies of African dances inside Africa

Banks’s (2007) research on *Decolonizing the body: An international perspective on dance pedagogy from Uganda to the United States*, highlighted the presence of pedagogy in dance practices in Uganda. She investigated the pedagogy used by John Mugisha to teach Rwandan dances and songs in the Umbanno community in central Uganda. The research disclosed that as a dance teacher, Mugisha was exploring dance movement through pedagogy as a text and a living manuscript for documenting the cultural livelihoods of the community and affirming the stories of the community.

Through fieldwork analysis of pedagogy, Banks (2007) further observed that “Dance decolonized the Rwandese soul; Umbanno found a freedom and healing in their bodies. The pedagogy was a testimony to their awareness of cultural, physical, and psychological territory they could create with dance” (p. 107). Although Banks’ study reveals how indigenous dances infuse cultural connections and social empower in postcolonial environments, it does not discuss the thought that informs pedagogic applications and how pedagogies deepen knowing, doing, thinking, being and becoming.

In the same local context of Uganda, Ekadu-Ereu (2012) conducted a study on the promotion and preservation of indigenous music in tertiary education. The findings of the
study revealed that indigenous knowledge could be taught in formal education frameworks in tertiary institutions. Integration of these indigenous music forms through a framework he calls “Living Indigenous Music Education Curriculum” (p. 190) can bring the learners closer to their realities and experiences, sustain this knowledge, and cultivate intellectual and candid thought. Ekadu-Ereu advocates for a balance between these knowledge and the formal education canons, which are mostly predicated on Western system of education. He proposes focus on orality, active practice, cultivation of experiences, and uplifting of human spirit as a centerpiece in attaining this pedagogic balance for this unique material. This research departs from Ekadu-Ereu’s findings by exploring how teachers of cultural heritage dances outside academic settings in central Uganda rationalize pedagogy in their teaching practices.

In African communities, dance education has led to the integration of cultural heritage dances from their communities of practice to academic settings (Gonye & Moyo, 2015; Mabingo, 2015a; Makoye, 2001; Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2003). Makoye (2001) conducted a study on traditional dance education in Tanzania schools. The study revealed that “students learn dance from fellow students and from two other categories of ‘arts’ teachers, which include those who do not have any formal training in teaching dance and those who have formal training in the performing arts, including dance” (p. 5). Makoye (2001) noted that the focus in schools is on re-arranging these dances as forms of entertainment for festivals, concerts and competitions. Reflecting on Makoye’s (2001) findings, I have sought to research pedagogy as a rationalised knowledge domain that entwines thought, theory, philosophy and tradition.

In the context of formal primary school education in Zimbabwe, Gonye and Moyo (2015) investigated processes of teaching and learning of cultural heritage dances in formal
classrooms. Their analysis was predicated, “on the central tenet of a socially just pedagogy which demands that what is taught in schools should be culturally relevant to and affirming of the students’ lived realities” (Moje 2007, cited in Gonye & Moyo, 2015, p. 260). They examined “the teaching and learning of cultural heritage dance at primary school level in Zimbabwe as a key aspect of postcolonial curriculum re-imagination within the broader project of reclaiming a nation’s heritage” (Gonye & Moyo, 2015, p. 259). The results from the study showed that:

… generally, many respondents have a low knowledge of most of the dances they are expected to teach pupils in the primary schools. This could mean that in our Zimbabwean primary schools, we may have teachers whose knowledge levels regarding traditional dance are lower than those of their students. It therefore becomes difficult for such teachers to ask pupils to identify the various traditional dances, describe or simulate the routine, let alone engage with the social, religious or ritual significances of the identified dances. (p. 269)

The abovementioned results present the dilemma of an ever-increasing lack of recognition and integration of cultural thought in cultural heritage dance education practices in academic settings in Africa (see also Mabingo, 2015c). Gonye and Moyo’s research revealed that the teachers in schools possessed low knowledge levels of the native dance. Their study pointed me toward some of the hindrances that may exist in dance education practices in cultural heritage dances. Thus, I examined how pedagogic rationalisation by the dance teachers in central Uganda is grounded in Ubuntu, as a framework of complex thoughts, theories, philosophies and traditions.

Research that I carried out about how teachers adapt cultural heritage dance pedagogies as extra-curricular activity in urban education in Kampala city, Uganda (Mabingo, 2017) showed they use: 1) music as a teaching aid, 2) peer modeling as a collaborative delegative form of teaching, 3) practical demonstration to address the
kinesthetic structures of the dances, and 4) verbal explanation and storytelling to reveal the stories, purpose, contexts, philosophies, essences, and histories of the dances.

Despite having no formal training, the dance teachers shared that they develop pedagogic mechanisms that derive from their individual experiences and cultural realities to teach the dances. According to the participants, they facilitated dance activities that enabled learners to embody, reflect on, and explore cultural dance skills and knowledge through experiential encounters to deepen their Afrocentric (Asante, 1988, 1990) worldview. This research formed the basis for my analysis of pedagogy outside academic settings. I examined how individuals within communities of practice engage pedagogy as a place of thought, action, philosophy, connection, and theory.

Streets (2011) shared her ethnographic experiences as a learner in dance camps for African dances that implemented different pedagogies in the local communities. From 2006 to 2010, she travelled to Ghana where she participated in learning dances such as Baamaya, Kpatsa, Kpanlogo, Fume Fume, Coucou, Lamban, Soli, Sofa, and Sinte. Each dance group varied from large (25 students) to small (as few as three in one group and six in another), and the programmes ran for two to three weeks. In addition to daily dance and drumming classes, she made excursions to cultural events and trips to historical sites.

According to Streets (2011), throughout her experience, learners cross-trained by interchangeably taking drumming and dance lessons. When she practiced the drumming patterns to the dances, it advanced her physical training, nurtured a different perspective of the dance, mentally prepared her to rehearse movements, and expanded her understanding of how complex rhythms are interwoven into the dance.

Commenting on the details of this pedagogy in camps, Streets noted:
Dancers learned and practiced in groups, alone, and with the teacher. Some students wrote down the steps. Some students kept journals, and some made audio or visual recordings of the classes and practiced from those images or sounds. Dancers learned by watching teachers, watching junior performances, and watching the national dance company perform or rehearse. Students reflected on their experiences by talking during dinner, journaling, and, in my case, by offering presentations to student groups on return to the United States. (p. 77)

As a learner, these pedagogies enabled her to engage pedagogy as an experience that sprang from the complex traditions, people and experiences. Through pedagogy, structures of dance knowledge were clarified and illuminated. Street’s (2011) observations point to the complexities of pedagogies of dances in African communities. Unlike Streets (2011), who took an autoethnographic approach to her experiences, the current inquiry considered pedagogy as a knowledge domain that could be examined through the practices of individual dance teachers in central Uganda.

3.4.2. Pedagogies of African dances in international education

With the increasing internationalisation of education (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Brooks & Waters, 2011; De Witt, 2009) came hope that dances from African communities could be integrated into international dance education. However, this process has been slow. In the article, The saga of African dance and black studies departments, Doris Green (2011) expounded on the continuous marginalisation of African dance in Western institutions of higher learning. She advocated that African dances should be taught as fully-fledged academic programmes in the university. Green further posited that these dances should be taught with their attendant music, and that attempts should be made by American universities to hire teachers who fully understand these dances and can articulate the contextual, musical, historical, theoretical and philosophical foundations of the dances and the communities where they originate.
In Western academic circles, African dances were initially ignored as disciplines not worth intellectual pursuit. According to Hanna (1966):

…the sovereignties of academic disciplines also hindered the study of African dance. The conservatism of various departments, the monopoly of dance by departments of physical education oriented to teacher training, and the multi-disciplinary demands of dance research (anthropology, religion, psychology, sociology, drama, and musicology) have proved to be formidable barriers. (p. 304)

Hanna’s observation shows that historically, the epistemology of African dances has been at the periphery of academia. Such marginalisation has prevented students from acquiring the knowledge and skills that the dances offer. This research highlights the richness of knowledge, underlining its essence, purpose, and structure.

According to Amin (2016), McCarthy-Brown (2009, 2011, 2014, 2017) and Walker (2016), African and African-derived dances have been victims of the continuous tokenism in Western academic curricula, which has rendered them subservient to Euro-American dance paradigms. Even in African communities like Uganda, the native dances are peripheral to the education curricula. They are taught as extra-curricular activities (Mabingo 2015b, 2015c; Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2003) and dance teachers are not accorded much needed logistical, material and financial resources to develop this knowledge. Examining how the dance teachers deal with pedagogical content knowledge in local environments amidst these constraints became the agenda for this study.

Scholars of African dances have attributed the underrepresentation of dance knowledge and epistemological thought structures from African communities to the insidious and dominant Euro-American meaning-making systems and intellectual canons that are founded on empirical, quantified, product and proof-based, objective knowledge (Banks 2010; Green, 2011; Mabingo 2015c). These dominant paradigms have ostracised
the cultural heritage and epistemological and ontological thought processes in and of the formerly colonised communities (Banks 2010b; Banks, 2013; Dils, 2007b; Mccarthy-Brown, 2014; Shizha 2013). These reductionist perceptions are also common within discourses in Uganda (see Section 1.3). This inquiry contended that the pedagogy of cultural heritage dances is intricate, both epistemologically and ontologically.

Drawing from his experience of teaching Ghanaian dances in Canada and his extensive ethnographic research on dance cultures in Ghana, Amegago (2011) proposed an African music and dance curriculum model for university education. Building on music and dance traditions from Ghana, he explained how dance and music content, such as language, instrumentation, timbre, performance techniques, rhythmic structures, dance elements, costume, make up, props, emotional expression, style, melody, and emotional values, is integrated in tertiary and pre-tertiary education. Amegago (2011) noted that his curriculum considers both theory and practice of Ewe music and dances and provides room for teachers to adapt this model to their unique teaching circumstances, needs, and goals. However, his proposed model is envisioned within the context of Western(ised) formal education. My study situates pedagogy within the local milieu. I examine the question of how reflections, rationalities and practices of individual dance teachers reveal pedagogy as a thought, action, construction, experience and tradition.

I have taught Ugandan cultural heritage dances using pedagogies that draw on native Ugandan and non-native influences such as Western educational canons (Mabingo, 2014, 2015b, 2015c, 2017). In these pedagogies, I have used a blend of Western tools, such as innovative technologies (Mabingo, 2015a), and Ugandan dance pedagogies. The Ugandan pedagogic techniques include use of stories, applying music as a teaching aid of dance, teaching and learning through indigenous philosophies, communal random
mirroring, and repetition. My experience as a dance teacher has unveiled the potency of pedagogy in the deconstruction of dance knowledge. For this inquiry, I pursued pedagogy from the perspective of individual dance teachers in local Ugandan communities, instead of taking an autoethnographic and subjective point of analysis.

Banks (2009, 2010, 2012) suggested that recognition and implementation of critical postcolonial dance pedagogy can be a pragmatic mechanism, which may “provide critical recovery of dance knowledge once deliberately oppressed” (Banks, 2009, p. 30) by Eurocentric academic and cultural domination. This pedagogy establishes the intersectional links between African dance epistemologies and postcolonial theory (Ghandi, 1998; Mapara, 2009; Smith, 1999; Wa Thiongo, 1986), and highlights the “vital role dance plays in critiquing and moving against cultural inequalities in and out of school” (Banks, 2010, p. 20). Banks (2009) has implemented this pedagogy in more than 10 public K-12 schools in Arizona, U.S. through the Dambe project. She convened one month to full year residencies, which involved the implementation of an African performing curriculum. This “alternative mode of pedagogy centralized dances, song, and music from Mali and Guinea, and encouraged student to master djembe and Dundun drumming techniques” (Banks, 2009, p. 23). Banks’ pedagogic formulation raises questions as to how the dance teachers in postcolonial environments in central Uganda rationalise pedagogies that honour native knowledge, and at the same time empower learners to participate in and be part of the teaching and learning process for these dances.

Dalton (2016) carried out research to “describe the experiences of and intended objectives for teaching African dance forms to a diverse population of American college students through the insights of five individuals who teach African dance techniques courses in five different American universities” (p. v). The research findings revealed that
for the dance teachers, teaching African dance techniques facilitated learners’ learning of self, connection to cultures outside their own, and immersion in communal abilities. The expert dance teachers in the study used call and response, circular formations for various activities, and the sharing of food to allow learners to collaborate with one another in an inclusive, non-threatening and non-competitive manner.

Kuwor (2013) also explained how he teaches Anlo-Ewe dances in primary and secondary schools in Britain to offer “cultural education for pupils from diverse cultural backgrounds; and using Anlo-Ewe dance as an expression of cultural freedom, empowerment, transformation, healing and awareness to the Black and Ghanaian/Ewe community in Britain” (p. 269). Within the scope of Anlo-Ewe dances, he has taught Kpalongo dance of the Ga people, Damba Takai dance of the Dangomba people, and Kpatsa dance of the Ada people. Kuwor selected these dances as part of his pedagogy because it is culturally permissible to modify these dances without any risk of cultural misrepresentation. Kuwor extended teaching of these dances into university education, drawing on Amegago (2011) and Adinku’s (1994) curriculum models to develop pedagogic frameworks that seek to “provide students with the basis for participation in, and appreciation and understanding of the cultural context of dance and to utilise cultural dance forms as a tool for their own creativity” (pp. 275-276).

Dor (2014) carried out a study on how teachers from African cultures, as native bearers of cultural heritage dance skills and knowledge, apply pedagogies to teach African drumming and dance in institutions of higher learning in the U.S. His study revealed that these teachers generally use rote methods to teach drumming, dancing, and singing without writing down material. The dance and drumming teachers that Dor researched also broke down content knowledge of the dances, drumming, and singing into smaller units to make
them comprehensible. These teachers believed that through this “oral-aural pedagogy” (Dor, 2014, p. 107), they could address the issue of authenticity of the dances and drum rhythms and invite learners to simultaneously embody and explore dance material as they learn it.

The aforementioned perspectives reveal how the pedagogy of dances in African communities is an intricate knowledge domain. The various authors disclose how teachers use pedagogy as a site for learners to explore complex ways of thinking, doing, knowing, becoming, and being. If African dances have a pedagogy that can express itself in all the contexts discussed above, it is my considered view that even within local environments, this pedagogy can be deconstructed. This study addresses this by investigating how Ubuntu thought permeates the pedagogies as frameworks of transformance, systems of inquiry, and methods of cultural practice.

3.5. Assessment and feedback in dance pedagogy
In dance teaching, pedagogy also covers the different ways teachers monitor the progress of learners (assessment) and the support that they offer to them (feedback provision). I reviewed literature on feedback and assessment of dance to expand my analysis of the pedagogy of Ugandan cultural heritage dances.

Feedback in dance education follows different criteria including: Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy of higher level thinking; remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001); and the highest level of cognition – creating-construct, adapting, combining, inventing, improving, imagining, elaborating and developing (Edupress, 2001). Clark (2003) observed that in dance sessions, assessment draws the teacher closer to the learner, the content of the class, pedagogy used, and the
overall pedagogic environment. He has suggested strategies that the dance teacher can employ to achieve meaningful delivery of dance material:

Moving throughout the room, making contact with every student, varying proximity to the students, frequently scanning the room, periodically focusing on individuals, demonstrating active watching and listening, providing a variety of learning experiences, changing spatial orientation to the students, stopping demonstrating in order to observe better, clearly expressing the goal of the activity, observing nonjudgmentally... (p. 35)

As I was reading Clark’s remarks (2003) on assessment and feedback, I reflected on what it means for a dance teacher to fulfill their teaching goals in local communities. A number of questions emerged: 1) How do the Ugandan dance teachers support learners during teaching and learning processes? 2) How do they deliver feedback? 3) What aspects do they consider as feedback and assessment benchmarks? 4) What is the overall objective of this feedback and assessment? In engaging with accounts like Clark’s (2003), I was not seeking to use them as criteria to examine local pedagogies. Rather, interface with these views allowed for investigation of feedback and assessment as a constituent part of the rationalisation processes of dance pedagogies in central Uganda.

My review revealed that assessment allows the dance teachers to identify the information and how they share it with learners (provide feedback) to facilitate learning. Feedback in a dance class “refers to the information, judgment, or correction given to a student about his or her performance of a task” (Gibbons, 2004, p. 38). This feedback can be verbal – oral remarks and comments; visual – use of images and notation; and kinesthetic – hands-on corporeal demonstration (Gibbons, 2004). The feedback that a teacher provides can also touch on “value, which offers a judgment; corrective, which identifies and corrects errors; neutral, which is descriptive; and ambiguous, which is vague and imprecise” (Mosston & Ashworth, 1994 cited in Gibbons, 2004, p. 39).
Through feedback teachers act on “information to direct error correction, as reinforcement, and as motivation. It enables students to correct errors, leads to better eventual performance, and provides powerful motivation, since it enables students to see that they are making progress and that they are valued” (Gibbons, 2004, p. 38). The provision of assessment and feedback creates links between the teacher, learner, content knowledge, and pedagogy. For dance, as a kinesthetic, embodied and motor learning discipline, Schmidt and Lee (1999) and Winstein and Schmidt (1990) have suggested that augmented feedback, which “is generally categorized according to information given to the learner from an outside source, and is in addition to what is called inherent feedback, or the information she receives simply by executing the movement” (p. 324), can enhance learning. What makes augmented feedback appropriate for dance is that “some students learn best by watching the demonstration of the movement. Others prefer to “mark” the movement along with the teacher, and still others need to hear the counts, perceiving the rhythmical structure of the movement” (Enghauser, 2003, p. 94).

The aforementioned viewpoints reinforce the notion that assessment and feedback are central elements of pedagogy. The dance teachers operationalise ideas through assessment frameworks and mechanisms for feedback provision. They both invite the teacher and learner closer to or into the structure of dance knowledge. Cognisant of the fact that cultural heritage dances are situated in communities of practice, I engaged reflections from the literature on feedback and assessment in dance education to interrogate whether and how individual teachers engage in forms of “collective, co-operative and collaborative approaches” (Boud, Cohen & Sampson 2001, p. 6-7).
3.6. Dance teachers’ teaching competences

Since this research centred on pedagogic practices of dance teachers, I deemed it necessary to examine the literature on dance teachers’ teaching identity and competences. In pursuing this examination, I sought answers to the following questions: 1) who is a dance teacher? 2) What does it mean to be a dance teacher? 3) Who determines who is a dance teacher? 4) What does being a dance teacher mean to pedagogy?

The question of what qualifies a person as a specialist dance teacher has loomed large in dance education discourses (Andrzejewski, 2009; Buck, 2003; Fortin, 1992, 1993; Gray, 1989; Lord, 1992, 1993; Smith, 1998; Stinson, 1993a). For education scholars and theorists, content knowledge or subject matter content (Ball, Thames & Phelps, 2008), pedagogical knowledge (Shulman 1986a, 1986b), personal teacher knowledge (Clandinin & Connelley, 1986, 1987; Pearson, 1989;), and pedagogical content knowledge (Cochran, DeRuiter, & King, 1993) constitute the teaching competencies in education. In view of these observations and within the context of this study, the questions that emerged included: What are the distinct competencies that cultural heritage dance teachers possess? How are these competencies applied in teaching of cultural heritage dances in central Uganda? How do the dance teachers acquire these competencies? How are these competencies situated in local circumstances?

Pearson (1989) outlined that teaching competence entails developing ways of transforming the skills and knowledge that a person bears into teachable material. These ways include classroom management, understanding of subject matter, and general principles of planning, instruction, and evaluation, which can be used to illuminate the content, ideas, and experiences in dance (Fortin, 1993; Warburton, 2008).
From the perspective of teaching, Gilbert (2005) observed, “I do not consider professional dancers or studio teachers to automatically fall into the category of specialized dance teachers. When a dancer without teaching skills works in a public school, the program receives a major setback” (Gilbert, 2005, p. 33). Gilbert’s view is problematic in that it restricts the definition of a competent dance teacher to the academic context. The fundamental questions that arise from this are: 1) How about dance teachers like the ones in Uganda who teach in purely nonacademic environment? 2) Should these individuals be considered as incompetent dance teachers? 3) Are there teaching competencies for dance teachers that exist outside academic strictures and structures?

A teacher’s pedagogic competencies also encompass their knowledge of the content they are teaching. Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987) referred to this competence as pedagogical content knowledge. Further, Newman, Griffin and Cole (1989) explained that pedagogical content knowledge is an integrated understanding that is synthesised from teacher knowledge of and competencies in pedagogy, subject matter content, student characteristics, and the environmental context of teaching and learning.

In the context of dance education, Fortin (1993) highlighted that:

Pedagogical content knowledge is essential to effective teaching of dance…Teachers should be competent in areas of the body and movement, creative movement and arts knowledge with application to theory, choreography and performance. Teachers must also be competent in practical application of subject skills and must learn how principles of classroom management, planning and evaluation can be structured for the benefit of students. (p. 34)

Stinson (2010) claimed that in order for a teacher to achieve the competences highlighted by Fortin (1993), they need to reflect on the following set of questions: 1) What dance content should be taught? 2) What is the relative importance of learning to dance? 3) What is the importance of learning dance-making skills? 4) What is the relative importance of
learning about dance and how to watch it critically? 5) Whose dance/what kind of dance should be taught? 6) What is the primary purpose of exploiting personal skills and social skills in teaching dance? 7) Who should dance education be for? 8) How should dance activities be conducted? This study examined whether the questions raised by Stinson (2010) are covered in dance teachers’ rationalisation of dance pedagogies.

This body of literature disclosed multifaceted views on what it means to be a dance teacher. Most narratives are framed from the viewpoint of dance education in academic settings. Engaging with this literature underscored the urgency of examining the proficiencies that dance teachers in nonacademic environments in native Ugandan communities possess. The literature prompted me to investigate how these competencies are grounded in theory, tradition, and the Ubuntu philosophy that empowers dance teachers to apply pedagogies as frameworks of transformance, systems of inquiry and thought, means of creation and expression, and methods of cultural practice.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the key themes in the literature that relate to the thesis. Firstly, I examined dance pedagogy, highlighting how it has been conceptualised as dance education, dance and education, dance as education, and dance in education. The review also covered how dance pedagogy is viewed as an epistemological domain. I examined traditional dance pedagogy, critical dance pedagogy, and culturally relevant dance pedagogy, underscoring how they mediate the links between the dance teacher, learner, subject matter, and the teaching and learning environment.

The analysis of related literature also covered how pedagogies of African dance have been applied in teaching African and African derived dances inside and outside the
African continent. The review examined the place of pedagogy in the epistemological and ontological frameworks of the dances. Pedagogies of African dances were found to be complex systems of thought and inquiry, mechanisms of cultural practice, means of creation and expression and frameworks of transformance.

A discussion that reviewed the place of assessment and feedback within the pedagogic frameworks of dance followed. Perspectives on how assessment and feedback decenter dance knowledge were explored. Reflections on assessment and feedback emphasised how dance knowledge is made intelligible if the teachers give support to learners. I also investigated the dance teachers’ teaching competencies, unveiling how the current discourses on this subject are confined to academic settings.

Reviewing the literature enabled me to identify gaps within the existing body of knowledge in dance education, research, and pedagogy to locate the relevance of this study to the prevailing discourses and practices in dance education and research.
Chapter Four: Fieldwork reflections and research methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses my reflections as an internative fieldworker and describes the research methodology and data collection methods I used to carry out this study. The first section explains how my overlapping complex cultural and internative researcher identities contributed in cultivating reflexivity, negotiated realities, and other reflections during fieldwork. Following the first section, I explain how the theory of constructivism and a phenomenological lens provided the frame of analysis used to examine the data. The next section describes how I used purposive and snowball sampling procedures to select the dance teachers as research participants. I also explain how I applied storytelling, interviews, and participant and nonparticipant observation to collect data. This section is followed by a discussion of data analysis techniques. I also examine how I handled ethical considerations during the fieldwork. The last section examines challenges and limitations of the study, and how I addressed these research constraints.

4.2. ‘Internative’ ethnographer: Unveiling autoethnographic fieldwork reflections

The field of ethnography is preoccupied with delineations between insider and outsider identities in fieldwork. The outsider-insider dichotomy assumes that, on the one hand, the insider, also referred to as native anthropologist/researcher (Gwaltney, 1976; Mascarenhas-Keyes, 1987; Nakhleh, 1979), often engages in fieldwork from an emic perspective with a subjective, informed and influential standpoint (Headland, Pike, & Harris, 1990). In this instance, “the insider is an individual who possesses intimate knowledge of the community and its members due to previous and ongoing association with that community and its members” (Labaree, 2002, p. 100). On the other hand, the outsider has been referred to as
“a) bereft of the direct, intuitive sensitivity that alone makes empathetic understanding possible; b) incapable of comprehending alien groups, statuses, cultures, and societies; and c) excluded in principle from gaining access to knowledge and understanding of the group” (Kauffman, 1994, pp. 179-180).

The insider is assumed to have an understanding of what Geertz (1988) has referred to as an ensemble of socio-cultural and contextual texts of a given culture and community. The insider perspective can “grasp the native’s point of view, his relations to life, to realize his [insider’s] vision of his world” (Malinowski, 1922, p. 290). Referring to the importance of insider identity in cultural heritage dance ethnography, Kibirige (2015) mentioned that native “dance practices, like other cultural heritage practices and rituals are best understood by their bearers and practitioners” (p. 1-2). Kibirige’s formulation categorises whomever does not bear knowledge of cultural heritage dances as an outsider.

4.2.1. Reflection on internative identity

As I was carrying out the research, I reflected deeply on identity. Hall (1996) underscored that identity is a perpetual aspect that chains and places a person into cobwebs of discourses, practices, experiences, locations, and reflections. As a researcher doing fieldwork in my own country, I considered Jones’s (1977) observation that the researcher’s own experiences, activities, thoughts, and generation of models based on fieldwork reflections should form part of the body of knowledge developed from ethnographic activities. My fieldwork reflections revealed to me that I was neither an outsider nor insider researcher, but rather an internative researcher. Different fieldwork experiences illuminated my multiple identities.
During the fieldwork, I reflected on my multiple identities emanating from my past life. I was born and raised in my home village, Mbuukiro. Growing up, home was the first axis of learning. Through children’s games, storytelling sessions, songs, lullabies, dance practices and home-based activities such as farming and fishing, I was able to access the practical and theoretical skills, knowledge and competencies of the Baganda people of central Uganda. My thinking was formed around the resources, knowledge, skills and environment around me at home and in the village, with guidance commonly offered by village and family elders and relatives.

My childhood thinking was continually expanding. At the age of four, I took classes in the catechism. Through these classes, I was oriented to Western Catholic religious dogmas. My sociocultural and spiritual world broadened. I learned that there was a supreme being – katonda (God) that I was answerable to as well as my elders and parents. These forms of orientation provided the childhood foundations from which my adult life and identity sprang.

Since 1989, I have been attending Western formal education at pre-tertiary and tertiary levels of education in Uganda, the U.S., and New Zealand. My experiences as a student in these formal academic settings have introduced me to new bases of practical and theoretical knowledge in different subjects in the arts and sciences. As a result of these encounters, my life has also become a playground for what Mazrui (1986) has referred to as triple heritage – religious orientation, indigenous upbringing, and Western education. This exposure has strengthened my “desire to investigate the cultural ideals of others without necessarily emulating them…” (Rowe, 2008, p. 7).

As an adult, my complex identities have been expanded by my habitation of cross-cultural environments through travel and residencies for performances and academic work.
As a result of these interfaces, my ethnorelativism (Bennett, 1993) has expanded. This has turned my professional, social and artistic life into a constellation that I refer to as my internative identity. Throughout my fieldwork research, I reflected on how the aforementioned multiple identities overlap. Deutsch’s (1981) observation that “researchers are multiple insiders and outsiders” (cited in Labaree, 2002, p. 101) became increasingly vivid. My internative identity made me always located somewhere (Griffith, 1998). I oscillated continuously between these positional boundaries in different social locations during the fieldwork (Labaree, 2002).

These changes in individual identity, which stemmed from my interaction with various cultural settings and experiences, have been explored in various literatures. Fanon (1968) explained that when natives of formerly colonised communities undergo Western exposure, they attain the identity of a native intellectual. Lugo (1997) argued that the complexities of nativity make evolutions in identity inevitable, explaining that individuals constantly and socially inhabit different spaces of identity, which can also qualify as nativities. These constant shifts in interaction and socialisation make the native identities unstable. Bhabha (1994) also noted that people and cultures are evolving intersections of complex social, cultural, and political forces.

While Abu-Lughod (1991) observed that researchers commonly alternate between outsider and insider identities, which he referred to as being ‘halfie’, my experience was different. My fieldwork experiences and reflections transcended this dualistic notion of ethnographic identity.

4.2.2. Reflexivity and internative identity

My internative identity was further illuminated when I interacted with the dance teachers
who were the research participants and the complex research environments, which illuminated a sense of reflexivity. Reflexivity created an understanding that emerged out of interaction between me as a researcher and the situations within which I found myself – out of the questions that emerged from my response to the situations” (Williams, 1990, p. 254). During the fieldwork, I did not ever operate in isolation from other individuals and communities. The reflexive fieldwork interactions further deepened my sense of internative identity. This is because reflexivity “demands both an other and some self-conscious awareness of the process of self-scrutiny” (Chriseri-Strater, 1996, p. 130). Below is an excerpt of a discussion I had with Herbert Katende Mukungu, one of the dance teachers, which reminded me of my internative identity:

“Mabingo, I am so glad to see you again after many years”, said Herbert Mukungu, one of the dance teachers who was a research participant.
“I am glad to see you too”, I responded.
“You have been abroad for many years. You left us here; we are still here. I see some of your other contemporaries in town”, Mukungu added.
“That is so great to hear. At least, you get to see some of my longtime friends. I hope they are well”, I replied.
“Many of them are well. They are still performing with troupes. Do you even still know how to perform dances? You have been away for many years. I thought you were not going to come back. You must have learned new behaviours from the many places that you have visited and lived. Your hair is now long. You accent has also changed. You do not look like you are from Uganda”, Herbert continued.

Listening to Herbert, I realised that for a researcher, rationalising fieldwork identities is sometimes not entirely their personal choice. The process of research entailed “developing reciprocity with research subjects – hearing, listening, and equalizing the research relationship – doing research ‘with’ instead of ‘on’” (Pillow, 2003, p. 179). As Griffith (1998) mentioned, “different knowledges are imbedded in both the researcher’s biography and the social relations of power and privilege in which the researcher is located” (p. 363). My conversation with Herbert brought my attention to Appadurai’s (1988) question: When
ethnography’s former “natives” engage in researching their native communities, what do they research back as? Or, to paraphrase Appadurai’s question, when “natives” talk back to an “internative”, what do they talk back as? Members of a culture? The conversation that I had with Herbert placed me on the outside of what he considered native space. It further deepened “an ongoing self-awareness during the research process, which aided in making visible the practice and construction of knowledge within research in order to produce more accurate analyses of research” (Pillow, 2003, p. 178). As my nativity continued to be otherised by Herbert, I reflected on how the perceptions of the dance teachers could impact my positionality as the researcher.

The fieldwork activities became a reflexive process (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984) through which I experienced self-reflective consciousness (Sartre, 1969) and looked at “self-in relation-to-others” (Finlay, 2002, p. 216). As Pillow (2003) has noted, such reflections “requires the researcher to be critically conscious through personal accounting of how the researcher’s self-location (across for example, gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality), position, and interest influence all stages of the research process” (p. 178). Wasserfall (1997) explained the role of reflexivity in immersing the researcher in fieldwork experiences:

…the use of reflexivity during fieldwork can mute the distance and alienation built into conventional notions of ‘objectivity’ or objectifying those who are studied. The research process becomes more mutual, as a strategy to deconstruct the author’s authority. (p. 152)

As an internative researcher, I alternated between reflecting on my intentions and observations as a researcher, and the experiences that transpired from the interactions I had with the dance teachers. This “reflexiveness pulled me towards other dance teachers and away from myself (Meyerhoff & Ruby, 1982). It created questions that I used to further
interrogate my place in the inquiry: 1) who am I in this research process? 2) How are my evolving identities impacting my position in fieldwork activities? 3) What role do the voices of the dance teachers as research participants play in fashioning my reflections on my identities? These fieldwork reflections allowed me to explore self-actualisation (Maslow, 1971) and reflect on what my sense of self meant for the insights I generated, observations I made, connections I established, interactions I engaged in, and the dilemmas I encountered.

4.2.3. Constructing negotiated reality

During data collection in the fieldwork, I also set out to achieve negotiated reality, which Crapanzano (1980) has defined as meaningful rapport, between the dance teachers and myself as the researcher. Key among the techniques I applied to become immersed in negotiated reality was a gradual integration into the fieldwork communities.

I engaged with the voices and views of the dance teachers and embedded myself in the fieldwork environments. For example, while researching the dance activities of a community in Nagguru, where Matthew teaches, I participated in dance and non-dance activities right from the beginning as a new learner of Larakaraka and Bwola dances. These activities included carrying instruments out of the storeroom and returning them to storage, clearing open spaces for dance activities, and sorting the instruments and costumes. Through this hands-on communal participation, I sought to dissolve hierarchical barriers between the community and me. This created an environment of trust, which brought me closer to the dance teachers and the fieldwork activities.

The dance activities and dance teachers that I researched were varied. Although some participants were Baganda, an ethnic tribe to which I belong, their stories,
backgrounds, visions, and philosophies of work varied depending on their gender, upbringing, working environment and social status. Some participants were working in suburban, rural, religious, environments and communities. This diversity meant that I engaged in each fieldwork activity differently.

Commenting on how unique each experience with a research participant can be, Kibirige (2015) observed that cultural heritage dance knowledge could be personalised and understood by the person embodying it. This embodiment of dance knowledge can evolve in different context of dance practice. Kibirige gave the example of *Myel Bwola* dance, where the dancer is the viewer, performer, singer and drummer. Each of these roles is highly personal and can only be understood by the person when they experience them. Considering that dance experiences can be complex, I engaged in fieldwork on a case-by-case basis to unveil the unique experiences of each dance teacher.

As a participant observer, I partook in practicing new cultural heritage dances with a community in Naguru in the Kampala district. Matthew Watmon and members of the community taught me *Larakaraka* dance from the Acholi people of northern Uganda. Matthew insisted that as a novice learner, I had to go through preliminary classes first under the guidance of dancers. These initial foundational classes put emphasis on first grasping *Larakaraka* drum rhythms before embarking on learning dance songs and movements. This process, which is unique to *Larakaraka* dance, exposed me to the complexities of the dance activities. My integration into the fieldwork experience through these initial tasks deepened my relationship with Matthew and his community.

As I immersed myself in fieldwork activities, I also created distance (Buzard, 2003; Geertz, 1973) as a means of achieving an understanding of dance practices. I was critical and reflective in this space, but not necessarily detached from the realities in which the
dance practices occurred (Buzard, 2003). This was necessary in revealing the intricate knowledge embedded in the complex pedagogic practices of the dance teachers.

4.3. Research frame, theory and methodology

I engaged a combination of two intellectual thoughts, namely Ubuntu (see 2.1.1) and constructivism (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Piaget, 1970; Bruner, 1960; Vygotsky, 1978) to address the following question: How do dance teachers engage the Ubuntu worldview to rationalise pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in central Uganda? The concept of Ubuntu enabled me to locate the dance teachers as individual doers, knowers, actors, constructivists and thinkers operating within the community context. I explored how experiential and embodied reciprocity between their individualities and community contributes in framing the ways they develop and apply their teaching methods.

The theory of constructivism allowed me to investigate the dance teachers’ rationalisation of pedagogies as a “depthful act of thinking in movement” (Vezina, 2006, p. iii), which is “relative to a specific conceptual scheme, theoretical framework, paradigm, form of life, society, or culture . . .” (Bernstein, 1983, p. 8). I pursued the view that every dance teacher is capable of looking critically at the dance activities and developing knowledge and meanings out of their reflections. Dance teachers reflectively perceive personal and social realities and experiences, become conscious of their own construction of that reality, and deal critically in re/creating it (Freire, 1974).

I drew on the theory of constructivism to examine how the pedagogic knowledge (Shuman, 1987) of the dance teachers is individually constructed and rationalised within the context of the communities in which they teach. I investigated how the reflections of the dance teachers encompass experience, conscience, objective, history, essence, and
agency. I considered the reflections as a way “to look back over what has been done so as to extract the net meanings, which are the capital stock of intelligent dealing with further experiences” (Dewey, 1938, pp. 86-87).

I examined the dance teachers’ rationalisation of pedagogy as complex individual constructivist processes (Berger & Luckman, 1966). This enabled me to ensure that “claims about the group as a whole are not assumed to hold for each member” (Charney, 1996, pp. 584-585). I took an “impersonal stance” (Cooper, 1997, p. 558) in investigating pedagogy as a framework of transformance, system of thought and inquiry, means of creating and expression, and method of cultural practice.

I employed qualitative research methodology, which deals with exploration of the means of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Flick, 2014; Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2010; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Saldana, 2011) to gather research data. I examined the processes, reflections, and experiences (Barbour, 2014) of the dance teachers in their pedagogic practices. Qualitative research allowed me “to represent the views and perspectives of the participants in the study and capture the meanings given to real life events by people who live them, not the preconceptions or meanings held by the researcher” (Yin, 2011, p. 8).

### 4.4. Phenomenological research paradigm

Hannink, Hutter and Bailey (2010) observed that conducting qualitative research effectively requires both learning the methods and internalising the concepts and assumptions. Since this research study centered on investigating the complex pedagogic experiences, reflections and practices as lived, rationalised, and embodied by the dance teachers, I employed an existential phenomenological research paradigm, which
highlighted the interconnection between the conscious and embodied lived experiences of
the dance teachers (Giorgi, 1989; Groenwald, 2004; Heidegger, 1962; Leonard, 1999;
Sadala & Adorno, 2001) to elicit research data.

I analysed and interpreted pedagogic phenomena; investigated the totality of dance
teachers’ reflections; and examined how they draw on the Ubuntu worldview to rationalise
pedagogies. The phenomenological lens provided clarification of the dance teachers’
multifaceted perspectives on lived worlds (Kvale, 1996). The critical application of
phenomenological inquiry focused not only on the dance teachers’ reflections, but also
emphasised how they constructed their pedagogic experiences and orientations. I
considered the dance teachers’ complex rationalisation of pedagogies as an “…experience
of being conscious of something” (Holloway, 1997, p. 117). I pursued pedagogy as a lived,
embodied, rationalised, and cognitivised phenomena by the individual dance teachers.

Since “the experiential aspect of dance, which we might call its perception, is an
embodied corporeal act, one which is embedded in the conditions of its articulation”
(Rothfield, 2005, p. 47), I also explored pedagogy as an embodied domain of knowledge
through participant and nonparticipant observations. I refrained from importing external
frameworks and judgments about the realness of the pedagogic phenomena, and instead
explored my own agency in these experiential pedagogic activities to investigate pedagogy
from a first-person position.

Researchers and scholars in the field of dance have engaged work by Merleu-Ponty,
titled Phenomenology of perception (1962), and Foucault’s (1979) Discipline and punish:
The birth of the prison to investigate experiential, embodied, and kinesthetic forms of
corporeality (Fraleigh, 1991; Ness, 2011; Parviainen, 1998; Rouhiainen, 2003; Rothfield,
“is the lived experience which is of paramount significance. Through the lived experience we arrive at not only the sense of any particular dance, but also at the essence of dance” (p. 4). I partook in dance classes to experience and embody pedagogy from the viewpoint of an active participant in the dance sessions.

I considered pedagogy as a corporeally embodied, experientially mediated, and reflectively negotiated knowledge domain. During the fieldwork, I deconstructed pedagogy within the immediacy of my lived experiences (Rothfield, 2005) and those of the dance teachers. As Vezina (2006) observed, phenomenological inquiry in dance recognizes that “the underlying structure of dance rests in the subjective experience of the moving body, extending through a temporal and spatial organization” (p. iii).

In extending Vezina’s (2006) formulation, I considered that the essence of pedagogy as an epistemological domain of dance could be revealed through investigation of pedagogy, not as an aspect of the Cartesian body-mind split, but as a process that encompasses embodied, reflective, relational, and lived experiences, kinesthetic action, and rational constructions.

4.5. Data collection

This research began with a review of secondary sources of data. I revisited material such as journal articles, books, visual recordings, and still images, which covered areas such as African dance, Ubuntu, qualitative research methods, dance education, dance pedagogy, constructivism, African philosophy, post-colonialism, and dance teachers’ teaching competencies. The review of this body of literature allowed me to understand the contextual, theoretical, conceptual, and philosophical foundations of the research topic.
The resources and platforms I used to access the secondary data sources include: The University of Auckland General Library and Music and Dance Library, Makerere University main library, Makerere University Institute of Social Research library, Department of Performing Arts and Film Library, and New York University Library. I also accessed literature through online forums and sources such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ResearchGate, JSTOR, Sage, *Journal of Dance Education, Journal of Dance Education Practice, Research in Dance Education, Dance Research Journal*, International Index for Performing Arts, and Dance Education Literature and Research Descriptive Index, among others. In reviewing these sources, I critically analysed the place of pedagogy within the discourses. I also considered how perspectives on pedagogy and dance education tied into pedagogies of cultural heritage dances.

4.5.1. Research participants

In this research study, I engaged eight dance teachers ranging in age from 24 to 65. At the time of the research, these dance teachers had taught cultural heritage dances in varied environments for an average of 18 years. The dance teachers included two females and six males from diverse ethnic backgrounds working in varied environments in the districts of Wakiso, Kampala, Mukono and Rakai (see Section 5.3). The sample size allowed me to exhaustively investigate the complex rationalisation of pedagogies, explore the depth of constructivist experiences held by each dance teacher, and examine how pedagogy acted as an epistemological, cultural and ontological domain.

I used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques to identify the eight dance teachers. In the purposive sampling, I identified the first five dance teachers by virtue of their extensive knowledge and experience of teaching cultural heritage dances in
in different communities in Uganda. I knew these dance teachers and was aware that they had been teaching dances in different communities for more than 10 years. However, I had not previously interacted with them about their teaching practices. I considered that these dance teachers possessed a wealth of teaching knowledge and experience that would be beneficial to this inquiry.

I then expanded the sample size from the initial five to eight dance teachers by applying snowball sampling. According to Noy (2008), snowball sampling occurs “when the researcher accesses informants through contact information that is provided by other informants...” (p. 330). The five dance teachers that I recruited through purposive sampling referred me to other dance teachers. Snowball sampling was necessary because in some communities, cultural heritage dance teachers were “hidden populations” (Noy, 2008, p. 330). By hidden population I mean that teaching dances occurred in spaces that could not be explicitly identified without direction from an individual who was aware of these dance activities.

The individual dance teachers that I selected had performed, taught, and learned cultural heritage dances in more than three different contexts inside and outside Uganda.

4.5.2. Storytelling

When I was carrying out fieldwork in central Uganda, I had an epiphany: I noticed that the dance teachers were keen to share their lived experiences and pedagogic reflections through storytelling in order to reveal how they apply pedagogy. Storytelling has been widely discussed as one of the salient oral tradition expressions in African communities (Banks-Wallace, 1998). Connelly & Clandinin (2006) underscored the role of stories in illuminating experiences, noting that:
People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. (p. 479)

During the fieldwork, the dance teachers engaged in storying by “structuring experiences into stories” (Livo & Rietz, 1986 cited in Banks-Wallace, 2002, p. 411). Storytelling allowed them to share “stories to bring forth a whole series of deep-seated memories about experiences that … could not be easily articulated” (Banks-Wallace, 2002, p. 411) through interviews and observations. Their storytelling invited me into the inner world of the dance teachers, allowed them to deeply navigate self-referentiality (Tedlock, 2005), and occasioned meaningful interaction between them as storytellers and me as an inquisitorial listener (Banks-Wallace, 2002). The stories that individual dance teachers shared magnified the experiential experiences that they encountered and embodied.

For my study, storytelling was a powerful socio-cultural interrogational lens through which I examined pedagogic tendencies within practical, embodied, and historicised contexts. Each dance teacher dug deep and unearthed specific memories and experiences about their pedagogic practices, which were relevant to this research.

Storytelling also facilitated engagement of narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, 2000; Connelly, & Clandinin, 1990, 2006) not as a research method, but as a strategy of eliciting deeper information. The narratives from the dance teachers encompassed how they perceived the phenomena of pedagogic realities. In dance education, Martin (2013) also used narrative inquiry to investigate the personal narratives of seven women from the southern Mediterranean region about their international education in dance experiences. Martin’s analysis was a methodological frame of reference for this inquiry. It demonstrated that narratives could reveal “the unfolding of people,
places and things within the inquiry, the participants’ lives, and the places in the inquiry” (Connelley & Clandinin, 2006, p. 485).

Through stories, the dance teachers were able to explain the ways they experience the pedagogic world. I also fused interview questions with storytelling sessions. Instead of reading out research questions from a piece of paper, I let these questions interweave with the conversations in a storytelling form. As they came from a storytelling and oral background, participants were able to delve detailed accounts, share their varied experiences, and reveal the deep-most subtexts of their pedagogic life.

4.5.3. Interviews

In section 4.3.1, I explained how the dance teachers engaged in storytelling to reveal their pedagogic reflections, thoughts, and experiences. I used interviews in two ways: Firstly, I used semi-structured phenomenological interview questions and comments to guide the storytelling session. As the dance teachers shared their stories, I asked follow-up questions and made inquisitorial comments directed to their pedagogic experiences, histories, constructions, philosophies, and strategies to focus the interaction to the inquiry. These questions and comments enabled me to tie my research agenda into the stories that the dance teachers shared. It also facilitated an interactive connection between the individual dance teachers and me as a researcher.

Secondly, I convened autonomous interview sessions with the dance teachers. These sessions happened before and after dance activities that these dance teachers facilitated. The phenomenological semi-structured interviews elicited “shared meanings by drawing from the participant a vivid picture of the lived experience, complete with the richness of detail and context that shape the experience” (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995, p.
I followed Sorrell and Redmond’s (1995) remark that “phenomenological interviews are not ‘conducted’ but rather they are ‘participated in’ by both the interviewer and the respondent” (p. 1120). I participated in these interviews as a self-interpreting being, living a life by listening to the dance teachers’ stories (Heidegger, 1993).

Semi-structured interviews involved interpersonal interactions to allow the dance teachers to share with me the details of their reflections. I conducted two face-to-face interviews with each dance teacher and each interview session lasted for at least 40 minutes. I conducted one session before I observed dance classes, and a second follow-up session after observing dance activities.

In the follow-up sessions, I pursued ideas that emerged from the first interview responses and my observation of the dance classes. I applied a semi-structured in-depth interview schedule, which allowed for exploration of open-ended questions during interviews. Following Heidegger’s (1962) view that all questioning is seeking and all seeking takes its direction beforehand from what is sought, I used interview questions to elicit the dance teachers’ multifaceted reflections (Green & Stinson, 1999).

I used basic and accessible language that the participants understood, as opposed to Western technical dance language or jargon, because the dance teachers did not have specialised academic training in dance. This interaction created a “genuine exchange of views and allowed enough time and openness in the interview for the interviewees to explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on the events in their world” (Heyl, 2001, p. 369). I used Luganda, the native language that most dance teachers and I speak. For dance teachers who did not understand Luganda, I held sessions in English. Using accessible language yielded deeper insights and experiences of the dance teachers and created interactive conversations.
Due to the length and depth of the interview and storytelling sessions, I used a digital voice recorder to capture the verbal conversations. The recorded material formed a record that I referred to during the subsequent stages of the study, including data transcription, translation, and verification of data by individual dance teachers. Additionally, after listening to the recording I prepared follow-up interview sessions to address areas that required further explanation.

During the interview and storytelling sessions, I noticed that some dance teachers were responding to questions in generalities. For example, in one of the cases, I asked the respondent, “What was your first experience learning to perform cultural heritage dance?” He responded, “We grew up dancing. I started dancing when I was still young. We used to have dance performances at home and in the community. It was always dance everywhere”. I noticed that this dance teacher did not recall a specific incident that reminded him of his initial experiences when he started learning cultural heritage dances. Accordingly, I rephrased the question to elicit specific information from the dance teacher’s memory: “When you reflect back on your dancing life, do you remember the first time you learned a cultural heritage dance? How did it happen?” In response to this question, the dance teacher was able to share his specific insights, revealing his first experience learning *Baakisimba-Nankasa-Muwogola* dance.

The pointed questions challenged the dance teachers to deeply reflect on their experiences and invoke their memory to reflect on, recall, process, and divulge deeply seated accounts of their pedagogic practices. Engaging dance teachers using storytelling and interviews required a deeper personal and gradual understanding of the forms of interaction that could engage the dance teachers, and at the same time invited them to constructively participate in fieldwork activities.
4.5.4. Participant and nonparticipant observations

As the study involved examining how dance teachers applied pedagogies in teaching cultural heritage dance classes, participant and nonparticipant observation (Tedlock, 1991, 2005) allowed me to gather data from practical teaching activities. Dance pedagogy is an embodied and ephemeral experience, and participant and nonparticipant observation created the necessary conditions for elicitation of nuanced experiential information.

I participated in 2-3 classes facilitated by each dance teacher as an experiential and reflective observer. Immersing myself in practical experiences and activities allowed me to investigate pedagogy as an experiential and embodied action. I was able to reflect on pedagogic ideas and inter/subj ectivities through the lens of embodied practice. Participatory observation invited me to experience pedagogy from the viewpoint of a learner, doer, and interrogator. I aimed to generate first-person embodied and reflective experiences on how pedagogy is a framework of transformance – becoming, means of creating and expression – doing and embodying, method of cultural practice – being and belonging, and system of thought and inquiry – knowing and thinking.

Each observation session was guided by a set of participatory observation guidelines, which were derived from my objectives and research questions. I used these guidelines to investigate how the dance teachers draw on the Ubuntu worldview (see 2.1.1) to rationalise pedagogies. Because “we cannot study the social world without being part of it” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1994, p. 249), I integrated into the community of dancers and learners. My immersion into the dance activities as a participant observer was to examine and explore pedagogy from an experiential perspective.

I also took part in nonparticipant observation of cultural heritage dance classes facilitated by each research participant. I drew on the nonparticipant observation protocol
that I designed based on the key research questions to guide observation processes. Nonparticipant observation enabled me to create distance from the dance activities and observe and reflect on intrinsic pedagogic clues to understand the subtler, implicit, underlying and incidental pedagogic actions and ideas that I could not readily access through interview methods alone (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Drawing on the nonparticipant fieldwork guidelines, I recorded field notes on the reflections, observations, and thoughts that I generated during the observation sessions.

As a participant and nonparticipant researcher, I faced the challenge of paying attention to all the activities that were happening simultaneously, such as drumming, singing, performing, dancing, and teaching. The overarching questions that addressed this fieldwork dilemma were: 1) At what point do all these different dance activities intersect? 2) How do I examine them as an integrated pedagogic practice? 3) How do they expand and illuminate dance education and pedagogy? 4) What is the location of individual teachers within these activities? As a nonparticipant observer, these questions allowed me to look at dance activities from an outsider’s viewpoint to figure out what was going on. This enabled me deeper interrogation of the practicality and intersectionality of these activities as they related to pedagogy. I investigated these activities interconnected elements of pedagogy. Being on the margins of these activities allowed for a perspective that is more objective, distant, logical (Headland, Pike, & Harris, 1990). I looked at one activity at a time to identify how a collection of activities undergirded pedagogy.

4.6. Ethical considerations

Before I conducted this research, I attained ethical approval from The University of Auckland’s Human Participants Ethics Committee. Ethical approval considered and
ensured the informed consent and safety of the dance teachers as research participants during fieldwork activities. I received ethical approval before I travelled to Uganda to conduct the fieldwork for the study.

The application for ethical approval covered seeking consent from the eight dance teachers as research participants, and the organisations and the communities they were teaching in, such as churches, non-governmental organisation, and youth centres, among others. During the fieldwork, I complied with all ethical requirements. I issued participant information sheets and consent forms to the eight dance teachers and organisational heads, written in English and Luganda. These documents clarified my position as a researcher, the intent and parameters of the research study and provided the participants the opportunity to withdraw themselves and their data.

The inquiry did not expose me as a researcher or the dance teachers I engaged to any risky situations. I was born and raised in central Uganda, the location of my fieldwork. Although I had challenges re-entering my native country, such as being viewed as an internative (see Section 4.2), the research activities did not expose me to any security or health dangers.

In the preliminary interaction with the dance teachers, which I conducted via phone communication, I let each of them identify a place of convenience and comfort where they wanted interview sessions to be conducted. The research did not infringe on the identity or privacy of the individual dance teachers. As dance activities involved other individuals who were not party to this study, I did not visually record the dance teachers during cultural heritage dance classes because this would have been infringement of the privacy of people who were not part of the study.

During the process of ethical approval, the issue of infringing on cultural heritage
dances as a form of native practice was raised. However, this issue did not arise during the fieldwork because I specifically focused on studying how individual dance teachers engage Ubuntu worldview to rationalise cultural heritage dance pedagogies.

As discussed previously, I did not attempt to discount particular cultural products or construct a representation of a particular cultural community. The cultural heritage dance practices in Uganda recognise that individuals can pursue practices derived from individual experiences and realities. Consequently, any inquiry or investigation that focuses on individual artistic practitioners is not considered as an infringement of or risk to collective cultural practices, unless these individuals are under the direct jurisdiction of cultural institutions and protocols.

4.7. Analysis of research data

Throughout the entire fieldwork experience, I reflected on the data that I collected and the experiences that emerged. As I have already noted, this study entailed collecting data through interviews, storytelling, and participant and nonparticipant observations. I listened to the interview and storytelling recordings and read through participant and nonparticipant field notes repeatedly. I considered this important because I wanted to immerse myself in the research data. I then transcribed the data into written texts. The process of transcription allowed me to get closer to the research data.

It is at this stage that I also translated the interviews and storytelling notes that I conducted in Luganda into English. Translation through transcription enabled me to identify the nuances in the data that related to how individual dance teachers rationalised cultural heritage dance pedagogies. After I transcribed and compiled the interviews, stories and observations, I sent the transcripts back to the dance teachers for verification and
clarification. They dance teachers deleted, added, and expanded areas that they thought required clarification.

I received the transcripts back and integrated the verifications and clarifications. I then employed classical content analysis (Elo & Kygas, 2008; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2005) to search for phenomenological meanings (Hatch, 2002) to deconstruct these data. I applied Burnard’s (1991) stages of analysing qualitative data to organise and interpret these data. This allowed me identify patterns and themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, and mount critiques (Hatch, 2002).

The stages of analysis entailed making notes about key insights during and after each interview, storytelling session and observation session; transcribing interviews, stories and participant and nonparticipant observation data; reading through these transcripts, and then re-reading them again and again to become immersed in the research data; applying classical content analysis to code the data; re-coding the data to ensure validity of codes; analysing the derived codes to generate a list of categories; re-reading the transcripts to correlate the data with derived codes and categories; and reviewing and re-analysing the list of categories to generate thematic indexes. The data analysis processes were based on an inductive approach (Bailey & Jackson, 2003; Warren & Karner, 2005), which required that the themes and categories of analysis emerged out of the data rather than being imposed on these data (Patton, 2005).

Concerns have been raised about the credibility, transferability, dependability, validity, reliability, and confirmability of qualitative research (Guba, 1981; Miles, 1990). If not addressed, the aforementioned aspects raise questions about the authenticity and relevance of a qualitative research inquiry. I employed data triangulation, theory triangulation, site triangulation and method triangulation (Flick, 2004; Shenton, 2004) to
address these concerns. This triangulation assured reliability and validity of data.

I used multiple methods such as interviews, storytelling, participant observation and nonparticipant observation to collect research data. Theory triangulation entailed applying the theories of Ubuntu and constructivism as the frameworks of data analysis. For site triangulation, I engaged dance teachers from a wide range of geographical, ethnic, social, demographic, and gender backgrounds in different districts of central Uganda. A combination of these triangulation strategies allowed me to draw comparisons between the research data to identify patterns and themes of the study.

4.8. Problems and limitations of the research

This research study was conducted in five different districts in Uganda. Fieldwork required financial resources to cover transportation costs, airfares back to Uganda to conduct the research, stationery costs, and costs related to data collection tools and equipment. Although I received financial support from the University to facilitate some fieldwork expenses such as airfares, I funded the biggest component of the research activities myself. This imposed financial constraints on the research activities.

However, I was able to mobilise financial and logistical resources before I embarked on the research, which enabled me to complete research activities with a low yet satisfactory budget plan. Additionally, I carried out the study over eight months. This timeframe allowed me to take a step-by-step approach to the fieldwork activities. I was able to design a fieldwork plan that considered the research activities according to the resources that I had and the time frame within which I scheduled to conduct the research.

Throughout the research process, I also encountered issues with the inaccessibility of literature on dances from African communities. Most of the books, articles, book
chapters, photographic images, and audio-visual recordings could not be accessed through online platforms, research engines or physically on library shelves. This not only slowed down the review of the literature, but also the entire process of writing the thesis.

To address these challenges, I liaised with the librarian of the Dance and Music Library at Auckland University to have these materials delivered to me through the interlibrary loan system. In addition, I utilised the Africana section of the Makerere University library and Makerere University Institute of Social Research in Uganda for fieldwork to access unique material, which I could not access in New Zealand. Through these institutions, I accessed a wide range of books and articles, which provided historical and contextual information on artistic practices in African communities.

4.9. Delimitations of the study

This research project covered eight cultural heritage dance teachers in central Uganda. The choice of this sample population and size aimed to exhaust the pedagogic realities, experiences, and practices of each individual dance teacher. The sample size allowed for in-depth investigation of the complex pedagogic realities of each dance teacher. The rationale was to use this sample size to provide a snapshot of the multifarious issues related to pedagogy of cultural dances as an epistemological and ontological domain and the role the individual dance teachers play in facilitating the pedagogic processes.

The geographical scope of the study was restricted to central Uganda. Due to migration, economic innovation, and technological advancement, this region has continued to experience cultural and social transformation that transcends ethnic boundaries. As such, it was suitable to examine the dance teachers’ pedagogic practices in this dynamic environment to achieve deeper and rich insights into pedagogy as epistemological, cultural,
intellectual, and ontological phenomena that drew on individual innovation and dynamic social circumstances, and experiential constructions.

The teaching practices of cultural heritage dances involve a wide range of participants, including learners. However, this inquiry did not cover the reflections and experiences of learners. Yet learners are critical participants in pedagogic practices. However, this research project focused on pedagogy from the viewpoint of the dance teachers, deconstructing pedagogy as a framework of teaching. Emphasis was laid on teaching as an axis from which knowledge and skills are shared and transmitted. The aim of the study was to critically examine the role of teachers as constructivist agents in activating teaching as an epistemological, cultural and intellectual undertaking and the place of Ubuntu worldview in this configuration.
5. 1. Introduction

In this section, I provide information about the profiles of the dance teachers who acted as research participants for this inquiry. This information covers the distinct histories and complex reflections of the dance teachers and their journeys into cultural heritage dance practices. This chapter unveils the voices of the dance teachers, allowing them to share their complex personal stories. My inclusion of the dance teachers’ biographical information was inspired by the belief it would form a foundation against which critical analyses of issues related to pedagogy could be made.

5. 2. Profiles of the dance teachers

5.2.1. Matthew Watmon

Image 1
My meeting with Matthew took several phone calls. At first, we set out to meet on September 23, 2015, but Matthew was scheduled to perform in northern Uganda. Later, I met him on October 7, 2015 at his house and dance training venue in Naguru, Nakawa division in the Kampala district. In his living room, Matthew had instruments from different ethnic communities in Uganda, such as *endingidi* (tube fiddle), *embaire* (xylophones), *engoma* (Kiganda drums), and *omurere* (flute), among others.

According to Matthew, this demonstrated that his practice involved both music and dance from diverse cultures in Uganda. During his free time, Matthew mentioned that he and his wife make instruments and costumes used by the community he teaches for dance activities.

Matthew was born in Pawidi village, Matiditi Sub County, Kitgum district in northern Uganda on November 25, 1951. He recalls that growing up, cultural heritage dance and music were always part of his life:

> I do not remember living a single day without music and dance. I started singing and dancing when I was still young in my village. I started learning *Larakaraka* dance at a young age. I used to go and observe adolescents perform in the villages and would imitate them whenever I saw them. I would also go back home and go through the dance movements whenever I got free time to perfect them.

Matthew’s life in the village enabled him to interact with music and dance as a cultural practice involving community members from an early age. Learning was communal and entailed his involvement in communal norms of practices. The learning of new dances was integral to the performance cycles of the dances as a routine practice in communities. Hence, performance involved a practical interface between content and pedagogy through participation.
When Matthew dropped out of school in primary school education because his parents could not afford to pay school fees, he started to look after his grandfather’s cattle. As a herdsman, he would move between villages looking for pasture. This enabled him to come into contact with communities that were performing dances and music. As a youth, Matthew would join these communities in music and dance activities. At first, he just observed the dancers and musicians and imitated them from the sidelines. Gradually, he joined these communities to dance, sing and play cultural heritage music instruments.

Matthew noted that he did not know the meaning of the dances at the beginning. He just saw people dancing and joined them. At around the age of 9, his father, grandfather and members of the community started to explain the cultural and contextual essence of the cultural heritage dances and music:

I always saw youth perform Larakaraka dance, but I did not know the meaning of the dance. As I grew older and joined other boys to dance, that is the first time I learned through conversations, which I had with community members, that Larakaraka was a courtship dance meant to prepare boys and girls for courtship and later marriage, among the Acholi people.

At home, Matthew continued to interact with music: “My grandfather was a very good nanga player and he was well known in the whole of Acholi. My father was also a good player of nanga. I observed both of them play, but I was still too young to own my own instrument.” Music and dance circulated in Matthew’s environs. He acquired dance and music knowledge through inquisitorial observations and reflective immersions in communities of practices.

At the age of 10, his father made a trip to Kampala. Matthew picked up his nanga, a multiple stringed traditional instrument from the Acholi people of Northern Uganda and played it. He tried to play nanga using the techniques that he observed from his father and
grandfather. Later, Matthew acquired his own *nanga*. To enhance his skills and knowledge as a learner, Matthew also started playing *nanga* with an elderly man in the neighbourhood. Matthew’s learning was imbedded in the community. This reflected the Ubuntu worldview. Matthew explored the sense of pedagogic self (I am) through the practices of others (We are) (see 2.1.1).

Matthew’s desire to advance his music and dance skills continued to grow. He exploited opportunities around him to learn music and dance, including learning from the radio that his father owned: “During that period, musicians used to play a lot of *nanga* music on the radio. I would listen to the music on the radio and try to play it on my *nanga*”. Reflections on radio performances were a trigger that Matthew used to explore and experiment in self-guided discovery to advance his skills in *nanga* music.

Growing up, Matthew continued to engage in music and dance activities in his ethnic communities. From the communities that he interacted with, he learned more dances such as *Bwola*. At the age of 17, he formed his own music and dance group, which offered performances in the communities for weddings, events, and other social gatherings. Members of the group supported each other to learn and grow by teaching one another: “We started teaching each other music and dance and re-arranging songs and movements into items for performance before audiences. I always invited women, who knew how to perform the dances very well, to teach my female dancers”.

In 1982, Matthew visited his uncle, who was a close relative of Tito Okello Lutwa, the former president of Uganda. The uncle saw Matthew playing the *nanga* and was so inspired he took Matthew to Radio Uganda, where he was booked to play the *nanga* on a live radio show:
I reached radio Uganda and I could not believe that it was me who was going to play. I sat quietly in the lounge with my nanga. I was so encouraged, but nervous. I knew that this was a moment for me to shine and make a national mark. When I went on air, I played the nanga with all the expertise that I had. I pulled out all the techniques.

It turned out that listeners liked Matthew’s music. Consequently, he received other slots to play for the radio station and was paid for these musical performances. Matthew’s practice experienced a shift from his local community to a national arena. This marked the beginning of his journey from the Kitgum district in northern Uganda to Kampala, the capital city of Uganda: “I relocated to Kampala in the late 1980s when the war in northern Uganda intensified. I first did casual jobs because I could not find opportunities to play music and practice dance in Kampala”.

In 1991, Matthew started a dance community in Kampala specialising in dances from the Acholi region of northern Uganda:

Together with a friend, we started to run music and dance activities in Naguru, in Kampala. We welcomed community members to come and dance with our community. At the beginning, our activities focused on dances and music from the Acholi people of northern Uganda. Later, we integrated dances from other ethnic communities in Uganda such as Baakisimba from Buganda, Kitaguriro from Ankole, et cetera because our members came from all walks of life.

Matthew still works with this community as an elder and dance teacher. Furthermore, Matthew’s community still engages in teaching dances from different ethnic communities in Uganda to community members (Oluka, 2016). People come from different communities to participate in music and dance activities. His community also performs for weddings, government functions, and other occasions organised by different communities and including festivals outside Uganda.

Matthew also indicated that he has taught music and dances in school in Uganda and conducted dance and music workshops in various communities in Uganda, Europe,
and Canada. Matthew’s work as a cultural heritage dance and music teacher stems from multiple influences that involve migration, co-option of ideas from diverse ethnic communities, individual experimentation, and communal goodwill. His philosophy is inspired by his view that “the young generation is copying other cultures at a very fast rate. This has left our cultures eroded and abandoned. By teaching traditional music and dance, I believe that we can engage communities in sustaining our cultural practices and inspire people to pick interest in their music and dances so that our cultures are not eroded by foreign influences”.

5.2.2. Collin Lubega

Image 2

Collin was born and raised in Kireka on the outskirts of Kampala city. He first engaged in dance at home during childhood: “My mother tells me that I always brought my milk home. As a child, I was so active in music and dance. Every time visitors came home, I would
entertain them with songs and dance and they would give me money and gifts. The money bought my milk”. For Collin, initiation into dance started at an early age. Home was a location where he first explored dance experiences as a form of entertainment.

At around the age of five, Collin experienced his first interface – *Imbalu* circumcision dances in Kireka village: “My first time to see cultural dances was in my village in the late 1980s. I saw a group of people with face painting moving across the village while holding sticks and tree branches”. Collin’s orientation into dance was through observation. Although his initial contact with dance was in Buganda, the dance that he observed originated from the Bagisu people of eastern Uganda. This is an indication that exchange of diverse cultural heritage dances in central Uganda existed at the time of Collin’s introduction into dance.

Initially, Collin did not know what these *Imbalu* circumcision dances meant. It was not until he joined the primary school that he took part in learning Mwaga dance: “During my primary school, our dance teacher taught us a dance whose movements resembled the *Imbalu* circumcision dances that I had seen in my village as a child. He explained to us that it was Mwaga, one of the dances that constitute the *Imbalu* circumcision ritual of the Bagisu people”

At school, Collin’s participation in dance activities continued: “In primary three, I joined the school choir to get more involved in dance activities. The school hired a teacher to teach us cultural music and dance from different communities in Uganda. The first dance that I learned was *Runyege-Ntorgoro*. I liked the polyrhythmic movements of the dance and the teacher hailed me for getting the movements right.” At school, Collin’s knowledge base in diverse cultural heritage dance grew.
At Makerere College High School, his music teacher, Arthur Kayizzi, encouraged him to join the music and dance team. The school had a vibrant extra-curricular programme in cultural heritage music and dance, which supported Collin’s desire to learn music and dances. Collin performed for the school in music, dance and drama festivals, and competitions at regional and national levels. Within six years of participating in music and dance in primary and middle school, Collin learned a number of cultural heritage dances from different ethnic communities in Uganda: “I learned more than ten cultural dances and the music that accompanies them. Some of the dances are Kitaguriro, Bwola, Mwaga, Maggunju, Kizino, and Baakisimba, Runyege-Ntgoro, Larakaraka, and many more”.

Collin later joined the Akadinda ka Africa dance troupe and Ndere dance troupe as a performer. Working as a performer and instrumentalist for the troupes, he toured and staged performances in Europe and Uganda. The performance encounters enabled Collin to experience shifts in contexts of dance performances from school festivals, to theatrical concerts, to international platforms: “I realised that each occasion of performance brought its own challenges and opportunities. For example, when we were preparing for tours abroad with the troupes, the dances that we learned were many and training was intense than when we were preparing to participate in school festivals”.

Collin also sought to apply his cultural heritage dance knowledge and skills to empower disadvantaged communities in Uganda: “I decided to focus on applying cultural heritage music and dance as a tool for community education, empowerment and development. I started working with Sosolya Udungu dance academy as a dance teacher and artistic director. This is not an academy in an academic sense. It is a community of people in this slum of Kabalaga, who meet every evening to learn, celebrate, share and
perform cultural music and dances”. Collin’s profile developed from a dance performer to a dance teacher.

Collin has also worked and taught in communities whose aim is to produce dancers to go to China for performances: “I have led teams to China to stage cultural heritage dance and music performances since 2010. I teach them in their communities and produce items that we stage in recreation centres in China”. As a learner, performer, and teacher, Collin is inspired by the vision that “for society to develop, we need to invest in the youth. We need to train youth in hands-on skills. Cultural dance and music education and performance offer an opportunity for youth to develop and apply these lifelong skills in different communities and sectors within the national and global economies”.

5.2.3. Herbert Katende Mukungu

Image 3

Hebert was born in 1967 in Luwero district in central Uganda. His experience in dance dates back to his childhood: “I was a very curious boy during my childhood. Every time I saw people dancing I would look at them and then imitate them”. His first encounter with
dance was in his village in Luwer district: “The very first time I saw people dancing in my village I thought they were just shaking. I did not know that it was Baakisimba dance. I just saw adults shaking their bodies”.

A Muganda by ethnicity, Herbert grew up under the guardianship of his parents and grandfather. The name Mukungu is a special name in his lugave (pangolin) clan and was given to him by his grandfather. Herbert stated: “My parents told me that my grandfather gave me the name Mukungu because he thought I had a special status within our clan. Up to now, that special status has never been explained to me”.

After spending his childhood in his ancestral village in Luwero, Herbert enrolled for primary school education at Buloba primary school in Wakiso district at the age of seven. It is at this school that he first came into contact with cultural heritage music and dance as a dancer: “At school, I interacted with the dance activities that the school choir engaged in. At first, I could not join the choir because the choirmaster thought that I was too young”. Herbert’s keen interest in dance continued: “Every time the choir conducted dance and music rehearsals, I would go to the room and observe the dancers from the sidelines”. One day he made a request to join the choir through the choirmaster. The choirmaster accepted Herbert’s request. This, he recalls, “was a turning point in my life as a dance performer and learner because it marked my active and full entry into the world of dance”.

As a choir member, Herbert excelled at learning and performing cultural heritage dances and music such as Baakisimba: “I performed well as a dancer and I permanently joined school choir”, he noted. In primary four, the school choir started performing in music, dance and drama festivals and competitions representing the school. Herbert
participated in these events. In primary six, he won a prize for the overall best national dancer at the National Theatre of Uganda during the primary school national competitions.

Herbert continued to perform music and dance at Lubiri secondary school. During his secondary education, he learned more Ugandan cultural heritage dances, such as Larakaraka, Bwola, and Kitaguriro. The exposure to new ethnic dance forms enabled Herbert to navigate dances from other cultures, embracing new ways of thinking and dancing. With diverse population of students and teachers, the school taught dances from various parts of Uganda. Because the school was participating in national dance activities, the government, through the ministry of education and sports, encouraged teaching of diverse ethnic Ugandan dances to reflect this ethnic diversity.

Later, Herbert joined the Ndere troupe as a performer. Learning and performing dances with the Ndere troupe expanded his knowledge of cultural heritage dances and music: “Together with other troupe members, we conducted dance rehearsals in Busega. These rehearsals always happened after school. It is at this point that I came into contact with more cultural dances from different ethnic communities in Uganda”. Because the troupe members came from different cultural backgrounds, the troupe’s approach of allowing members to teach each other cultural heritage dances and music broadened Herbert’s knowledge and skill base of the dances.

Herbert noted that sometimes “cultural dance instructors were invited to teach us the cultural dances that we did not know at Ndere troupe”. Learning from other teachers allowed him to experience different ways of teaching and learning cultural heritage dances. The dance experience in the troupe was intense and competitive. Herbert noted that teaching and learning was primarily centred around honing practical skills: “We just focused on movement aspects of the dances and music. The troupe environment was about
getting dances right for stage performances. So, you had to work hard to be selected on the performance team. In a way, we were a community of learner and dancers, but also competitors”.

Alongside working with Ndere troupe, he also enrolled in a teacher training college and received a certificate in primary teacher training. Although this training offered him new ways and methods of teaching in formal education, Herbert did not pursue a career as a schoolteacher. Instead he attended Makerere University to pursue a diploma in music, dance and drama, specialising in dance. At the university, Herbert enhanced his knowledge of theoretical areas of dance such as choreography, labanotation, dance criticism and analysis, among others.

After graduation, he continued to work with the Ndere troupe, and started teaching cultural heritage dances and music in schools and other communities. Through this exposure, Herbert interacted “with people from diverse ethnic background, who offered me cultural insights into a variety of Ugandan cultural dance and music forms”. He added that he grew as a teacher of diverse population of learners: “I mean, every group that I taught brought its own learning experiences. I realised that each group required it own unique sets of instructions. For example, there are people who learn dances through music and there are those who just want movements to be slowly broken down”.

Herbert’s foundational dance knowledge and skills further expanded when he started participating in cultural exchange programmes and festivals in countries such as France, the U.K, Spain, Norway, Kenya, and Tanzania as a performer and teacher. This added global perspectives to his view of cultural heritage dances and music: “I learned how to choreograph and teach dance in cultures outside Uganda. I realised that when you are teaching new learners in Europe, you have to go slow, take each step at a time, which we
do not do when we are teaching dances in Uganda where we mostly use rote method”. Herbert’s cultural heritage dance practice is motivated by his belief that cultural heritage “dances are under threat of extinction and there is urgent need to pass on this knowledge and skills to younger generations in academic and nonacademic environments, if the dances and the cultures where they originate from are to survive in this ever-changing world”.

5.2.4. Olivia Namyalo

Image 4

Olivia’s experience in cultural heritage dances dates back to her childhood:

Growing up as an orphan, I realised the importance of having lifelong skills that I would use to earn a living and share my life experiences knowledge, and skills with others. This realisation coincided with my love for music and dancing. I have always loved to dance since childhood.

Olivia was born in Kalerwe, on the outskirts of Kampala district. Her father passed on when she was very young. As a child, Olivia recalls having an interest in music and dance:
My first encounter with dance was at my primary school. At around the age of four, I saw people dancing. At that time, I thought they were just shaking. I did not know it was Baakisimba dance. Every time I observed dancers, I would go back home and practice their moves in the mirror. My guardians did not want me to go into music, dance and drama. When I was going to school, I asked them to send me to a school that taught music and dance.

Olivia’s guardians agreed to send her to a primary school with a strong tradition of music and dance. At school, Olivia took classes in cultural heritage dances and music for school festivals and competitions. The first dances she learned were Baakisimba and Tamehnaibuga. Olivia said, “The teachers showed us the movements and we observed these movements and imitated them. They told us the names of the dances, but they did not tell us the meaning of the dances”. This recollection demonstrates how the schools put more emphasis on mastering movement skills than offering information about the historical, cultural, and ritualistic backgrounds of the dances.

Throughout her primary school education, Olivia continued to perform cultural heritage dances and music and became one of the best dancers at the school: “Even as a child doing these dances at school, I became successful. I remember my fellow pupils and teachers always complimented me that I was a very good dancer”. The school environment enabled Olivia to learn dances from different cultures in Uganda. For example, Tamehnaibuga dance came from the Basoga people of Eastern Uganda, not from Buganda, the ethnic community to which she belongs.

Olivia joined Old Kampala Senior Secondary School for secondary education. The school did not have a strong tradition in music, dance and drama. Olivia felt alienated due to the lack of dance activities. In senior two, she joined Cornerstone Uganda, an organisation whose mission was to bring together girls from disadvantaged backgrounds
in Uganda and equip them with lifelong skills and knowledge through cultural music and dance.

At Cornerstone Uganda, Olivia became more involved in the dance activities: “I became more involved in music and dance at this organisation, both as a learner, instructor, and performer. I performed dances, sung songs, led songs as a soloist, and learned from and taught other members of the community”. Engagement in dance activities at school and at Cornerstone Uganda exposed Olivia to broader dance ideas from different perspectives and positions as a performer, learner, singer, and teacher.

When one of the teachers at the organisation started a dance troupe, Uganda Heritage Roots, Olivia offered to be one of the pioneering members. At the dance troupe, she expanded her knowledge and skill base in cultural heritage dances from other cultures, which included Runyege, Kitaguriro, Kizino, and Larakaraka. Olivia performed with this troupe extensively in and outside Uganda. Olivia also taught new members of the troupe as a mentor:

I assisted the director to teach new members. I mostly taught the new girls that joined the troupe but did not know how to perform the dances. I taught them through demonstration. I would ask drummers to play music and I would stand in front of these new members and show them how movements are done.

Alongside working as a performer with Uganda Heritage Roots, Olivia started working with Harvest Christ Church in Lungujja as a dance teacher. She ran music and dance programmes with church members for evangelical and fellowship purposes. But this did not come without challenges:

A number of church members thought that cultural dances and music were devilish. These dances and instruments are associated with activities in indigenous shrines. Of course, there are dances such as Kimandwa, which we do not teach because they are meant for indigenous worship and religious rituals that are against the preaching of the church. But I explained
to the church members that not all dances are evil. Some are performed for celebrations. With time, they appreciated the role of cultural dances in society.

With this background knowledge as a dance teacher and performer, Olivia joined the department of Music, Dance, and Drama at Makerere University to pursue a diploma in music, specialising in music and minoring in dance. Later, she enrolled for a degree in drama at the same university. Academic training exposed Olivia to new aspects of cultural heritage dances and music:

It is at the university that I came to learn about dance choreography, dance education, dance research and how to use western techniques such as music notation to analyse songs and instrumental rhythms that accompany the dances. I did not know that this knowledge existed until I started taking dance and music classes at the university.

Olivia has taught dances in schools in Uganda on contractual basis. She has taken part in dance performances in Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, China and Europe:

Currently, I am working on a project that brings members of different churches together through music and dance. Through this project, we have trained and taken performers from different churches to perform in Kenya and Rwanda for evangelical conferences. I have performed on different platforms in Uganda, China, Europe and Africa.

This background information shows how Olivia acquired knowledge and skills of cultural heritage dances from the different contexts in which she made contact with the dances. Olivia’s work is guided by the philosophy that “If the teaching of ethnic dances and music is not encouraged, communities risk losing this knowledge, which is key in the nourishment of human spirituality, creativity, humility, culture, and connections”.
I met Brian at his house in Kyetume, Mukono district in central Uganda. Brian was born and raised at Old Kampala in Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. He grew up going to church and seeing performers sing and dance to church hymns. At home, Brian did not engage in dance activities at all. But he recalls seeing “a lady called Nandujja, who used to conduct cultural dance rehearsals near my dad’s place of work”. This is when Brian first made contact with cultural heritage dances as an observer and listener. He mentioned: “I saw people playing drums, listened to the sound of the drums and voices of the singers, and noticed others dancing. They were dancing, singing, drumming, and clapping at the same time”. Through observation, Brian’s became aware of the existence of cultural dance practices.

Brian first took part in cultural heritage music and dance during his primary school education at Buganda Road Primary School. According to his recollection: “The school hired dance teachers who included Stephen Rwangyezi, Frank Katoola, and Moses Tamale
to teach cultural heritage dances and music for festivals and competitions. Among the dances that we learned are *Runyege, Baakisimba, and Kitaguriro*. His interaction with diverse cultural heritage dances expanded in this academic environment. For example, he stated that “dances such as *Runyege* and *Kitaguriro* originated from Bunyoro and Ankole cultures respectively [to which] I do not belong”.

Brian became active in school choir and class activities that involved music and dance. Because of his talent in music and dance, he was recruited in the Ndere troupe: “Stephen Rwangyezi recruited me into Ndere kids. ‘Ndere Kids’ was an auxiliary group of Ndere troupe, which focused on scouting, recruiting and training young boys and girls to become cultural music and dance performers of Ndere troupe”.

As a dancer with Ndere Kids, Brian’s learning of cultural heritage dances and music mainly happened through keen observation and mimicking of teachers and fellow learners: “We learned dances by observing and mimicking our teachers and fellow learners who assisted the teachers as dance demonstrators”. In addition to gaining exposure in cultural heritage dance knowledge in Ndere troupe, Brian also explored Kiganda drumming with a drum maker who lived in his neighbourhood. “We had a drum maker in our village who used to invite young boys to play drums with him. I used to go to his place and drum with him and other people. Drumming was mostly jamming. We just played and improvised with rhythms”. This drumming experience gave Brian foundational knowledge in musicality and rhythm as aspects of dance.

At school, whenever Brian did not have drums and other instruments to play, he would improvise with other objects. “During my primary school time, we improvised and experimented with music and dance with other pupils. We used to hollow some parts of the desk in the classrooms, which we struck to make different properties of sound. We
always created different rhythms and sounds from the hollowed desks and danced to them”, he noted. Brian’s reflection shows how the environment in which he lived acted as resource for artistic and creative imagination, experimentation and exploration.

Through school festivals and competitions, Brian continued to actively participate in and learn more cultural heritage dances and music. When he joined Makerere University to pursue a degree in literature and drama, Brian continued to take part in dance and music practices: “Because I had the passion for dances, I always went to the Music, Dance and Drama Department, Makerere University, to learn and rehearse dance and music and performed with students of the department”.

When he graduated in 2004, Brian became a music and dance practitioner. He has performed with different dance troupes such as Rhythm Africa, and Ndere. He has also taught dances and music in primary and secondary schools and worked on cultural heritage dance and music projects in churches, including the Watoto children’s choir. Brian is now working with local communities in Uganda to scout talented local dancers, train them, and choreograph cultural heritage dance and music for recreational and cultural performances in different cities and communities in China.

Brian’s zeal for cultural heritage dances and music is guided by his belief that these dances and music “have the capacity to connect people from different cultural diversities. The theory of diffusionism is at the centre of my dance practice. Drawing on this theory, I approach cultural heritage dances as artifacts that originate from human spirit, which the body interprets into movement. I believe that like cultures, dances are mobile and fluid between cultures, populations, and geographic spaces. This is a common trait in all human races, which we should share and celebrate”.
Ronald identifies as a dancer, drummer, teacher, dance scholar, musician, and community dance facilitator. A multi-instrumentalist, Ronald plays musical instruments that originate from different ethnic communities, such as *engoma* (drums), *madinda* (xylophones), *endingidi* (tube fiddle), and *adungu* (bow harp), among others. He grew up performing cultural heritage music and dances at home and within village communities. Ronald stated:

> I come from a renowned family of drum makers and players in Mpambire village, Mpigi district. Mpambire is well known in Uganda as the capital of drum making. Drumming and drum making is a tradition that runs deep in our family. I grew up listening to music, making instruments, tuning them, playing them and dancing to their music.

The social ecosystem at home, which included his grandfather, parents, and other family members acted as a source that fed Ronald’s dance and music knowledge:

> During my childhood, I was closely attached to my grandfather, who was a very famous musician on the village. Every time the grandfather sang or whistled, I would listen to him from a distance and imitate the melodies and
songs. We also made drums at home. Every time we finished a set of drums, we would converge and play them. We used to call this testing the drums.

Growing up, Ronald became more involved in community-based drumming, singing and dance practices. When he was still a child, he used to see dancers perform *Baakisimba-Nankasa-Muwogola* dance in the villages. At this stage, Ronald did not know the name of the dance. After he started participating in community performances as a drummer, he acquired deeper cultural and historical information about the dances and music. Ronald recalled that learning dances and music at home and in the village was participatory and experiential: “As a young drummer, I was always asked to play for dancers. At first, I thought I was a novice since the villages had members who were much more experienced than me. But I undertook the drumming tasks head on. Each day I drummed I gained confidence and identified my own unique techniques and rhythms under the guidance of community and family members”.

As a drummer accompanying dancers, Ronald learned the intricacies and complexities of music as an inseparable component of dance: “I had to learn when to change motifs, when to play softly, and how to provide powerful accompaniment for dancers. In this environment, we did not compete between ourselves as learners. This created opportunities for us, the novice drummers, to improvise and be creative with the music craft. Occasionally, expert drummers would come in to challenge and guide us to play complex rhythmic patterns”. These community-based performances deepened Ronald’s appreciation of music as a central element in dance practices.

Because of his music, dance and drumming skills and knowledge in cultural heritage music and dance performance, Ronald was awarded a bursary to attend school at St. Joseph Nabbingo primary school. At this school, he joined the school music choir as a
drummer, dancer, and singer: “I was very active in music and dance activities because I wanted to keep my bursary. I was appointed to keep and maintain music instruments. The choirmaster also asked me to teach other students songs, dance, and drumming, especially *Baakisimba*. The school participated in festivals and competitions to which Ronald was an active participant as a performer. When he joined the school, he only knew *Baakisimba-Nankasa-Muwogola* dance. However, because the school hired dance teachers to teach and choreograph cultural heritage music and dances from different Ugandan cultures in preparation for festivals and competitions, Ronald was able to expand his repertoire of diverse cultural heritage dances:

> The teachers who came in to teach us exposed us to many new dances such as *Bwola, Larakaraka, Kitaguriro, Mwaga,* and *Runyege,* among others. I did not know these dances. I was so excited to learn new dances. I particularly liked Mwaga dance movements and drumming. The dynamics and layers of the drums captured my soul. That is the dance that I fully learned first.

As a learner and performer, Ronald continued to participate in dance and music performance during his secondary education. At this level, he had mastered a number of dances from Uganda. He joined Children of Uganda, an organisation whose aim was to use cultural heritage music and dance to offer lifelong skills to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ronald continued to harness his skills in cultural heritage dance performance. In 1998, he traveled to the U.S with Children of Uganda to stage dance and music performances. This reaffirmed his belief that cultural heritage dances and music can bridge cultures and allow a people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to express their cultural ideas and connect with other communities. Ronald also worked with Ndere troupe as a dance performer and music instrumentalist.
To advance his knowledge in dance and music, Ronald enrolled for a diploma in music dance and drama at Makerere University where he specialised in music. Later, he upgraded to an undergraduate degree in music. University education expanded Ronald’s theoretical perspectives in music and dance:

At the university, I learned scientific methods of analysing and teaching cultural music and dance. For example, I took courses in music composition. Through these courses, I learned how to use music notation to analyse cultural music and drum rhythms. I also learned how music knowledge is organised. Academic training enabled me to use music as a framework to understand cultural dances.

Ronald pursued music and dance further at the graduate level. In 2012, he was admitted to pursue a Master’s degree in dance at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Norway. This course advanced his knowledge in dance anthropology, research, ethnochoreology, and labanotation. After graduation in 2014, Ronald returned to Uganda and was offered employment as an assistant lecturer of dance in the Department of Performing Arts and Film, Makerere University. He has worked on a number of cultural exchange programmes, which has allowed him to “experience different ways of teaching cultural heritage dances and music to people from different cultural backgrounds”. This has enabled Ronald to advance dance education knowledge in ways that transcend the experiences that he initially acquired in his home village and country.

In 2005, Ronald started an organisation called Peace Africa Children Ensemble. The organisation is “a community outreach project, which aims to train youth and children from disadvantaged backgrounds such as orphans and former child soldiers”. It consists of 30 youth and children whose dream is to create a better life for individuals and communities through music and dance.
Ronald believes that the dances have power to bring communities together, empower people with skills and ideas, instill hope, build broken communities, and redeem people from difficult conditions and disadvantaged backgrounds, such as poverty, being orphaned and post war experiences, and open them to new cultural and life experiences.

5.2.7. Ssenkubuge

Image 7

Members of a community where Ssenkubuge teaches dance getting ready for a dance class

Ssenkubuge hails from Kyotera village in Rakai, a district that borders Tanzania to the south, where he has practiced dance and music for more than 40 years. He identifies as a dance teacher, master drummer, composer of drum rhythms, and performer of cultural heritage dances and music.

I first met Ssenkubuge for an interview on October 22, 2015, in Kyotera town. He took me for a tour of his dance community as a soon as I arrived. Ssenkubuge grew up in this district in a family of renowned drummers:

I was born into a family and community of great drummers. When I was still a child, I remember seeing my father and his friends play drums every evening. They would raise platforms and play these drums on top of these platforms. My father used to say that they used these raised platforms so
that drum sound could be heard across villages. I was too young to play. The drums were only played by adults. I remember sitting aside and observing my father and his friends play these drums.

At the age of four, Ssenkubuge had his first experience of drumming, which he did with other adult members of the family. Initially, he had interacted with drumming and dance as an observer. When he started playing, he put into practice some of the ideas that he had experienced as an observer: “This is when I tried out some of the things that I had observed from other people when I was growing up. I did not have difficulties experimenting with these techniques”.

The more Ssenkubuge played drums at home, the more he mastered the art of drum rhythms and musicality. At the age of seven, he started drumming with communities in different villages. “We would get together in different villages and play drums. Whenever drums sounded, we would listen and pick a signal of where the sound was coming from. This is how we located the drumming gatherings across villages”.

The drumming events “created opportunities for individual drummers to explore different techniques, learn from one another, initiate others in drumming and music traditions, invent styles of drumming, and share diverse ways of drumming”. Since the community was mostly made up of Baganda people from central Uganda, theirs were the drum rhythms that Ssenkubuge grew up listening to and playing. For example, Ssenkubuge mentioned that he first got oriented into Baakisimba-Nankasa-Muwogola, a ceremonial dance performed by Baganda people through communal village and home performances.

Ssenkubuge later learned Mbaga, a wedding dance from the same ethnic community of Baganda people. “These became my dance specialty. I am well known in Buganda because of my teaching and performance credentials of these two dances”. Ssenkubuge shared that in his community, “it was women who used to dance. Men played
instruments”. However, because he was keen to learn both dance and drumming, he joined dance activities as a learner and performer. As a participatory learner, Ssenkubuge was fascinated by the manner in which the dancers translated music into dance movements: “I was always curious to experience how it felt to dance to the drum rhythms. Every time I played drums for dancers, my interest to join them to experience music from a dance perspective grew. When I started dancing, I would feel the drum rhythms through my body.”

In form six during his primary school education, Ssenkubuge’s father died. By this time, he had already been instructing dances at school and in the village communities:

I remember teaching fellow students drumming and dance in preparation for school festivals and competitions. All teachers and students knew that my family was famous for dance and drumming. My teachers always asked me to assist them with drumming and dances. I always demonstrated for other students. I practically showed them how movements are done and they followed me. I taught only Baakisimba-Nankasa-Muwogola. I did not know other dances.

Because Ssenkubuge could not afford fees to pursue further education, he dropped out of school in primary six. He decided to start running dance activities in and with communities around Kyotera: “I felt the need to continue the family tradition. I already had skills and knowledge of dance. I just needed a community to continue with the tradition of music and dance”, he stated. In 1990, Ssenkubuge started offering classes in cultural heritage music and dance at a facility that he inherited from his father in Kyotera town. The project has steadily grown to attract member from various village communities and schools in Rakai, Kampala and Masaka districts:

Parents send their children to me. There are three boys that just came yesterday. You will see them when we go to participate in dance and music activities with the community. This is the pillar that has sustained cultural dance community in Rakai. I feel the responsibility to mentor these individuals as agents of our cultures through cultural dances.
Ssenkubuge considers the community as space where cultural heritage dance knowledge and skills can be shared, developed, preserved, and sustained. He believes his guidance as a teacher is key in keeping the tradition of drumming, singing and dancing alive.

The experience of Ssenkubuge and dancers in his community has broadened as a result of exposure to different festivals, concerts, and dance events. For example, when his community was invited to perform and facilitate workshops in music and dance festivals in Kampala, Ssenkubuge interacted with new cultural heritage dances from other ethnic communities in Uganda:

I remember when we went to perform at Ndere centre in the late 1990s, I saw people performing other dances that differed from ours. I later came to learn that one of the dances was Runyege-Ntogo of the Banyoro and Batooro people of western Uganda. We also saw many new instruments such as adungu.

Interface with diverse dance and music traditions has expanded Ssenkubuge’s understanding of the diverse dances. He has acquired some artistic knowledge and skills, which he integrates into his teaching and performance with his community:

I observed other dancers and musicians perform and learned the movements and rhythms. At times, they asked us to participate in music and dance workshops. I participated in the dance workshops that people from other communities facilitated. The first two dances that I learned and integrated into our dance activities are Runyege-Ntogo and Larakaraka. The intricate movements of the dances and patterns of music fascinated me.

As a dance teacher, Ssenkubuge has taught in different school in Masaka, Rakai, and Kampala. “I never completed school but people call me teacher. I have taught in many schools. I have produced so many performers. Some are performing with dance companies in Uganda and abroad”, he stated. Ssenkubuge has also been invited by Ndere troupe to choreograph Baakisimba dance and rearrange drum rhythms for a group of more than 20 troupes for Uganda Development Theatre Association festivals.
Ssenkubuge believes that “dances and music have their unique qualities that they bring into communities and human realities and experiences. Through dance and music practices, people can avail communities with these unique qualities, which they may not be able to access through other ways of living. Teaching music and dances can open up opportunities for communities to engage in multiple sociocultural experiences”.

5.2.8. Mariam Amooti Mugyenyi

I met Mariam at her home in Kiyindi zone, Nakulabye in Kampala city. Mariam was born and raised in Butyaba village, Hoima district in western Uganda. She was the only female child in the entire family. Because of this environment, Mariam described “doing so many things that society perceived to be masculine such as riding bicycles.” This experience prepared her to engage in dance performances at home and in the village communities. Marian recalled: “When I was a child, I use to sing and dance to entertain visitors that my
parents hosted. I would do creative dances and on songs in front of these visitors in the house. They would give me gifts and presents”.

When her father and mother separated, Mariam relocated with her mother to another village. It is in this village that Mariam first interacted with cultural heritage music and dance as an observer and performer: “My first experience occurred when I saw people in the villages perform dance and music. The most common dance was Runyege. I can say that my first learning was through observation. Gradually, I figured out how to get more involved in the practical activities of the dances”.

The community activities enabled Mariam to establish networks with other performers of her age and sex. Together with some community members, she started learning and rehearsing the music and dances for performances: “I formed a dance and music group in the village with my friends. We would teach ourselves dances, re-arrange them, and rehearse and stage performance for events in the villages such as weddings”.

These performances helped Mariam to raise money for school fees and other basic welfare needs: “When my mother enrolled for further education, she left me to take care of my seven siblings. The dance performance group that I founded in 1986 helped me to raise resources to cater for my siblings”. As the artistic director of the performance group, Mariam’s responsibilities included composing songs, re-arranging dances, arranging rehearsals, managing other dancers and looking for performance opportunities.

When Mariam joined Kitara secondary school in Hoima district, she continued to participate in music and dance as a lead soloist and dancer. At the school, she also learned Western music notation through the classes in Western classical music. In form two of her secondary school education, when her mother failed to raise school fees for her education, Mariam decided to drop out of school to fully embark on dance and music practice.
In the late 1990s, Mariam joined the Music, Dance and Drama Department of Makerere University to pursue a diploma in music, dance and drama through mature age entry exam. At Makerere University, Mariam’s knowledge of theory and practice of cultural heritage dances and music broadened:

I came into contact with cultural dances from other cultures in Uganda such as Maggunju, Larakaraka, and Mwaga, which I did not know before. I also studied theoretical courses such as choreography, dance education, theatre, directing, and dance criticism, and dance performance.

Upon graduation, Mariam started teaching dance, drama and music in schools in Hoima district, and later relocated to Kampala city to teach cultural heritage dances. Alongside teaching in schools, she performed for cultural heritage dance and music troupes such as Akadinda ka Africa, staging performances in Uganda and Europe.

Performing with dance troupes widened Mariam’s performance abilities in music and dances and exposed her to knowledge of managing projects that integrate cultural heritage dances and music. In 2004, Mariam and her friend Michael Nsibambi started a project, the Afrique dance group. She observed: “Through this project, I teach cultural heritage dances and music to children and youth who come from different disadvantaged communities on the outskirts of Kampala. The aim is to equip these youth with music and dance skills and at the same time allow them to experience different cultures”.

Besides this project, she also teaches cultural heritage dances and music to communities such as women and youth organisations, orphanages and non-governmental organisations. Mariam’s interest in cultural heritage dance and music stems from her belief that cultural heritage dances and music:

Can teach communities about their culture and other people’s cultures. Through cross cultural and intercultural learning, these dances and music can be transformed into a service that people can use to learn about and
appreciate one another and develop lifelong skills that can be used as source of income through teaching, performance, and choreography.

5.3. Conclusion

This chapter has provided background information on the dance teachers who acted as research participants for this study. The journeys that these dance teachers have taken as practitioners of cultural heritage dances have also been examined. The discussion has unveiled the complexity of the dance teachers’ trajectories in the field of cultural heritage dance practices. Although there are some commonalities in the experiences and contexts in which the dance teachers engaged in dance practices, each dance teacher has gone through a unique dance journey. The identities of the dance teachers as dance practitioners have multiple sources of influence. The dance teachers revealed that their journeys have shaped their dance practices as thinkers, knowers, doers, collaborators, and explorers.

These journeys involved gradual processes where the dance teachers were not only initiated into norms of dance practices but were also oriented into communities of artistic practice. The processes through which the dance teachers navigated dance practices were not linear. Immersion into dance knowledge and skills entailed moving between different environments, dance traditions, performance roles, and experiential experimentation.

The unique autobiographical backgrounds of the dance teachers provide a backdrop against which the reflections that they shared, which constitute Chapter Six and Chapter Seven of this thesis can be further understood. The biographical information positions the dance teachers at the centre of this inquiry. It provides a glimpse into their lives and amplifies their voices, providing a framework of reference against which analysis of their pedagogic rationalisation can be pursued.
Chapter Six: Deconstructing content knowledges diverse ethnic dances: Dance teachers as learners of cultural heritage dances

6.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the complex experiences of the eight dance teachers as learners of cultural heritage dances in Uganda. Drawing on Shulman’s (1986b, 1987) concept of pedagogic content knowledge, I argue that in order to understand the dance teachers’ rationalisation pedagogies, it is necessary to study how, when, and where they acquired the content knowledge of the dances they currently teach. In relation to this, Shulman’s (1987) has observation that “teaching necessarily begins with a teacher’s understanding of what is to be learned and how it is to be taught” (p. 7). Hence, I examine how the learning experiences of the dance teachers acted as processes of inquiry and thought about the dances and pedagogy, their transformation into teachers (becoming), frameworks of cultural expression or being, and means of experiential corporeal exploration.

I locate the interlocation between Ubuntu worldview and constructivism in reflections on the dance teachers as thinkers, knowers, doers and collaborators in the learning processes of dances. I explore how the complex “notions of context, purpose, relevance, form and content through the medium of dance” (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000, p. 14) ushered the dance teachers into dance practices. I analyse the learning encounters as constructed experiences by the dance teachers, arguing that the contexts and mechanisms through which the dance teachers acquired content knowledge also acted as thought processes that immersed the dance teachers in the pedagogic realm.

The first section explores how the dance teachers learned movements, techniques, contextual information, and music of the diverse cultural heritage dances as content
knowledge. The section is followed by a discussion of how reflective observation, practical experimentation, formal instruction, and performance of dances in schools and dance troupes acted as a medium through which the dance teachers expanded their content knowledge base of the dances. The final section explores the contexts in which the dance teachers acquired content knowledge, and the experiential impact that each context had.

6.2. Rationalising content knowledge of the dances

The inquiry examined the epistemological archaeologies (Foucault, 1970) of the eight dance teachers to find out how they developed content knowledge competencies for the dances. To expand the analysis, I pursued the following questions: 1) How were the dance teachers able to identify and learn the content knowledge and skills the cultural heritage dances before they started teaching? 2) What meanings did the dance teachers take from their initial interface with the content knowledge of the dances? These questions were based on the premise that acquiring content knowledge entailed the dance teachers moving from the unknown experience to known knowledge and skills, as Popper (2012) has theorised.

6.2.1. Movements, gestures, drum rhythms, songs, body postures and stories as content knowledge of the dances

The dance teachers revealed that they first made contact with dance during their childhoods as observers of movements, gestures and techniques when these dances were being performed in their communities. As observers, they came into contact with the knowledge structures of the dances from a distance. The knowledge structures, according to the dance teachers included drum rhythms, songs, stories, other vocal sounds, techniques, physical
sites of performance, facial and other forms of expression, costume, make up, ornamentation, body shapes, and gestures.

Matthew revealed that his experience of Larakaraka dance occurred when he observed community performances in his native village in Kitgum district: “When I was still young, I saw boys perform Larakaraka dance in the village. Because I was too young to dance, I stood aside and looked at the movements of male and female dancers. I also listened to the songs and drum rhythms, which were performed concurrently with dances. My attention was drawn to how the movements and music came together”. During the observation, Matthew scrutinised the details of the dance:

The heads were bouncing; the knees were bent, and they stomped with both feet. The shoulders dropped side to side. One of the hands was holding the awal – calabash - while the other was striking it with spokes. The dancers danced as they sung a range of songs. All this was happening at the same time”.

Through observation, Matthew rationalised the complex kinesthetic structures of male movements of the Larakaraka dance, in what Lave and Wenger (1991) have called legitimate peripheral participation. Creating a distance from practical involvement, Matthew engaged in learning through inquisitorial observation. He constructed knowledge and experiences about the dances by identifying the technique, footwork, and postural and gestural movements as constituent elements of Larakaraka dance knowledge. Extending constructivism, he started to integrate his individual reflections into communal norms of Larakaraka dance practice. Through observation, Matthew started constructing what he thought was content knowledge of the dances. His observation was also a moment of reflection on dance as an embodied and kinesthetic domain of knowledge, identifying its underlying qualities as constituting its whole.
Ssenkubuge also stated that he first made contact with dance content through childhood interactions with dancers in his community: “I used to see my father and his friends perform *Baakisimba* at home”. Through observation, Ssenkubuge identified the structural frameworks of the dance: “The footwork was slow. The feet moved from the toes to the sole. The upper body was still. The hands were held slightly about the waist. The waist movement seemed to ceaselessly be propelled from the footwork”.

For Ssenkubuge, acquiring content knowledge began with observational analysis of the corporeal components of the dance from an observational standpoint. Both Matthew and Ssenkubuge were able to discern how the schemas of the dances were organised, structured, and coordinated (Piaget, 1970) by looking at the body as a site of epistemological expression. They subjected their observational analysis to constructivist internal processes through cognition, perception and information processing (Kimmerle & Cote, 2003), as observers, inquirers, and thinkers.

For Ronald, the first experience of observing dances was corporeal rather than theoretical: “My first time to see dancers, I thought it was just people moving. I did not know the name of the dance. Everybody was moving as drums were being played and songs sung”. Olivia shared a similar experience: “The first time I saw *Baakisimba* dance, I just saw people moving in an interesting way. They were moving while following music. I did not know it was dance”. The reflections from Ronald and Olivia show that not all the content knowledge of the dances was derived through observation alone. Initial knowledge was primarily acquired from kinesthetic action. Olivia and Ronald developed abstract reflections and imaginings (Kolb, 1984) of the dances without deriving specific conceptions of the theory behind body action. They interpreted their visual experience and
created imaginative, abstract and structural relationships (Piaget, 1970, 1977) of the body in space. This exposure initiated their construction of what it means to dance.

Herbert used the insights he acquired through initial observation of Baakisimba dance as motivation to get practically involved in learning the dance: “After observing the school choir dance Baakisimba for the first time, I developed an interest in joining the dance club at the school and doing the dance movements. Through observation, I noticed that the movements were not difficult to learn and do. In fact, I slowly started to try the movements on the sidelines”. The elements he identified, which formed content knowledge, included the tempo, footwork and waist movements and body posture. He said: “The pace was slow. The movements only had footwork, waist movements and upright position of upper body. The dancers were also happy. Only that!” Herbert also engaged the content knowledge of Baakisimba dance from a legitimate peripheral position. Through observation, he internalised observational reflections and externalised these reflections through corporeal experimentation.

Similarly, Ronald stated that his initial contact with Baakisimba dance involved observing and later performing dances at home: “After I observed the footwork and movements and listened to the music of Baakisimba when family and community members were doing it, I gradually joined them and started doing movements”. He added: “I did footwork first. I had noticed that all other movements originated from footwork. From there we progressed to other intricate elements of the dance such as polyrhythms. I just learned by participating in the dance activities. I did not go through training by a single teacher”. 

Ronald and Herbert’s learning experiences occurred in communal contexts where they wove their learning curiosity with the practical activities of other community members. Their learning was not solitary but occurred in environments where dance
practices were part of the communal norm. Acquiring content knowledge entails a gradual progression from the peripheral positions of the communities and practices to the core content knowledge of the dances. Their construction of dance ideas into kinesthetic realities entailed practical exploration of and experimentation with the observed movements.

The dance teachers rationalised content knowledge of the dances as abstract cognitions and kinesthetic structures through initial observational encounters. This process has parallels with Vygotsky’s (1987) concept of mediation, whereby individuals experiment, explore, and grasp new experiences through observation and reflection on objects and subjects of knowledge (Kolb, 1984). Through observation, the dance teachers engaged content knowledge to know, think, construct, question, experiment, and become. They acquired content knowledge through cognition (Piaget, 1970) of embodied knowledge. This involved active exploration, accommodation, discovery, abstraction, and assimilation of conceptual and practical experiences through what Kolb (1984) has referred to as reflective observation.

6.2.2. ‘Storying’ dance knowledge

The fieldwork findings revealed that the dance teachers’ acquisition of content knowledge of the dances encompassed learning background information about the dances. This information included the name of the dances, the history of the dances, the cultural relevance of the dances, and the philosophical essence of the dances, among other theoretical sets of information. The dance teachers shared that storytelling was a key mechanism through which they acquired information about the dances.

Ronald disclosed that learning dance involved acquisition of contextual information from family and community members at home and in communities:
We used to sit down at home and in the community and family member, elders and mentors would tell us the histories and stories about the songs, dances, folklore, and myths. I first learned about Baakisimba dance from my grandfather. They told us stories about how the dance started in the palace of the Kabaka of Buganda after people had taken offertory of mwenge bigere (local beer) to him. The Kabaka, like everybody else, became drunk and started dancing while moving his waist and bum and singing “abaakisimba beebakiwoomya”. The meaning of the song is that “those who planted the banana plants from where juice was extracted to make beer made it (beer) sweet”. When he left, the people started imitating his movements, which they later developed into Baakisimba dance and music. That is why the body area of emphasis of the dance is the waist.

Ronald’s anecdote reveals that the stories that Ronald’s grandfather shared with him enabled him to understand the foundations of Baakisimba dance and its centrality to his native community, the Baganda people. This information situated the dance within the philosophical, cultural, theoretical and historical perspectives of the Baganda people.

Ronald further shared: “Through the stories I also learned that the basic footwork movements of Baakisimba dance means “okusimba” (to plant) among the Baganda. This footwork represents planting of the banana plant. But broadly, it also represents the fact that the Baganda people are typically agriculturalists”. The stories unveiled the inherent theoretical stimuli behind the movement. Storytelling demonstrated that content knowledge of the dances is not only about corporeal movement but is also informed by episteme that derives from the historicity, origin, stories, contexts, and lives of a people.

Matthew also underlined the centrality of interactive storytelling in deepening his acquisition of Larakaraka dance knowledge: “When I was learning Larakaraka, people in the communities told us stories about how the dance is a platform for courtship between boys and girls among the Acholi people. They told us about the etiquette of the performance. As a result, I learned that the dance carried deeper meaning beyond movements”. The reflection reveals how information that Matthew accessed through
storytelling expanded his understanding of the functional foundations of the dance. Matthew learned that dance was not just a physical endeavour, but also an experience that is profoundly rooted in sociocultural norms.

The dance teachers such as Mariam shared stories they were told about the meanings underlying the specific movements, gestures, and techniques of the dances:

My grandmother told me that the male movement of Runyege came about when men were squeezing juice on luganjo using their feet. Because of the yellow bananas, the luganjo was slippery and the stepping by men became faster. That is why the movements are faster. Whenever beer was ready, women would carry it in the calabash, kneel down and serve the men. That is why in the dance there are moments when women kneel down in a way that symbolises this practice. When men and women got drunk, mostly in the evening, they would look at birds in the sky. They would try to imitate these birds by dancing on their toes. The interaction that always existed between men and women during the social gathering resulted in the courtship nature of Runyege dance.

Mariam’s narrative demonstrates how stories about the dances expanded on the kinesthetic forms of Runyege dance. This information clarified the kinesthetic structures of the dance, positioning this knowledge in its historical realm. Mariam’s experience can be linked to Bateson’s (1994) observation that “Wherever a story comes from, whether it is a familiar myth or a prime memory, the retelling exemplifies the making of a connection from one pattern to another…” (p. 11).

For other dance teachers, these stories were “a source of their historical beginnings embedded in their cultures, belief systems, philosophies, family values, and knowledge of the world” (Bekerie, 1994, p. 132). For example, Collin stated that while learning Kitaguriro dance, his teacher always reminded them that the dance was created to depict the centrality of the long-horned cows among the Bahima sect of the Banyankore people of south western Uganda:
Learning contextual information of Kitaguriro as a dance outside my culture, I learned that placement of the arms depicts the cow horns while the movement of the feet represent the movements of the hooves of these long-horned cows. The Banyakore people of South Western Uganda depend on these cows for survival. As a gesture of this dependency on cows, the people created the dance to celebrate this relationship. This gave me a new perspective on dance because I did not even know that a dance about cattle, like Kitaguriro existed.

The stories about Kitaguriro dance opened Collin to new dance knowledge, revealing to him the cultural source that formed and informed it. Collin: “Since I do not come from Ankole region, these stories gave me insights into the dance and the people that perform it”. The stories about the dance covered the question of what the dance is, who performs the dance, why the dance is performed, how the dance is performed, when the dance is performed, and where is the dance performed. This information provided corporeal clarity, but it also enabled the dance teachers to comprehend that teaching and learning cultural heritage dances transcends the imitation of corporeal dance movements.

Herbert stated that the background information on the dances acted as a pedagogic framework, which he used to learn the new dances from cultures outside his own:

When I joined Ndere, a fellow performer, Namono, taught us ‘Imbalu’ dance. She came from Bugisu where the dance originated. The movements were so sensual and sexually expressive. She told boys to aggressively push their penises with a forward pelvis movement. This looked so odd to me. It was my first time to do this dance. Namono’s explained that this dance was created and performed to celebrate male circumcision among the Bagisu people of Eastern Uganda. The movements of the male and female members of the community are meant to seduce each other. After this explanation, I was able to slowly get a clear understanding of why and how the movements are performed.

Herbert’s excerpt demonstrates how he relied on the contextual and historical information of Imbalu dance to advance his learning of the movements. The explanations offered in Namono’s storytelling made the kinesthetic patterns of the dance intelligible. These stories
provided a window through which Herbert experientially explored the movement knowledge behind the dances.

The background information on the dances acted as an epistemological framework through which the dance teachers negotiated, rationalised, and constructed the content knowledge and meanings of the dances. The stories offered holistic knowledge, which presented the dances as domains that exceeded corporeal movement. The stories revealed meanings of and behind the dances and the cultures and people that created and celebrated these dances. Storytelling placed the dance teachers as individual learners at the centre of dance knowledges and skills in community contexts. The stories offered a mechanism through which the dance teachers inquired more about the dances, engaged their thoughts about the meaning of the dances, framed their entry into practice, and located their involvement in dances as aspects of communities of practice.

6.2.3: Music as content knowledge of the dances

Some dance teachers indicated that music was part of the content knowledge of the dances they learned. Music includes songs, vocal sounds, and drum and other instrumental rhythms (see also Section 2.3.2 for a detailed discussion of music as an element of dance).

Collin observed: “Music was not just an accompaniment for the dances. It was always a constituent part of the movement knowledge and structures, without which learning of the dances would be incomplete”. Recalling how learning music was central in learning Baakisimba dance, Ronald also elaborated:

I come from a family of drummers. Our village, Mpambire, is well known for the tradition of drumming. As a young boy, I did drumming first before I ventured into dance. We used to play drums at home and in the village in groups. My first dance rhythm was “abakisimba beebakiwoomya”; words that are codified into drum rhythm. When I started learning Baakisimba
dance, I noticed that the footwork and movement of the waist stem from this rhythm.

Ronald’s reflection shows how drumming constituted the *Baakisimba* dance content knowledge that he learned. Drumming within communal environments oriented him into the musical and movement structures of the dance. As an illumination of Ubuntu sensibilities (see Section 2.1.1), these experiences immersed Ronald as an individual into artistic communal practices and exploration of music as content knowledge of the dance. Gradually, he built on this musical and rhythmic framework to understand the dance.

When I interacted with Herbert, he gave a practical demonstration of how he learned the song of Baakisimba dance: *Abaaakisimba beebakiwoomya* was a constituent element of the content knowledge of the dance. He explained *abaakisimba* had two accents at ‘*abaa*’ and ‘*mba*’. At ‘*abaa*’ either the right foot or left foot is on its toes and then goes to flat feet on ‘*kisi*’. On the last ‘*mba*’, the alternating foot goes to its toes, and then to its sole on a suppressed beat that bridges into ‘*beebakiwoomya*’. The pattern then continues with ‘*beebaakiwoomya*’ where at ‘*beebaa*’ the alternating foot goes on its toes and then lands on the sole on ‘*kiwoo*’ before resting on the sole again at ‘*mya*’.

This rationalisation provides a glimpse into the centrality of music as content knowledge of the dance structures. Herbert’s learning experience underscored music as a component of knowledge, which when he grasped it enable him to reflect deeply on its meaning in relation to the dance. It also reveals the place of constructivism in using music to understand dance. Herbert used the constituent components of music and their raltionship to dance movements to learn the dances. This conceptualisation of music as part of the content knowledge of dances has parallels with previous published analyses of music
and dance as inseparable epistemological domains in artistic and cultural practices in African communities, which I have expounded on in Section 2.4.

Collin mentioned that “some dances like Bwola of the Acholi people required learning all the songs first because the movements were guided by songs. You had to get each song right to do the movement correctly. The turning, bending, changing of fronts, stomping, and playing of small drums all rely on the dance songs. There is even the arrangement of the different structures of the dance, which follow particular flow of songs”. Collin perceived the songs as constituent elements of Bwola dance. It demonstrates that in Bwola dance, movements are not a stand-alone element, but rather songs interweave with movements to create a holistic spectrum of the content knowledge of the dance.

Collin’s emphasis on songs as integral to the movement knowledge of Bwola dance can be connected to a study by Meintjes (2004) on isigqi, the visual gestures and sounds demonstrated by the dancer in Zulu Ngoma songs and dance. Meintjes (2004) found that “a performance [is said to have] isigqi when dancers, drummers, singers, and clappers…meld sound and movement into one dense experience” (p. 175) that deepens a performer’s holistic understanding of the dances.

Similarly, Mariam shared that the idea of music as content knowledge of dance is also illuminated in drum rhythms. Citing the example of Runyege dance, she mentioned: “The drum is a significant part of Runyege dance. For male dancers, the long drum speaks the language that the dancers embody without fail. To know the movements requires listening to, understanding, and responding appropriately to the rhythms through movement”. Mariam’s reflection places the dance learner at the centre of both the drum rhythms and male movements of Runyege dance.
The reflections of dance teachers reveal how music and rhythms constitute the content knowledge of the dances. Through songs, sounds and drum rhythms, the dance teachers were able to inquire into, think about, experiment with, embody, and know and construct knowledge of the dances. They considered music as a microcosm whose epistemology and ontology are composed of complex structures that tie into the dance movements. Music and rhythm invited the dance teachers to know, question, explore, learn, and locate themselves as individuals within communities of dance practice. Engaging in learning music and rhythms as part of dance allowed the dance teachers to engage in reflection upon which they rationalised and discovered the meaning of the content knowledge of the dances. Contrary to the views that have framed dances from African communities as kinesthetic activities without deeply founded philosophical foundations (see Section 1.3), the complexity of the content knowledge of the dances shared by the dance teachers reveals that these dances are intricate systems of inquiry and thought, frameworks of becoming, and means of creation and expressions.

6.3. Methods of learning cultural heritage dances

Part of the inquiry investigated the different methods through which the dance teachers had learned the dances. The findings revealed that the mechanisms through which content knowledge of dances was acquired were complex, methodical, conceptual, theoretical and philosophical. These methods engaged the thought and body of the dance teachers. Moreover, they gave the dance teachers first hand insights into pedagogy as active acquirers of the content knowledge of the dances.
6.3.1. Using the eyes first: Learning through inquisitorial observations

The dance teachers shared that they used reflective observation during the initial stages of learning cultural heritage dances. Through inquisitorial observation, they internalised and conceptualised abstract patterns of body movements of the dances and the attendant music.

Olivia mentioned that she first came into contact with dances as an observer: “At school, the choir always conducted rehearsals of different dances in the evening. I always stood by the side and watched them dance. Together with other pupils, I used to stand outside and look at the choir dancers dance through the windows. I liked the movements and songs and I memorised them in my mind”. Olivia’s inquisitorial observations emphasise grasping dance movements and music from other dancers. This involved grasping of kinesthetic action and translating it into memory. Olivia’s use of observational learning has parallels with what Kolb (1984) has defined as abstract conceptualisation. Olivia engaged reflective rationalisation and internalisation of the dances to keep the information as memory, constructing “individual representations of knowledge in memory in the form of conceptual and procedural knowledge” (Billet, 1996, p. 265).

Olivia further shared: “I made sure that each day I watched the choir performing, I wanted to learn new movements since the choir performed different dances. I could see the difference between the dances but did not know the names of the dances. I saw the difference in movements, the body parts used, and the songs”. The excerpt shows the observation Olivia engaged in was reflective and cumulative. She distilled movement knowledge, organised it, and later developed ways of deciphering its kinesthetic forms. From this perspective, it can be deduced that learning through observation entailed Olivia engaging of thought to derive the corporeal meaning of the new knowledge (Kolb, 1984). Learning through reflective and inquisitorial observation reveal the idea of constructism,
as these observational processes were meant to expose deeper knowledge of the dances. This can be linked to what Lewin (1951) has referred to as immediate concrete experience. Immediate concrete experience involves relational observations and reflection on constructs to develop abstract and embodied knowledge.

Ronald shared that it was through inquisitorial observation that he learned the link between movements and music of *Baakisimba* dance: “Since I was already a drummer, I observed community dancers and noticed how the waist movements, footwork, and gestures coincided with the songs and drum rhythms, which we were playing as a drummer. Whatever I observed dancers do came back to power my inner rhythmic pulse”. Reflective observation taught Ronald’s the link between rhythmic reflections and the dancers’ kinesthetic outflow.

Ronald further explained: “I noticed that the feet of the dancers were moving to the *mpuunyi* drum. I also saw some singer clapping, and the clapping coincided with the beat of *mpuunyi* drum. I started to investigate further the link of all these patterns of the dance”.

Matthew also highlighted that he identified the intrinsic intersections between music and dance through observation of *Larakaraka* dance: “I looked at other dancers to get to know the details of songs, drum rhythms, and dance movements. This is how I was oriented into learning *Larakaraka* dance. I had to first observe and listen to songs and drum rhythms in order to be able to get the details of *Larakaraka* dance as a whole”.

Ronald and Matthew’s stories explain how inquisitorial observation allowed them to systematically rationalise the different elements of dance such as music, movements, techniques, and drum rhythms. Inquisitorial and reflective observation formed a lens through which they inquired into the dances, sought entry into dance as a cultural space, and identified how to situate their individualities within the content knowledge of the
dances. Through observation, Ronald and Matthew explored the integration of external elements of observational thought with the evolving or completed conceptual and corporeal structures (Piaget, p. 706) of the dances.

For dance teachers such as Ssenkubuge, ideas developed through reflective observation provided a foundation upon which they engaged in practical dance activities:

After observing the dances and drumming when other drummers and dancers were doing it, I developed confidence to start participating in drumming and dancing activities with other community members. I had seen some dance and drumming techniques. For example, I saw that to play *ngalabi*, the player has to use his hands to slap the drum rather than press it. It was just slapping the surface of the drum. This is what I did the first time I played *ngalabi*.

As an inquisitorial observer, Ssenkubuge’s “individual efforts were relational to social practice” (Billet, 1996, p. 4) of the dances. Acquiring the drumming and dance playing techniques required him to first observe community performers and then rationalise the concepts developed through observation into rhythmic action.

Conversely, reflective observation placed the dance teachers in a position of peripheral legitimate participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Some teachers gradually shifted from this position to participation in dance activities as active constructivist agents. Observation was guided by the question: what is going on? This question meant that observation was not only a method of learning, but also a system of inquiry and thought (thinking and knowing) about dance, framework of transformance (becoming) into active agents in communities of dance practice and means of constructing experiences that led to making meaning out of the dances. Moreover, observation allowed the dance teachers to locate their individualities within collective dance practices.
6.3.2. Learning dances using practical experimentation

The dance teachers also mentioned reflective observation practical experimentation as medium through which they acquired content knowledge of the dances. Practical experimentation offered the dance teachers initial practical experiences of the dances.

Olivia mentioned: “Whenever I observed performances of *Baakisimba* dance at school, I would memorise them and go back home and try out movements by myself. I would stand in front of the dressing mirror in my mother’s bedroom and try to do waist movements, imitate body posture, bend the knees and do footwork”. Olivia’s reflection reveals that through practical experimentation, she expanded the abstract movement ideas memorised through observation into corporeal action. In this sense, practical experimentation allowed Olivia to translate movement ideas into kinesthetic realities.

As an experimental learner, Olivia engaged conscious corporeal imitation (Willis, 1999), through exploration of the memorised movement concepts. Wertsch (1983) has defined learners like Olivia as explorers and not passive recipients of perceived corporeal and mental images. For Olivia, practical experimentation was not only a framework of kinesthetic inquiry; it was also space through which she explored transformance into corporeal movement embodiment.

Matthew, Ssenkubuge and Ronald experimented with cultural heritage dance movements within the context of a community, at home and in their communities. Matthew revealed: “I learned *Larakaraka* dance gradually, with other members in the village. I remember the first time I tried to learn with the community they chased me away because I was too young”. As a novice, Matthew found space on the periphery of dance performance (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to experiment with *Larakaraka* dance: “I stood aside and imitated the movements of the dancers and sang along the songs of the dance”.
In my previous research and theorisation on pedagogies on Ugandan dances, I defined Matthew’s learning experience as communal corporeal apprenticeship (Mabingo, 2014). Communal corporeal apprenticeship allows dance novices to advance their dance skills and knowledge through continuous practical experimentation in communal dance activities, either as legitimate peripheral participants, or active agents in dance practices.

Ssenkubuge also mentioned that he learned *Baakisimba* dance through a series of movement experimentations within communities of dance practice: “After observing how the elders were dancing and playing drums for *Baakisimba* dance, I started playing drums and dancing with them. Of course, I did not start with complicated rhythms. I started from simple rhythms. With time, I started to develop and discover my own style of playing”. For Ssenkubuge, practical experimentation was a process of immersion in the fundamental rhythmic structures. In addition, he experientially explored his own rhythm imagination to develop and discover his own voice and technique of drumming. The foundational rhythmic knowledge and skills formed the basis from which he further engaged in movement experimentation and exploration: “As I gained more skills in drumming, I started trying out dance movements as well. I started with the footwork, then waist movements and body posture at home and in the village communities”.

Ssenkubuge’s learning experience relates to Nketia’s (1999) observation that knowledge and skills of African dances are “acquired directly in the community by going to events, observing and listening to performances of music, imitating dance movements, gesture and facial expressions and taking part in the singing and dancing” (p. 1).

According to Ronald, for him learning dances involved “experimentation with and participation in dance and drumming activities at home and in the villages”, as the two immediate socio-cultural spheres of teaching and learning cultural heritage dances. Ronald
further revealed that “at home and in communities, nobody was there to take you through the details of doing the movements of songs, you had to figure out things yourself. You had to observe and just perform with others. You figured things out along the way”.

According to Ronald, individual engagement in movement and rhythmic experimentation entails intent participation (Rogoff, Paradise, Arauz, Correa-Chaves, Angelillo, 2003). Intent participation means taking part in the dance activities with a primary goal of achieving individual growth. It also involves taking individual initiative to search for knowledge and meanings from experiential engagement in practical dance activities. Citing an example of Baakisimba drumming, Ronald also stated, “I remember nobody taught me how to play mbuutu drum. As a child, I learned the rhythms of Baakisimba dance and music by playing with other members as I figured out the techniques of drums and rhythms by myself”. The act of learning through individual experimentation relates to Vygotsky’s (1978) idea of the zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development accords the learner opportunities to assume responsibility in their own learning (Green, 2002) and construct meanings individually without external assistance from an expert teacher, instructor or guide.

Learning through practical experimentation in communities of practice by the dance teachers reflects what Lave and Wenger (1991) have defined as situated learning. Their explorations were situated within the contexts of communities of dance practice through active participation in and dialogic interaction (Wells, 1999). The dance teachers explored their individual learning trajectories through symbiotic interfaces with other dancers and dance traditions. Thus, it can be argued that the knowledge they acquired through practical experimentation was socially constructed knowledge (Rogoff, 1995).
Practical experimentation invited the dance teachers to explore dances as embodied and corporeally constructed knowledge. The corporeality entailed active practical participation in dance activities. Positioning the dance teachers as learners at the centre of practical processes also reflects the Baganda education philosophy, “kola nga bwoyiga ate oyige nga bwokola” (learn as you do and do as you learn) (see also Mabingo, 2014, 2015c). Practical experimentation not only encompassed practical imitation of the movements, but also acted as a space for the dance teachers to reflect on, question, negotiate, rationalise, expand, de/construct dance knowledge and transform into dancers.

6.3.3. Learning dances through formal instruction

The research findings reveal that some dance teachers underwent formal training in cultural heritage dances. These dance teachers referred to ‘formal training’ as a range of dance classes that were conducted in schools, dance studios, universities and in some dance troupes (see Section 6.4 for detailed discussion of these contexts). Dance teachers, instructors and demonstrators facilitated these dance classes over a specified period of time.

In relation to formal dance training, Brian observed: “The dance instructors at schools just showed us movements and we imitated them. The first dance that I learned was Baakisimba. I just used my eyes to see the instructor and I copied how they were moving”. According to Brian, formal training in dance was steered by the individual dance instructor. Unlike the previous methods where content knowledge of the dances was negotiated through relational interaction between dance teachers as learners and communities of dance practice, in formal dance training the instructor acted as the sole source of dance knowledge.
The dance training that occurred in schools, as the case was with Brian, placed the teacher at the centre of dance learning processes. In Uganda, teacher-centred teaching and learning stems from the education system that was introduced to Uganda during colonialism (Ssekamwa, 1997; Ssekamwa & Lugumba, 2001). With the advent of colonialism, the school became the primary centre of knowledge, with individual dance teachers as solitary authorities of knowledge. Inasmuch as cultural heritage dances are only taught as extra-curricular activities in schools, the teacher-centred pedagogical paradigm, which is a colonial residue, is still used as a benchmark for teaching.

Through formal dance training, the dance teachers observed the dance instructors, internalised the dance movements and externalised it through imitative body action. Herbert disclosed: “The dance instructors showed us the movements and we imitated what they were doing. They always stood in front of the learners to demonstrate movements”. This style of teaching can be linked to traditional pedagogy (see Section 3.3.1), which privileges the teacher as the sole source of knowledge.

Herbert further explained that formal training in dance focused on getting movements right within a specified period of time: “At school, we always had about one month to prepare for school festivals. So, the instructors made sure that we got all the dances within the time specified. And we had to get the songs and movements right”. This anecdote from Herbert reveals that the dance instructors used formal training methods to advance the learners’ movement proficiency.

Smith-Autard (1994) has defined this approach to dance training as putting focus on the product other than the process. In Herbert’s case, the product was proficiency in music and movement performance, which the learners had to achieve to be able to compete in school festivals. Teacher-centred dance training curtailed the ability of the dance
teachers as learners to engage their individual thought, engage in inquiry from as active learners, and construct their own meanings from the experiences.

Because schools, universities and troupes in Uganda are ethnically diverse, attracting teachers, students and ideas from multiple ethnic communities and cultures, formal training in these different settings allowed some of the dance teachers to learn diverse cultural heritage dances. Collin noted: “Through dance classes led by Arthur Kayizzi at Makerere College, I learned how to perform dances such as Bwola, Kitaguriro, Kizino and their accompanying music. I did not know these dances beforehand because they do not come from my ethnic culture. We learned these different dances because each year the school identified a different dance to teach the dance team for festivals, concerts and competitions, to reflect the cultural diversity of Uganda”. Mariam also highlighted the acquisition of diverse dances through formal instruction at university: “I was taught cultural dances such as Maggunju, Mwaga, and Otwenge by instructors at Makerere University. All these dances originated from different tribes in Uganda. The lecturers led us through dances and graded us for practical and written dance assignments”.

Olivia also shared reflections on how she learned a multiplicity of Ugandan cultural heritage dances through formal training in a dance troupe: “When I was learning Runyego and Ntogo I had to imitate what the instructor was doing. They played the drums and she stood in front of us and demonstrated the movements”.

Collin, Mariam, and Olivia’s reflections unveil how formal dance training at school, university, and in the dance troupe as a process that enabled them to access diverse Ugandan cultural heritage dances. Although formal training reduced the learners to being passive repositories of movement knowledge, in what Freire (1998) has referred to as the
banking system, these dance teachers were able to advance their content knowledge in diverse Ugandan cultural heritage dances.

Formal dance training in schools, at university and dance troupes is “based on the notion of transfer of ready-made concepts or principles into the empty spaces in the learners’ heads” (Marton, 1981, p. 182). Unlike contexts such as home and village communities where the acquisition of content knowledge came about as a result of reciprocal interplay between the individual and community, or I am because we are, and because we are therefore I am (see Section 2.1.1), formal dance training is individually constructed, with emphasis on the advancement of movements skills.

6.3.4. Learning dances through practical performances

The dance teachers who participated in the study disclosed that they have performed music and dances for an average of 14 years. Through performances, they have honed their skills and knowledge of dances, which has enabled them to develop performance proficiency. The performances in which the dance teachers refined their dance knowledge and skills, have occurred in communities, homes, schools, and other avenues such as theatres, festivals, concerts, competitions, and local and international tours.

Citing the centrality of repetitive performance in enhancing her mastery of the content knowledge of cultural heritage dances, Olivia stated: “I mastered dances through the shows that our dance troupe staged. We performed every week on different occasions”.

The constant dance performances enabled Olivia to hone her ability to perform dances as embodied domains of knowledge and skills: “For a dance like Kizino, the more we performed it, the more I mastered its movements, songs, and drum rhythms. The more performances I did, the more my ability to know movements advanced”.
Olivia’s reflection reveals how the repetitive performances immersed her in the movement and rhythmic knowledge of Kizino dance. This mastery enhanced her kinesthetic and musical intelligences (Gardner, 1983), and the recurrent performances advanced her corporeal memory. Kizino dance became a corporeal reality. Attaining kinesthetic mastery through recurrent performances can be connected to Bruner’s (1960) theory of the spiral curriculum. This style of teaching and learning emphasises that learning involves repetitive navigation of ideas, enabling a learner to deepen his or her understanding by building on these repeated ideas to fully grasp the inherent knowledge.

Highlighting the vitality of performance in expanding dance skills and knowledge, Matthew stated: “At the age of eight, I started dancing Larakaraka with other youth. I got a deeper understanding of the dance, drumming and songs every time I performed the dance with other youth”. He added: “Each performance helped me to learn something new about music, movements, and history of the dances, drum rhythms, among other things. Even learning how to perform with others came as a result of continuous performances”. Matthew reflection reveals how practical performances ushered him into the norms for community dance practices.

Through these performative interfaces, Matthew’s kinesthetic and musical intelligence (Gardner, 1983) of Larakaraka dance grew. His statement, “I got a deeper understanding of the dance, drumming and songs every time I went to perform the dance with other youth” shows that his learning was experiential and participatory (Kolb, 1984; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Practical performances accorded him agency as an active participant within contexts of communal practice. Furthermore, the practical performances did not only immerse Matthew into dance skills and knowledge, but also integrated him into communities of dance practice as a performer.
For other dance teachers such as Mariam, continuous dance performances expanded their knowledge base and skill sets in diverse dances: “I learned and perfected dances and songs from Buganda such as *Maggunju, Baakisimba* through constant stage performances with the *Akadinda* dance troupe”. Similarly, Collin shared that he advanced his knowledge and skills of diverse dances through performances:

*Bwola* was a new dance to me since I do not come from the Acholi tribe. It has complicated songs and drum rhythms. You have to sing, play small drums, dance and listen to the drums. As I performed, I was watching, listening, singing and dancing. The more performances that I participated in the more I learned the intricate components of the dance.

Mariam and Collin’s reflections show that recurrent performances of diverse cultural heritage dances deepened their abilities to master the movement skills of these dances. The performances acted as sites where the bodies of the two dance teachers experienced embodied acculturation. The performances launched the dance teachers into new experiences through kinesthetically experiential actions. The practical performances also acted as spaces to analyse, synthesise, and rationalise knowledge of diverse cultural heritage dances using the body as an extension of this rationalisation.

Emphasising this nexus between the body and thought, Brian stated that repetitive performances allowed him to engage body and mind to rationalise the knowledge and skills of the dances: “As a learner, whenever I was on stage performing traditional dances such as *Maggunju, Kitaguriro*, and others, I was thinking about how best I would present the movements, techniques, gestures and musicality of the dances”. Brian further mentioned: “I was practically doing the movements and at the same time thinking about the whole process and experience of performance. I was conscious of what was going on in the body and keen to address any practical shortfall that I identified while performing”.

As a “thinking performer”, Brian engaged in thought processes while performing the dances. He made links between corporeal foundations of movements and internal thought schemas that emerged as part of performance experience. Brian’s rationalisation of content knowledge through engagement of the body and thought defies the Cartesian body-mind split. Brian’s reflection has parallels to Albright’s (1997) notion that “dancing bodies simultaneously produce and are produced by their own dancing” (p.3).

The more the dance teachers performed dances, the more they attained what Kolb (1984) has referred to as concrete experience (Kolb, 1984). The concrete experience constituted forms of constructions of movement ideas into practical realities. Each dance teacher demonstrated unique forms of navigating the practical exposures to deepen their grasp of dance knowledge and skills. The dance teachers engaged “cognitive structures, higher orders of procedures and the organisation of knowledge to think and act in ways, which emphasized the internal processes of the mind” (Billet, 1996, p. 264) and the body through practical immersion in content knowledge. Practical performance acted as a system of thought and inquiry (thinking and knowing), framework of transformance (becoming) into dance practice, system of cultural production (being) and means of kinesthetic and musical creation and expression (doing and embodying).

6.4. Learning contexts of cultural heritage dances

So far in this chapter, I have considered the context in which the dance teachers acquired content knowledge of the dances as pivotal in framing their pedagogic identities. I have considered these contexts, such as homes, communities, schools, dance troupes and university as spaces that constructed the pedagogic thought of the dance teachers. Because these contexts are unique, with each having its own complex characteristics, I next
examined how this complexity constructed the dance teachers understanding of pedagogy as a system of inquiry and thought, framework of transformance, method of cultural practice, and means of creating and expression.

6.4.1. Home as a learning institution

Some of the dance teachers shared that they first interfaced with cultural heritage dance knowledge and skills at home. Ronald described learning *Baakisimba* music and dance at home together with other family members: “I come from a family that is renowned for drum making, drumming, and dancing. I started making and playing drums and dancing at home when I was very young”. Ronald’s first exposure to the artistic traditions included complex artistic activities, which were part of family traditions.

As part of this pattern, dance and drumming as recurring family practices offered Ronald entry into dance and music artistry: “Every time we made a set of drums, we had to play them first with family relatives. We also danced to the drumming. We used to call this testing the drums”. The home was an epistemological hub where Ronald deconstructed knowledge and skills of cultural heritage dances as an active practical participant. The act of engaging the home as a centre of learning in African communities is not unique to the experiences of the dance teachers. According to Wandira (1971), among the Baganda people of central Uganda, “the basic principle of education in homes was to train a child to be a good person - *omuntu mulamu* who would respect his fellow men and [women] and institutions of the society” (p.4). Ssekamwa (1997) and Ocita (1973) have highlighted that *ekyooto* (communal fireplace) in homes has always been a place where teaching and learning has occurred in Ugandan communities.
For Ronald, the home also formed a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where he explored knowledge and skills of music and dance as an experiential participant. Ronald noted: “We learned from one another. We would create together, perform together, observe each other, imitate each other, and at the same time create our own individual works and devise personal techniques of dancing and drumming”.

Ssenkubuge shared that “music and dance creation and performance was a tradition in our family”. He learned drumming and dancing with family: “I learned some patterns of drumming and dancing from my father and relatives during performances that always took place at home in the evening. Because we were an extended family, we had enough people to play a wide range of instruments and dance. For me, all these people were teachers”. The home acted as a microsystem where Ssenkubuge and Ronald engaged in participatory processes to attain social, personal, physical and technical growth as a result of interactions within networks of practice (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Based on Ronald and Ssenkubuge’s reflections, the home offered a supportive environment for learning. As learners, they immersed themselves in rationalising, generating, constructing, reproducing, and developing dance knowledge as individuals within their families. This environment allowed for sel-driven discovery and collective support. In both cases, the dance teachers first learned music and dances “as newcomers or novices and moved towards participation involving particular experience and expertise and new sets of relationships” (Kirk & Mcdonalds, 1998, p. 381). They constructed meaning by developing and exploring reciprocal relationships with other members, the dance activities, the environmental cues and dynamics, and the social organisations that their homes sustained through dance activities (Stein, 1998).
The home also acted as a place of dance learning for other dance teachers. Matthew stated: “My learning experience of nanga was an individual journey. I first listened to and observed my grandfather when he was playing it. I also listened to the nanga music on the radio”. Matthew acquired knowledge of nanga music as a listener and thinker. Listening to nanga music from his father and on the radio enabled him to explore self-guided learning and construction of his own ways of playing the instrument: “When I later acquired my own instrument, I taught myself how to play it. I was always home with my nanga and experimenting with different self-composed rhythms”.

It can be argued that Matthew subjected nanga music to thought processes and used this as a foundation for more rhythmic discoveries. He further shared: “I paid attention to the blend of singing and nanga instrumentation and always worked towards inventing my own techniques of blending these two elements”. Matthew’s rationalisation nanga music at home underscored the relationship between music and dance (see Section 2.4). This has links with Katona’s (1940) idea of “converging thinking” (p. 29). With converging thinking the “learner’s thought process is directed towards a particular learning target” (Mosston, 1972, p. 122) through experiential and reflective tasks.

Similarly, Mariam highlighted how she engaged in self-guided learning of dances and music at home: “I started dancing when I was still a child. I remember that every time they played Runyege dance music over the radio, I would dance to it. Whenever we hosted visitors, I would dance to entertain them. The dances were short and imitated the movements of Runyege dance that I used to observe form other dancers in the villages”.

Mariam and Matthew’s dance experiences at home can be described as resulting from the constant interaction between a person, activity and situation (Lave, 1993). For Mariam, the dance experiences within the context of home enabled her to further navigate
dance as an embodied corporeal reality: “I discovered that I had passion for dance during the dance experiences that I had at home as a child. I learned a lot about my body strength, flexibility, creativity, and movement adaptability”.

Learning cultural heritage dances at home enabled the dance teachers to immerse themselves in the content knowledge of the dances and music. For Matthew and Mariam, they experimented with and explored their creative imaginations without support from music and dance experts. It can be said that at home, these dance teachers experienced the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) by honing their knowledge and skills through self-guided rationalisation and discovery of the knowledge and skills. Learning dance and music in the home as a centre of knowledge can be connected to Bronfenbrenner’s (1976, 1986) concept of micro-systems as an ecological structure of learning. With the home as proximal and social environment, the dance teachers explored their practical, creative, and performative abilities by drawing material from and operating within these social environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

6.4.2. Communities as classrooms

Beyond homes, the dance teachers mentioned that their communities acted as another context where they acquired content knowledge of the dances. As part of these communities, dance teachers observed, listened, explored, and participated in the dance activities as active constructivists, inquirers, and observers. The network of dance activities allowed these dance teachers space to further expand their curiosity about dance as a body of knowledge, state of being and cultural practice.

By learning dances in these communities, the dance teachers engaged in participatory, relational, and interactive ways of rationalising dance knowledge and skills.
Olivia underscored the role of the community in her cultural heritage dance education: “At Cornerstone, we were a community of disadvantaged girls who used to support each other through music and dance rehearsals, performances, and teaching. As a community, we always got together to learn, teach and perform cultural heritage dances and music. Corrected and directed each other. If you knew a dance you would teach it to others”. Olivia’s anecdote shows that her community created an environment for safe relational learning. Her statement, “If you knew a dance you would teach it to others” demonstrates that learning was communal and each member who possessed knowledge of the dance was treated as a knowledgeable other (Bruner, 1996).

The community at Cornerstone formed what Bruner (1996) has referred to as community of learners. In this environment, the community of knowledgeable others taught Olivia new dances that she did not know: “I only knew Baakisimba dance when I joined this community. After spending time with this community, I learned new dances such as Kitaguriro and Maggunju from community members who came from tribes where these dances originate and possessed extensive knowledge of these dances”.

For Matthew, the community performances of Bwola dance, which he was part of from a young age, enabled him to refine his Bwola dance knowledge and skills: “As a young boy I started learning and performing Bwola with other youth from different villages. I learned from other performers to master the drumming, songs and movements. The community performances in the villages were more learning and teaching processes than showcases for dance and music skills”. Learning in community settings fostered participatory and relational co-construction (Valsiner, 1994) of dance knowledge between Matthew and other dancers as knowledgeable others. This deepened relational
interdependence between the youth as learners. Community performances provided frameworks of practice for Matthew to experientially embody the dance and the music.

Within these community settings, teaching, learning and performance were a shared practice, built on communal apprenticeship (Mabingo, 2014). Through participatory embodiment, the dance teachers engaged in dances as “an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 35).

Citing her personal learning experience, Mariam shared that learning dance in the community was situated (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As she described, “To learn Runyege dance I went and became part of the dancers in the village. I always danced alongside other female members. As young girls, we mobilised ourselves in the villages to have sessions to do Runyege dance. Sometimes we learned when we were going to fetch water and firewood. Dancing was part of our daily life”. In the context of Mariam, situated learning meant being part of, deriving meaning from, and navigating ways of engaging in practicing the dances. The dancing experiences, which were strongly grounded in the socio-cultural fabric, positioned Mariam at the centre of the dance practice.

Mariam and her female dancers formed a community of practice that was based on gender roles and identities as expressed in Runyege dance:

In Runyege dance, the female dancers have their own movements. So, we did not need to always dance with boys. Remember that at the back of our minds we were also preparing ourselves for the courtship festivities where Runyege dance is the key items of performance. As girls, we needed to have our own space to share experiences through dance.

Mariam’s anecdote shows that learning in the context of community entailed weaving individuality into the norms and identities of the community. Learning dances with other female members cultivated a feeling of peer support. It also deepened the importance of agency in understanding and embodying the essence with which the community as a whole
engaged in Runyege dance. Dancing was not a merrymaking event, but rather a process guided by intentions and goals.

According to Ssenkubuge, learning in the community expanded his repertoire of dance knowledge: “Doing dances and music with other people in villages added on the knowledge of the dances that I had acquired. If today I knew how to do footwork, tomorrow I would aim at learning waist movements. We had people around and with us who were doing all sorts of movements for us to learn from”. Ssenkubuge’s reflection suggests that the community was an arena for construction of new dance knowledge and experiences by building on the knowledge and skills that he already knew.

In this case, the community presented learning opportunities that expanded the initial knowledge and experiences that he had acquired at home: “In the village you had many talented dancers and drummers who had unique styles of performance. For example, at home my father taught me to play Ngalabi. I learned a set of rhythms. But when I started drumming with other people from the villages I realised that they played different syncopated rhythms. I gradually learned from them”. Ssenkubuge’s approach entailed rationalisation of the nature of skills and knowledge that he had learned in different contexts. Learning involved “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation to other tangential and overlapping activities” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98). From Ssenkubuge’s reflections, it can be deduced that Ssenkubuge’s drumming experiences in the village communities were a process through which he inquired into, thought about, and immersed himself into the new drum rhythms.

For dance teachers such as Ronald, participating in dance activities in the communities also acted as a system of community appraisal. Ronald explained: “In my village, if you performed with the community it was a sign that you had grasped the core
skills of dance and music. Participation in community activities was a sign of artistic progress. There was a sense in me that I had to improve my skill and knowledge levels each time I took part in community activities”. The community provided a framework within which to work towards advancing his skills to attain integration into the communities of music and dance practice. The learning possibilities made available by the community meant that both the content of the dances and music acted as systems through which he was assimilated into dance practices (Bennett, 1993; Berry, 1997).

Engaging in dance and music activities in community settings facilitated relational learning between the different community members who participated in the activities. Matthew stated: “Each time I participated in Larakarakaka dance and music with other youth, I gradually mastered the dance. As a participant in these activities, I would compare myself with other dancers, especially those that I considered to be dancing well”. Matthew located his proficiency through interaction with other actors in the dance activities. Participating in the dance activities offered a lens through which he inquired, observed, rationalised, and deconstructed Larakarakaka dance as an observer, knower, thinker, collaborator, and doer. He explored his individuality (I am) in environment where he framed other participants (we are) (see Section 2.1.1) as knowledgeable others.

By engaging in communities as spaces of epistemological exploration, the dance teachers engaged in the mesosystem as a paradigm for social learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The mesosystem denotes the epistemological links that exist between units of a microsystem, such as home and village communities. The dance activities in the communities positioned the dance teachers at the centre of dance knowledge and skills as doers, collaborators, constructivists, thinkers, and knowers. Learning was a result of interactive processes that entailed thinking, co-construction, perceiving, problem solving,
and interactive corporeal action between participants. Rationalisation of dances occurred in complex social environments made up of the dance teachers as individual actors, dancing as action, village communities as sources of knowledge, and learning as the situation, as Anderson, Reder, & Simon (1996) and Wilson (1993) have theorised learning in social environments.

6.4.3. Dance troupes

The dance teachers indicated that they had participated in dance activities in cultural dance troupes in different parts of Uganda. Dance troupes are commercial and social units consisting of individuals who train in and perform dances at arts centres, social gatherings, festivals, and competitions among others.

As a learner of dances in a dance troupe, Herbert shared: “When I joined Ndere troupe, I did not know that in Uganda we had so many dances. The director of the troupe used to bring instructors from tribal villages to teach us dances their cultural dances”. Herbert’s reflection shows that the troupe environment presented him possibilities for learning a range of cultural heritage dances in Uganda. He stated: “My first time to learn Mwaga dance was at Ndere. A fellow performer called Namono from Bagisu tribe taught us this circumcision dance”. The dance training undertaken in troupes enabled Herbert to enrich his repertoire of dance originating from cultures outside his own.

Participation in dance troupe activities enhanced Herbert’s rationalisation of corporeal dance material: “I realised that the movements of the dance were very different from the Baakisimba dance that I knew. The movements were fast, strong and aggressive, not as elegant and slow as Baakisimba dance”. As Herbert’s participated in learning the new dances, he became more reflective by engaging thought to rationalise the intrinsic
properties that constituted the knowledge base of the different dances. As a participatory reflective learner, he engaged kinesthetic cognition by unleashing his mind to think about and investigate movement details to uncover the unknown (Mosston, 1972).

Collin, Mariam, Olivia and Ronald also described learning diverse cultural heritage dances including Ntogoro, Otwenge, Akogo, Larakaraka, Baakisimba and Adungu in the dance troupes that they performed in, such as Ndere, Peace Africa, Afrique, Akadinda, Uganda Heritage Roots, and Rhythm Africa. Olivia noted: “We had to learn many dances at Uganda Heritage Roots. We had troupe members from different ethnicities who taught us their cultural dances. We had a practice where each member taught other members his or her cultural music, dances, and other aspects such as stories. The more dances you knew the more your status as a performer within the troupe was secured”. Olivia’s narrative reveals how the ethnic diversity within the dance troupe made the different cultural heritage dances available to the dance teachers through their individual participation in experiential sharing – performance, learning and teaching.

In addition to acquiring content knowledge, some dance teachers said they experienced new teaching techniques for the dances in the dance troupes. Brian revealed: “By learning dance in and performing for different dance troupes, I noticed how different instructors approached teaching cultural dances”. He further explained that teaching approaches in the cultural dance troupes were complex, not monolithic:

In some troupes, we first learned music and drum rhythms and later did movements. In other troupes, the instructors showed us movements that we observed and translated. This depended on the nature dances. Each dance required a certain way of learning it. For example, for Ntogoro dance, we always put emphasis on clapping first the syncopated rhythms played by the long drum for basic male movements. When I joined Ndere kids, the teachers at the troupe taught us differently. The teacher would stand in front of us, some troupe members would play drums, the teacher would dance, and we would look at him and mimic the movements.
Brian’s anecdote shows how the dance troupes did not only offer content knowledge of the dances, but also provided deeper insights into the pedagogies of the dances. In the case of Ntogoro dance, the teaching approach was participatory and exploratory. It allowed him to learn the intrinsic forms of kinesthetic knowledge and skills through music and rhythms. This was in contrast with his learning experience with Ndere kids where teaching was teacher-centred, emphasising the teacher as the sole transmitter of dance skills. Brian was able to rationalise pedagogic differences and identify the meanings behind each pedagogic technique – and what this meant to the dances.

Drawing on their experiences of participating in dances in dance troupe environments, Mariam and Herbert mentioned that learning was experiential and collaborative. Marian stated: “In Akadinda ka Africa dance troupe, I learned from other troupe members such as Arthur Kayizzi and Michael Nsibambi. We always found time for them to take me through the songs and dance movements of the new dances such as Maggunju, Bwola, and Kitagururo”. Hebert also recalled: “In Ndere troupe, the director encouraged us to teach one another, especially the new learners. A fellow member called Kyaligonza was the first person to teach me a new dance called Runyege”. Mariam and Herbert’s narratives show that the collaborative learning experiences drew on the competencies of the diverse members of the dance troupe environment. The troupe members who possessed knowledge of their cultural dances were knowledge natives who used the dance troupes as spaces to share this wealth of material beyond their cultural boundaries (see Section 6.5 for learning dances in complex cultural contexts). This involved interweaving individualities into the dance troupe as a community of learners.
Olivia further highlighted the role of individual dance troupe members as her peer teachers and mentors: “At Uganda Heritage Roots I learned a lot from fellow performers. *Kitaguriro* dance was so hard for me to learn. Whenever we got free time, I would get a member who knew the dance to privately take me through movements, songs, rhythms, techniques, and gestures”. Olivia’s reflection unveils the centrality of communal support in facilitating teaching and learning in troupes. The individual dancers scaffolded each other as learners (Bruner, 1960) and engaged “in individualizing process which…elicited ability to conceive and produce new solutions, information and knowledge” (Mosston, 1972, p. 145) for fellow troupe members as learners.

6.4.4. Schools

Some dance teachers explained that they acquired their knowledge and skills in schools. In my article examining the status of dance as a subject in academic setting, I explained that cultural heritage dances are taught as extracurricular activities in primary and secondary schools, and in academic courses at Makerere University in Uganda (Mabingo, 2015b; see Section 3.4). These dances co-exist as extra-curricular activities alongside mainstream academic subjects such as maths, science, biology, economics, physics, chemistry, history, and social studies, among others. Further, they are taught for a limited period of time in preparation for school festivals, competitions and concerts. The extra-curricular cultural heritage dance and music activities are meant to enable students to share and acquire diverse cultural knowledge and skills.

Collin stated that he learned diverse cultural heritage dances as a student and performer during his primary and secondary school education: “When I joined Makerere College School, the music instructor, Arthur Kayizzi, taught us *Larakaraka* dance. He
demonstrated movements and we observed and imitated him. We just went over these movements again and again. By the time I left after six years, I had learned a range of dances from different Ugandan cultures such as Larakaraka, Bwola, Kitaguriro, Naley'o”.

The school provided a platform from which Collin interfaced with diverse dances from different Ugandan cultures (see Section 6.5 for detailed discussion learning dances in complex cultural contexts). He further explained: “I have never been to the ethnic communities where these dances originated. I just learned them at school”. In Collin’s instance, the cultural heritage dance knowledge and skills from ethnic communities in Uganda was appropriated from their cultural spaces of performance (Charttejee, 1999; Rowe, 2011; Spivak, 1988; William, 2000) and adapted in schools in a form of second existence (Hoerburger, 1968; Nahachewsky, 2001).

Other dance teachers such as Herbert noted that learning processes in schools were more teacher-centred than at home and in communities: “Teacher Ssemanobe taught us Baakisimba dance at Buloba Primary School by demonstrating movements while standing in front of us. We would observe and imitate him”. Similarly, Brian also recalled: “We had teachers such as Steven Rwangyezi, Frank Katoora and Moses Tamale that the school hired to teach dances. They mostly used demonstration to illustrate the movements and music”.

These narratives reveal the role that individual teachers played in spearheading learning dances in schools. The teaching approaches that Herbert and Brian shared portray the learners as docile corporeal depositories (Green, 2003) and the instructors as sole authors on dance knowledge and skills. The instructor demonstrated movements and the learners imitated them (Freire, 1970). Through these teacher-centred approaches, Matthew and Brian were exposed to teaching methods that emphasised kinesthetic memorisation of dance movements, rather than experiencing learning as a participatory and relationally
constructivist activity. This approach to teaching seems to have drawn on the formal schools’ tendency to push students towards individual achievement. This is a consequence of the European imperial education system, which positions the teachers as the sole expert and learners as followers of the teacher’s pedagogic agenda.

Learning dances in schools also presented some constraints. In contrast to communities and homes where dance activities were part of daily life, the time accorded to dances at schools was very limited. Collin mentioned: “We always had limited time to put the dances together for school festivals, competitions, and concerts. We only had time in the evening or at night after normal classes to go through the dances. During the day, we had to take classes in other academic subjects. Generally, we focused on dance movements, songs, and drumming. The instructors did not go into extra information about these dances such as their histories, purposes, the stories behind them, etcetera”.

Learning shifted significantly between homes and communities to schools as centres of knowledge, Collin discloses how learning at school was constrained as a result of the relegation of dance to just an extracurricular activity. His reflection reveals the dilemma that cultural heritage dances may encountered when they are integrated in contexts such as schools where they are less valued as domains of knowledge.

Another constraint mentioned by Brian was that learning the dances at school was competitive, as students raced to perfect the dances and be selected by the teachers for the performance: “Most of the school performances were competitions and the dance instructors always reminded us that we had to train hard, perfect the movements and choreography in order for our school to be competitive in the festivals. As dancers, each of us had to work hard to learn the dances and get selected to be on the dance team”.
As revealed in the anecdotes of some dance teachers such as Brian and Collin, the teaching and learning of dances in the school context focused on the product as opposed to the process Smith-Autard (1994). This emphasis on the product aimed at enhancing mastery of movements. The pedagogic processes in schools also acted as acculturative spaces (Bennett, 1993), where the dance instructors and learners appropriated and deconstructed a diversity of dances in creating their second existence. Although learning in the school settings was predominantly kinesthetic and embodied, it expanded the knowledge bases and skill sets of the dance teachers who constituted the research participants for this research. Most importantly, interfacing with ethnically diverse dances at school immersed the dance teachers in new ethnically diverse dance experiences, which they had not previously encountered in their homes and village communities.

6.4.5. University

For some dance teachers such as Mariam, Olivia, Herbert, Mariam and Ronald, the university education expanded their practical and theoretical dance knowledge and skill. They indicated that taking academic courses in dance at university, particularly Makerere University, enabled them to broaden their skills and knowledge bases.

Mariam recalled: “To further my skills and knowledge in music and dance, I joined the department of music, dance, and drama to study towards a diploma. I wanted to learn and also get qualification”. At university, dances are rationalised within a framework of Western academic canons and processes for which qualifications are awarded. Mariam’s university education expanded her theoretical and practical rationalisation of the dances: “I learned about theory and practice. I practically learned cultural heritage dances from different communities in Uganda and Africa, as well as in theoretical courses such as dance
choreography, dance performance, anatomy, and dance notation, history of dances”. University education offered possibilities for the exploration and rationalisation of academic theories, concepts, and themes of the dances.

Similarly, Olivia shared: “In the first week of my university education, lecturers gave us course outlines with readings and writing assignments about cultural heritage dances. I did not know that dance was theoretical”. For Olivia, university education was revelatory. It introduced her to codified academic approaches to teaching and learning the dances. This knowledge exposed her to new ways of rationalizing cultural heritage dances as theoretical and conceptual subjects, whose episteme could be deconstructed into distinct academic themes under the guidance of codified course outlines.

For Ronald, academic experiences at university offered possibilities for developing and applying research paradigms in the field of cultural heritage dance and music: “As a diploma and later degree student in music, I did a music composition project on composing indigenous Kiganda music for Baakisimba dance”. The course in composition exposed Ronald to scientific analysis of music for dance. This framework of learning deepened his understanding of Baakisimba dance: “When I composed the music, I reflected on what I had learned as a Baakisimba drummer. Documenting the rhythms, tempo, meter, time, texture, and other elements into music notation gave me deeper perspectives about what I had learned and practically performed as a child”.

As Ronald’s intellectual and theoretical curiosity and discoveries expanded, he was inspired to pursue further ethnographic research and wrote a dissertation about drum making practices in his home village, Mpambire. University education advanced Ronald’s intellectual ability to apply tools such as music composition to expand knowledge of dance
practices. It supported him in navigating new ways of identifying, questioning, generating, constructing, and appreciating dance knowledge and skills.

The university orientation engaged dance teachers such as Mariam, Ronald, and Olivia in scholarly conceptualisation of cultural heritage dance material in complex ways and expanded their rationalisation of the cultural heritage knowledge and skills they had experienced at home, school, and in dance troupes and communities. At university, they experienced cultural heritage dances as subjects of scholarly exploration and pursuit of theory and practice. Ekadu (2012) has explained that incorporating knowledge of indigenous art forms in tertiary education contexts in Uganda advances the learners knowledge and ensure sustainence and promotion of these endangered forms. University education revealed to them that dance knowledge exists and can be deconstructed, conceptualised, contextualised, adapted, re-written, rationalised, contested, activated, approximated, assimilated, and expanded in different forms such as theory, research, and pedagogy. University education positioned the dance teachers in dance theory and practice as thinkers, knowers, and doers. The training in theory and practice exposed the dance teachers to the application of critical reflection and analysis to the conceptual, historical, performative and kinesthetic properties of the dances.

The anecdotes of the dance teachers show that the contexts in which they acquired dance knowledge and skills of the dances were complex. Some contexts such as school, dance troupe, and university represent the phenomenon of cultural and intellectual dynamism that is evolving in postcolonial Uganda. Unique and complex as these contexts are, each situated the dance teachers as learners within experiences, which entailed embodying, reflecting on, and rationalising dance knowledge as a system of thought and inquiry, means of creating and expression, method of cultural practice, and framework of
transformance. The contexts fashioned the dance teachers into norms of dance practices, unveiling insights into pedagogic thought.

6.5. Learning ethnically diverse cultural heritage dances in complex cultural environments

Because Uganda is an ethnically diverse society with diverse cultures and dance traditions, part of the study aimed to trace the learning experiences of the dance teachers in complex cultural contexts. This component of the inquiry sought to address the following questions:

1. In what ways and contexts did the dance teachers learn cultural heritage dances from cultures other than their own?
2. What meanings did they de/construct from these learning dances in complex cultural contexts?
3. How did the dance teachers address dilemmas that learning dances in complex cultural contexts may have presented?
4. How did the cross-cultural dance encounters expand the dance teachers’ acquisition of content knowledge?

6.5.1. Learning cultural heritage dances within own ethnic community

The dance teachers shared that their first contact with cultural heritage dance was within their own homes, communities, and ethnicities. These dances were part of communal norms and practices, making it proximal and accessible for dance teachers to immerse themselves in modes of practice from a young age. Matthew, who belongs to the Acholi people of northern Uganda shared: “Every male member of the Acholi tribe was expected to perform Lararakara dance. This is because we were expected to engage in courtship as
youth. Being a cultural practice that is highly treasured, I had to learn the dance and also understand its cultural significance in our culture”.

For Matthew, learning Larakaraka dance, which was linked to courtship, a cultural practice integral to the way of life among the Acholi people, was a cultural responsibility shared by members of the community. He was surrounded by this cultural practice, which gave him early orientation to Larakaraka dance as an aspect of local knowledge systems.

Matthew mentioned that with time, practicing Larakaraka dance became a cultural habit: “With daily practices, we became proficient in performing these dances. But we never stopped dancing it. We performed the dances almost every day and it became a norm. Part of it was that we had to remind ourselves, train ourselves and hone our skills in preparation for courtship dance bonanzas”.

Mariam’s learning experience within her community positioned her at the centre of dance experiences and Banyoro cultural traditions, the ethnic community to which she belongs. She stated: “I learned Runyege dance of the Banyoro people when I was still young. As girls, we had courtship festivities and the dance, drumming, and songs were a big part of it”. She further explained that within the Banyoro culture it is a common practice for members to form communities of dance practice to collectively advance their dance skills and knowledge: “As girls, we used to separately get together and go through movements, songs, learn how to make and use the female waist ring, and develop other skills of interaction to prepare for courtship festivities”.

Mariam emphasised that these gender-particular, task-driven, and activity-specific gatherings were aimed at preparing individual members for courtship dance performances: “You had no other way to engage in courtship other than dance and music. You had to learn well and dance well to attract potential partners”. As well as fulfilling cultural
traditions, Mariam’s involvement in Runyege dance also allowed her to find a place and a voice within the community. In this sense, it can be argued that dance education ushered her into the world and community of practitioners within her culture, through embodied and reflective participation in norms of dance practice.

Ssenkubuge explained that being Muganda by ethnicity and having interacted with dance at home and the immediate village, the first dances he learned were from Buganda: “At home we are Buganda and the villages are in Buganda. There is no way we would have started learning and performing dances from other cultures. This explains why I first learned Baakisimba”. Ronald also described how the cultural, ethnic, and geographical environment in which he first interacted with dances influenced his learning of dances from Buganda: “My family and our village is known in the whole of Buganda for drum making, drumming and dance. It is not surprising that we always learned and played Kiganda music and dance”. Ssenkubuge and Ronald’s reflections show how the immediate environment defined the nature of dances or content knowledge they acquired. Both the content and pedagogy of these ethnically situated dances tied into the cultural norms of the communities where the dances and the two dance teachers originated.

Olivia, Collin, Herbert and Brian shared that their first point of contact with dances from Buganda, their ethnic culture of belonging, was at Kololo High School, Makerere College School, Buloba Primary School, and Buganda Road Primary School respectively. These schools are located in Wakiso, Kampala, and Mukono district in Buganda region. Herbert observed that the location of the school determined the dances that he learned: “I learned Baakisimba dance first because the school, Buloba Primary School, was located in Buganda. The teacher, Mr. Ssemanobe, was also a Muganda”. He added that as a learner, his ethnicity as a Muganda inspired him to learn Baakisimba, a dance from Buganda: “As
a Muganda myself, I felt obliged to learn *Baakisimba* dance and expand my repertoire of knowledge of my native traditions and practices”.

The reflections of the dance teachers underscore the significance of place, belonging, culture and tradition. The idea of place defines the flow of cultural knowledge from the cultures and traditions of people occupying that location. Because ethnicities occupy territory (place), the people who belong to these places tend to be tied to the nature of dance traditions that are celebrated in these ethnic environments. Belonging to or occupying these places means having access to the dance traditions within these places. Therefore, dance pedagogies become highways through which knowledge and skills of dance traditions are shared, explored, constructed, developed and embodied.

### 6.5.2. Learning diverse dances in complex ethnic environments

The narratives of the dance teachers revealed they learned dances that emanated from three complex contexts: 1) Some dance teachers learned dances originating from other ethnicities; 2) Other dance teachers learned diverse cultural heritage dances in geographical areas outside their ethnic communities; and 3) The dance teachers learned diverse cultural heritage dances from instructors who came from diverse cultures. All these complex learning experiences nourished the search for new ways of knowing, thinking, and embodying new dances. Herbert mentioned: “When I joined Ndere, a fellow troupe member, Kyaliwonza from Bunyoro, taught us a dance called *Runyege*. This is when I came to know that cultural heritage dances existed in and from other ethnicities. Before then, I only knew *Baakisimba* dance from my culture”. The anecdote shows that before Herbert first learned *Runyege* dance, his perception that *Baakisimba* was the only dance displays cultural ethnocentrism (Bennett, 1993).
The troupe environment, although outside the cultural environment where Runyege dance originated, enabled Herbert to further rationalise the content knowledge of Runyege dance: “Unlike in Baakisimba dance where we had to move from the toes to the sole at a slow tempo, the tempo of Runyege was very fast. The entire sole of the foot was supposed to touch the ground. Male dancers had to listen to the rhythms of the long drum and translate the rhythms into the footwork”. For Herbert, the experience of learning Runyege dance doubled as exploration of new cultural realms.

Although Herbert acquired practical skills, he noted that he encountered the challenge of learning Runyege dance in its second existence: “For Runyege dance, I learned movements, songs, and drum rhythms at Ndere troupe. Kyaligonza also told us stories about how the dance is performed for courtship traditions. But I still missed experiencing it with the communities that culturally perform and celebrate it in Bunyoro. We did not use it for courtship”. Although taught by a native of Bunyoro, Herbert still felt that his learning experience of the dance was out the cultural context of the dance.

Ronald mentioned that he first interacted with Imbalu drum rhythms and dance when he joined Nsangi Primary School: “The school hired a teacher who taught us drumming for Imbalu. This was my first time to learn a dance outside my culture. It was very different from the Baakisimba drumming. The drums were different in make and the rhythms were more polyrhythmic and fast”.

Similarly, Collin recalled that his first time learning about dances from northern Uganda, such as Larakaraka, Bwola and Ding Ding, was at Makerere College School under the tutorship of the music teacher, Arthur Kayizzi. Ronald and Collin’s reflections reveal that in contemporary central Uganda, there is a flow of dances from different
ethnicities. In their case, the school offered spaces through which this diverse knowledge could be appropriated, mediated and acculturated (Berry, 1997) through pedagogy.

Although schools act as locations where the diverse ethnic dances are appropriated, Collin stated that this process has posed challenges in relation to representation of the cultural functions, realities, and qualities of dances that are tied to their contexts of performance: “The teachers in schools did not teach us the history, purpose, stories, and meaning of the dances, songs, drum rhythms and costumes. We just learned movements without exploring the contextual information behind the dances. I felt as if we knew the dances but we did not know the people and cultures that produced them”. This excerpt discloses that although Collin explored embodied experiences, the learning processes of dances from multiple cultures created dilemmas relating to his ability to fully understand the contextual and cultural underpinnings of the dances.

For Ssenkubuge, learning diverse cultural heritage dances from other cultures only occurred when he travelled to Kampala city from his village in Rakai district: “The first time I went to Ndere centre for a festival is when I saw new dances. I liked Runyege and Ntgoro, which was performed by a group from Bunyoro”. These new encounters exposed Ssenkubuge to new dance knowledge and skills, which he did not know before: “What attracted me is how the body movements of male dancers are guided by ngalabi drum rhythms. What you hear from the ngalabi rhythms is exactly what the footwork does”.

From this reflection, it can be deduced that Ssenkubuge rationalised the constituent components of Runyege dance and Ntgoro dance through participatory observations of the practical workshops to grasp dance knowledge and skills. Ssenkubuge’s reflection shows the desire in his pedagogic philosophy to enrich his repertoire of dance knowledge and skills from diverse Ugandan ethnic communities.
Matthew shared that when he relocated from Gulu to Kampala city, he came into contact with diverse cultural heritage dances from other cultures in Uganda: “When I moved to Kampala, I started this community of dancers, with primary focus on dances from northern Uganda. With time, I realised that we needed to expand our repertoire of dances”. Matthew sought out native teaching exemplars to teach him and his community the ethnically diverse cultural heritage dances: “I contacted people from various cultures such as Ankole, Teso, Buganda and many more, who taught us dances from their cultures”. Matthew’s excerpt reveals that the learning of diverse cultural heritage dances is also spurred by the migratory tendencies of people across different places and cultures. As individuals travel, dance cultures and knowledge boundlessly permeate new demographic and geographical spaces. In these complex cultural processes of learning dance, pedagogy acts as a location where these ethnically diverse cultural heritage dances are negotiated and deconstructed through embodied and reflective encounters.

The learning and teaching processes availed the dance teachers with space to explore experiences, traditions, and norms from diverse cultural heritage dances. In this process, these dance teachers constructed meanings and identities that traversed and transcended complex ethnic boundaries. These new constructions were a result of re-organization of dance knowledge emating from how the dance teachers’ initial experiences into dance norms in their ethnic localities and the new schemas of interaction with new dance practices from ethnic communities outside their own.

6.5.2. Addressing dilemmas of acculturative stress

If the dance teachers were able to learn the complex cultural heritage dances in different environments, how did they address dilemmas that stemmed from these forms of learning
dances in complex cultural contexts? What dilemmas of learning did the dance teachers encounter as learners? What were the implications of these dilemmas on the dance teachers’ understanding of pedagogy?

Olivia revealed that as a learner she had “trouble learning the footwork of Kitaguriro dance for a long period time”. She added: “I felt the technique was very new and different from that of Baakisimba dance that I already knew. The alternation of the feet was very fast and followed particular rhythmic structures of the drums. Other footwork movements felt like syncopations. I felt as if I was dancing out of time”. Collin also observed that he encountered difficulties learning Bwola dance because “the dancer has to sing, dance, listen to the drums, and play drums at the same time. This was not the case with dances from my culture such as Baakisimba where we have dancers, drummers, and choristers performing these sections simultaneously in separate groups”.

Olivia and Collin’s narratives show the difficulties that learning dances in complex cultural contexts can pose to learners within local environments in Uganda. Berry, Kim, Mande and Mok (1987) described the anxieties that learners such as Olivia and Collin experience as acculturative stress. Acculturative stress denotes the struggles that Olivia and Collin encountered as they shifted from norms of their cultural practice to integrate, assimilate, and adapt “movements in and out of different cultural worldviews” (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003, p. 425). This acculturative stress was mostly embodied. Both Olivia and Collin, engaged reflection on their acculturative embodied experiences to arrive at the “meaning of learning experiences, and evaluation and appraisal of these learning experiences as a source of difficulty…” (Berry, 1997, p.18).

In the course of learning dances in complex cultural contexts, the Collin engaged adaptive mechanisms to address any ensuing acculturative stresses:
I had difficulties learning *Bwola* dance because dancing, drumming, singing, and listening to songs and drums all happen simultaneously. To learn this dance, I had to learn the songs first because these songs are the drivers of the dances. Then I learned how play the small drums, and finally I added the movements. I gradually went over the dance again and again for some time to get into its practice.

Similarly, Ssenkubuge stated that he explored new dances such as *Runyege* and *Ntogoro* by first rationalising the attendant drum rhythms: “The first time I saw *Runyege* and *Ntogoro* dance I listened to the drums rhythms first. I identified the polyrhythms from the different drums. I them looked at the dancers and how they were interpreting the music”.

Collin and Ssenkubuge’s reflections reveal that they engaged thought to rationalise the dance material. This enabled them to identify areas of difficulties within the material. Upon reflection on these acculturative stresses, they applied music as a problem-solving aid to make the dance material intelligible. Use of music as a learning aid relates to my earlier analysis of the place of music in aiding pedagogy of Ugandan dances (Mabingo, 2015c). In this analysis, I underscored that music provides a framework through which the dance learner can explore movement material, instead of engaging it as just a form of accompaniment for dance.

Highlighting another adaptive mechanism for coping with acculturative stress, Mariam shared that when she was learning *Baakisimba* dance, she used structural analysis to rationalise complex movements: “When I joined Makerere University, a professor called Nannyonga taught me *Baakisimba* dance. I looked at the footwork, waist movement and body posture. The footwork was slow and followed the central beat. The waist moved in a rounded way, the knees were bent and the rest of the torso was still”.

Mariam analysed the movement structures of the dance and deconstructed them into smaller independent components. She rationalised each component separately to learn
the whole dance. Mariam’s approach to learning *Baakismba* dance can be linked to Wilson’s (1986) observation that in complex cultural learning environments, “persons are more likely to learn from experience when they are prepared for the experience, practically engage in educational activities during the experience, reflect on the experience, and evaluate the experience” (p. 520).

According to Hebert, locating the link between *Runyege* dance and its underlying stories was a problem-solving technique for dance knowledge comprehension: “Because Kyaligonza came from Bunyoro, he first taught us the meaning behind *Runyege* dance. He told us that it was a courtship dance for boys and girls and explained how the female and male movements and songs exemplified courtship”.

Through these stories, Herbert understood, memorised, and established connections between theoretical knowledge and the kinesthetic structures of the dance. Herbert reflected on the stories to understand the technique of the dance: “I had to dance while having in mind the sense and feeling of courtship. We had to act as if we were enticing women. Kyaligonza told us that boys stomp hard on the ground and use a lot of energy so that *ebinyege* (leg rattles) can sound loudly”. This underlines the role that stories as theories behind the dance movements can play in illuminating the corporeal movement material of the dances. The stories further aided Herbert’s understanding of the rationale behind the dance: “The stories behind *Runyege* dance helped me to understand the essence of the movement and how to execute them. I listened to the stories, understood them, and related them to the corporeal properties of the movements”.

Contrary to notions presenting Africa as one homogeneous society (John, 2013; Seay & Dionne, 2016), the narratives of the dance teachers show that the demography and traditions in central Uganda are complex. In the realm of dance education, the dances in
are ethnically diverse. The dance teachers engaged in learning dances in various cultural environments, acquiring knowledge and skills of dances outside their cultures.

For the dance teachers in this study, learning dances in complex cultural contexts had provided space to inquire into new dance knowledge, frame thoughts about what this learning meant to their dance identities, explore embodiment of these dances, reflect on mechanisms for coping with new learning experiences, and adapt this knowledge of complex cultural dances as part of their cultural heritage dance repertoire. The different experiences of learning diverse cultural dances shared by the dance teachers confirm Torbiorn’s (1982) observation that learning dances in complex cultural context involves the gradual development of familiarity, comfort, and proficiency regarding the new cultural realities. It is worth noting that dance pedagogy acted as the bridge that linked the dance teachers to the complex dances from different ethnicities in Uganda, providing them with ideas about how to deal with acculturative dance learning stresses.

6.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have drawn on Risner’s (2009) view that in addition to pedagogic knowledge, dance teachers need to possess competencies in content or subject matter knowledge of the dances (Shulman, 1986). I examined the complex experiences the dance teachers had as learners of cultural heritage dances in varied learning environments. By revisiting the initial orientation of the dance teachers into dance practices, I also aimed to examine Walsh’s (2004) observation that a dancer’s aesthetic and pedagogic paradigm is developed from the cultural environment in which he or she interfaces with dance traditions (cited in Rowe, 2008).
The content knowledge acquired by the dance teachers was culturally complex and transcended ethnic boundaries. Content knowledge included movements, gestures, techniques, instrumental and vocal music, stories, histories, and other background information on the dances and the diverse cultures from which these dances originated. The dance teachers’ initial interface with the content knowledge of the dances occurred in contexts such as home, village communities, dance troupes, schools, and universities in central Uganda. Employing learning mechanisms such as inquisitorial observation, storytelling, practical performances and embodied experimentation, the dance teachers rationalised the content knowledge of the dances as abstract, concrete, visual, cognitive, embodied, musicalised, and kinesthetic epistemological domains.

The content knowledge that constituted the epistemological foundations of the dance teachers was diverse and complex. Originating from different ethnic backgrounds, the dance teachers were immersed into learning norms of dances in complex cultural environments. This exposed the teachers to new cultural realms and realities. Due to their diverse cultural orientations, the dance teachers were confronted with acculturative stresses emanating from difference, diversity and variations in traditions. In dealing with the anxieties of acculturative dance learning stress, some dance teachers applied adaptive mechanisms such as stories, reflective structural analysis of dance material and use of music as a learning aid, which enabled them to corporeally shift from ethnocentrism (knowing dances from their own ethnicities) to ethnorelativism (accepting, integrating, adapting, and assimilating knowledge and skills from other cultures) (Bennett, 1993).

For the dance teachers who participated in this study, acquiring content knowledge of the dances was not just an act of corporeal imitation of movements. The dancers used their learning experiences as a process of thought to rationalise their place within the dance
traditions, frame their identities as pedagogues, and construct complex meanings from the content knowledge. The content knowledge of the dances was not only an aesthetic quality, but also an epistemological frame of thought and space for construction of individual and social meanings. Underscoring the epistemological foundations of African art, including African dances, Mudimbe (1986) noted they:

...are historical products of a complex process: the metamorphosis of concrete realities into abstract categories and, complimentarily, the possible transformation of those realities into cultural objects of knowledge, which are understood, classified, refined, and defined as cultural signs from the perspective of …epistemological tradition. (p. 3)

The dance teachers’ journeys into acquisition of the content knowledge of the dances positioned them individually within communities of dance practice. The reciprocal interface between them as individuals and the community created mechanisms of knowledge production. Hence, the learning of cultural heritage dances formed processes of inquiry and thought – thinking and knowing, methods cultural practice – being and belonging, means of creating and expression – doing and embodying, and frameworks of transformance – becoming, for the dance individual dance teachers. Competence in content knowledge of the dances had grounded the dance teachers in dance education practices. Unveiling this historiography provided a lens through which I examined their current pedagogic practices, which I expound on in Chapter Seven of the thesis.
Chapter Seven: Pedagogies of thought, knowing, doing, being, and becoming: Rationalising teaching of ethnically diverse cultural heritage dances

7.1. Introduction

This chapter unveils the key findings of this research study; the findings answer the key research question that guided this research. I provide a critical examination of the complex ways through which the dance teachers rationalise pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in varied environments in central Uganda. The analyses reveal how the pedagogies of cultural heritage dances are systems of thought and inquiry – knowing and thinking, frameworks of transformance – becoming, mechanisms of cultural practice being and methods of creating and expression – doing and embodying.

Drawing on the premise that “a teacher can transform understanding, performance skills, or desired attitudes or values into pedagogic representations and actions” (Shulman, 1987, p. 7), the chapter discusses how the dance teachers engaged pedagogic reasoning (Shulman, 1987) as individual thinkers, constructivists, doers, knowers and collaborators operating within a framework of communities of practice.

In the first section, I explore the reflections of the dance teachers on how they prepare for the dance class, which in formal dance education is referred to as lesson planning. The chapter discusses the preparatory pedagogic choices that they make and how they are informed by critical reflection on the subject matter, and the learners, and environments of teaching and learning. This section is followed by a critical examination of how the dance teachers orient learners into practical dance activities as a warm up. Following this section, I analyse of how the dance teachers engage theories of the dances to delve into information on the history, contexts, cultural underpinnings, and stories about
the dances and the cultures where they come from. The section that follows explores how the dance teachers teach movements and techniques of the dances in varied environments. Within this inquisitive observation, peer modeling, repetition, verbal remarks, and practical demonstration are examined as mechanisms that dance teachers use to provide feedback and assess learners. This section is followed by a critical analysis of the use music as a teaching aid for dance. The last section discusses how the dance teachers rationalise pedagogies in diverse ethnic dances in varied environments in central Uganda. The section illuminates the dilemmas encountered by the dance teachers in this process and how they address these dilemmas in their pedagogies.

7.2. Rationalizing teaching plans: Dance teachers’ preparations

This section deals with how the dance teachers prepare for dance classes. The findings show that the process of teaching begins with rationalising material and pedagogies in ways that reflect conceptions of teaching (Bullough, 1987). These processes have links to the lesson planning theorised in formal education canons (Butt, 2006; Farrell, 2002). It is through these preparatory thought processes that the dance teachers rationalized the subject matter, teaching activities, teaching tasks, and teaching environments.

7.2.1. Researching the dances

The fieldwork data revealed that some dance teachers carry out research about dances in preparation for the dance classes and activities. Olivia mentioned: “The first thing I do before I teach a cultural dance is to research about it. This is common for dances that do not come from Buganda, my ethnic culture of origin”. Citing the example of TamehnaIbuga dance, she noted: “Recently, I taught TamehnaIbuga dance to the members of Christ Harvest Church, Lungujja. I contacted people from Busoga, an ethnic region
where the dance originates, and asked them about the history of the dance, the purpose of
the dance, the meaning of the name *TamehnaIbuga* and its movements, and where and
when the dance is performed”. This reflection from Olivia reveals that teaching diverse
dances entails acquiring deeper knowledge about the dances in question. It underscores the
centrality of initial preparatory processes in understanding this knowledge. This is
important because it allows dance teachers such as Olivia to teach from a position of
knowledge of the dances.

Mariam explained the importance of acquiring this initial information in pedagogic
rationalisations: “When you acquire this information about the dances, it enables you to
teach any dance to learners beyond the movements. This information includes rich history
that carries messages about them and the communities that perform them. As a dance
teacher, you cannot claim to know a dance without knowing this information. This is the
knowledge that defines the existence of the dances”. This excerpt shows that teaching
dances is not only about demonstrating movements. It also encompasses awareness of
knowledge that speaks to the history of the dance, meanings of movements, and the
information that attaches the dances to their cultures of origin.

Both Olivia and Mariam reveal that attaining a deeper understanding of the
theoretical and contextual knowledge of the dances leads to the development of teaching
plans as part of sketching a holistic pedagogy. These reflections connect with my teaching
philosophy. Throughout my career as an internative teacher of dances in varied cultural
contexts (see Section 4.2), I have developed a teaching model that integrates background
information on the dances as part of pedagogy (Mabingo, 2014, 2015c). This knowledge
allows the teacher to holistically rationalise the content knowledge of the dances, giving
consideration to kinesthetic, theoretical, and contextual information about the dance to allow learners to know the dances beyond their corporeal movements.

A key question emerged from the fieldwork encounters: If the dance teachers engage in research about the dances, what particular information about the dances do they seek knowledge about? The reflections of some dance teachers revealed that the information they seek in this process is complex and intrinsic to dances and the communities from which these dances originate.

Collin mentioned: “I look at the name of the dance, the history of the dance, the purpose of the dances, the contexts in which the dance is performed, the meaning of songs and movements, and the people, who perform the dance”. Citing the example of Kitaguriro dance, Collin stated: “When I did research about Kitaguriro dance, I came to appreciate the significance that the long-horned cows have in the lives of the Banyankore people of western Uganda. I also learned how all this knowledge is depicted in the footwork, arm movements, stories, sounds, and the songs of the dance”.

Collin’s narrative discloses how seeking information about Kitaguriro dance was a process on inquiring into and developing thought about the dance and the people. This information allowed Collin to understand the place of Kitaguriro dance in the sociocultural fabric of the Banyankore people. Collin’s understanding of Kitaguriro dance as a complex domain of knowledge can be connected to Gorer’s (1976) observation that each dance in an African culture is a complex constellation of the customs, geography, religious beliefs, sociocultural settings, and historical perspectives of the people and place.

Underlining the vitality of acquiring detailed information about the dances, Herbert, Ronald, and Ssenkubuge observed that because dances are diverse and originate from different ethnic settings, it is important to engage a ‘native knowledgeable other’ (people
who come from communities where the dances come from) to attain valid information. Ronald stated: “Since Uganda has many tribes and many dances, it is necessary to contact a person from a particular tribe where the dance comes from to get the information”. He further added: “At Peace Africa, I have community members from different tribes. I contact them for information about their cultural dances. This means I get valid knowledge and use it to design my teaching strategies and philosophies”. Ronald’s viewpoint underlines the fact that a dance pedagogue needs to be open to collaborations to learn. In a country as ethnically diverse as Uganda, pedagogy offers dance teachers possibilities to seek information inter-culturally from and about dances that originate from other cultures. Acquiring knowledge of the diverse dances advances the teaching competencies of the dance teachers, putting them in a place of knowledge from where they can develop and implement effective pedagogic frameworks.

The dance teachers reflected on what constitutes the subject matter of the dances as part of the process of developing their teaching plans. They described seeking deeper understanding of the dance knowledge, especially for dances that originate from other cultures. This experience involves thought and inquiry as the dance teachers seek to develop pedagogic frameworks that are informed by the knowledge accumulated.

7.2.2. Investigating prospective learners and teaching environments

In addition to researching the dances, some dance teachers revealed that developing teaching plans entails seeking knowledge about the communities where they are going to facilitate dance sessions and activities. Herbert said: “When I was hired to teach the communities in Luwero, I asked for information about them. They told me that these were women suffering from HIV/AIDS. I had a meeting with them where we had a conversation
about their expectations, fears, challenges, among other things”. He added: “The information, which I gathered allowed me to go back and prepare the dances, music, and think about how to introduce these women to this dance”. Integrating knowledge about learners into the teaching plans allowed Herbert to engage in learner-centred teaching (Blumberg, 2013; Doyle, 2011).

He acquired “knowledge of learners and their characteristic” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8) and used this material to make pedagogic choices that responded to the conditions of the prospective learners: “I picked Kitagwiro dance. I looked at many dances and decided to pick this dance because it has arm movements, which I thought were appropriate and accessible for people living with HIV/AIDS because these movements are not physically too demanding”. Herbert’s approach placed the learners at the centre of teaching and learning process. This draws links to Barr and Risner’s (2014) call for dance teachers to heighten their understanding of students’ needs and the issues that surround them to allow for meaningful collaboration and the application of pedagogy.

For some dance teachers, the process of developing teaching plans entails going through the dance movements to immerse the self into the movement knowledge of the dances. Herbert mentioned: “When I am going to teach a dance class, I think about them, practically and repeatedly go over them, and memorise them in my head and body and later teach them. I do not write these movements down”. Herbert’s approach involves embodied preparation where he seeks to advance his kinesthetic intelligence (Gardner, 1983) by repeatedly going through movements to memorise them.

For Olivia, part of preparing the teaching plans involves selecting the dance movements and songs to be taught. She stated: “Because the dances that I teach at Harvest Christ Church are ethnic, there are some dances that I do not teach. Before I teach a dance
class, I first think about the dance material – meaning, history, purpose, and movements”. Citing some examples, Olivia posited: “I cannot teach Kimandwa dance because it is traditionally a worship dance. The church community perceives these worship performances as devilish. They are against the religious preaching of the church”. Olivia’s observation shows that rationalising pedagogy involves understanding the relevance of the dances to its context of practice.

Olivia further noted that part of preparation for the classes encompasses reflections on the impact the dance material may have on the learners: “Although psalm 149:3 encourages us to dance for God, people at the church first resented our cultural dance classes”. She added: “One day, I taught Baakisimba dance and we performed it at the Church. We decorated our costume with cowries’ shells. Church members and the pastors told us that the shells were demonic because they use them in cultural shrines in Buganda”. Olivia’s narrative unveils the complexities of pedagogic rationalisation and application. It also demonstrates how pedagogy offers the dance teachers a framework to think about, reflect on, and locate the place and relevance of the dance in relation to the learners and contexts in which it is taught and learned.

Olivia’s rationalisation of her teaching plans places her at the intersection between cultural forms of artistic and cultural expression and the Pentecostal Christian religious values and beliefs, which were introduced to Uganda as a pretext for colonisation (Openjuru & Lyster, 2007). Olivia shared: “Before I teach classes, I pick movements that are appropriate for the church community”. She further explained: “For example, for Baakisimba dance, I change the waist movements so that they do not look seductive. I also change songs of the dances and use words that are related to scriptures, Jesus and God instead of indigenous linguistic lyrics”. Olivia’s thought and planning also shows how
dance teachers can use pedagogy as a space to negotiate issues related to teaching and learning cultural heritage dances in diverse ethnic environments.

In revisiting *Baakisimba* dance to tailor it for the church environment, Olivia is engaging intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1986; Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). She seeks ways to adapt, assimilate and integrate *Baakisimba* dance material into the evangelical criteria of the church. This incorporation of dances in church settings relates to research conducted by Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2005) and Ssempijja (2006, 2012) on music and dance in Catholic churches in central Uganda. The studies revealed that dance and music has been integral to the evangelical and liturgical activities of the Catholic Church.

For Collin, part of the preparation for the dance classes entails attaining knowledge of individual learners. He observed: “Because our community gets new members every day, I try to know the learning progress of each learner. This enables me to select the dances that fit this diversity of learners and their complex needs. I always start with dances like *Kizino*, which does not have complicated movements to cater for novice learners”. Similarly, Ssenkubuge shared: “I always make sure I know the abilities of individual learners so that nobody is left behind. I normally start with *Baakisimba* dance, which is less complicated, before teaching hard dances such as *Mbaga*”. Ssenkubuge and Collin both seek information about learners that allows them to frame teaching plans that respond to the needs of these learners. This approach can be linked to Shulman’s (1987) idea that “knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from workings of the group….to the character of the communities and culture” (p. 8) is key in enabling teachers to rationalise pedagogical knowledge that focuses on the learners.

In general, the narratives of the dance teachers demonstrate that rationalising teaching plans is a thought process that streamlines their pedagogic frameworks. These
modes of thought occasion “comprehension and transformation” (Shulman, 1987, p. 14) of information into pedagogical knowledge. Preparatory reflections “involved the making of decisions regarding the value and meaning of the dance product being transferred” (Rowe, 2008, p. 5). This process offers deeper understanding of knowledge, skill, and expands their levels of thinking (Bloom, 1956) about teaching tasks. The aforementioned thoughts of the dance teachers reveal that contrary to the views that have characterised cultural heritage dance practices as physical activities without deeper thought (see Section 1.3), developing teaching plans involves thought and modes of reasoning on the subject matter, the learners, and the teaching and learning environments.

7.3. Setting the dance classes in motion: Teaching tasks, activities, and goals

The previous section covered how the dance teachers generate ideas that inform their teaching plans. This section builds on the foregoing discussion to examine how these dance teachers orient the learners into practical dance activities. This examination is guided by the following questions: 1) what activities do the dance teachers use as warm ups to initiate learners into practical dancing? and 2) What are the key underlying ideas that these activities cover? Finding answer to the above questions also took into consideration Shulman’s (1987) position that “there exists ‘knowledge base for teaching’…aggregation of knowledge, skills, understanding, of ethics and dispositions, of collective responsibility – as well as means for communicating and representing it” (p. 4)

The fieldwork findings reveal that the dance teachers facilitate activities such as games, songs, drum rhythms, and structured movements routines in ways that draw parallels with what in Western dance education has been conceptualised as warming up (Church, Wiggins, & Moode, 2001; Guidetti, Emerenziani, Gallotta & Baldari, 2007) to
prepare the learners to partake in teaching and learning. The following sections discuss how the dance teachers apply these activities as part of rationalising dance pedagogies.

7.3.1. Cultural games as warm up

Some dance teachers mentioned that they use cultural games to introduce the dances to the learners. Collin stated: “When am starting a dance class, I use cultural games a lot. I want the learners to feel comfortable, have fun, and at the same time warm their bodies for the dances”. Collin believes that using games derived from cultural traditions as a warm up can prepare the bodies and minds of the learners to actively partake in practical dance activities. He added: “I use games such as ekibbo, kapa agobaagoba from Buganda and others from other ethnic communities, which emphasise rhythms, involve vocal singing, and require body movements and teamwork”.

In nonparticipant sessions, I observed Collin using Ekibbo game as a warm up. Ekibbo is a children’s folk game from the Baganda people of central Uganda where children form a circle, hold hands, and jump on both feet as they sing the following song:

Soloist: Ekibbo
Corus: Kiri munyumba
Soloist: Ekibbo
Chorus: Kiri mu nyumba
Soloist: Jangu okinone
Chorus: Kiri mu nyumba
Soloist: Ddayo ddayo
Chorus: Kiri mu nnyumba
Translation
Soloist: The basket
Chorus: Is in the house
Soloist: The basket
Chorus: Is in the house
Soloist: Come and pick it
Chorus: It is in the house
Soloist: Move back, move back
Chorus: It is in the house
The learners sang the song in a call and response format. The singing was accompanied by jumping in one place. When the soloist called “jjangoo okinone”, all the learners jumped towards the middle of the circle, while replying “ekibbobbo”. When the soloists called “ddayo ddayo”, the learners moved the circle back. According to Collin, “such games such as ekibbobbo carry all the elements that are key in dances such as rhythm, interaction, attitude, singing, and the body movements”. When I observed the group of more than 25 learners playing this game as warm up, I felt it brought as sense of teamwork through the strength of the voices, the steadfastness of movement, and the diverse forms of expression and freedom that each learner brought to the group and activities. This game also centred the minds of the learners to the dance space and tasks.

This game was vital to the dance activities that ensued in three ways: firstly, it combined kinesthetic, musical, vocal and social intelligences (Gardner, 1983) and, participatory interactions, aspects that are central in dances from African cultures (see 2.3.2); secondly, it physically prepared the learners to engage in learning movements, songs, and drum rhythms that proceeded the warm up, such as Maggunju and Kizino; and thirdly, it engrained the sense of Ubuntu (see Section 2.1.1), where the different individualities of learners interactively and reciprocally commune in the learning process.

The rationalisation of the game as a warm up exercise demonstrates Collin’s understanding of the cultural, conceptual, practical and mental foundations of these games. Collin’s teaching approach underscores “mastering complex awarenesses and sensitivities, various bodies of knowledge, and a set of skills that taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching” (Moule, 2005, p. 5). He subjected his pedagogy to thought processes and modes of inquiry to locate the knowledge of the games within content knowledge of the dances and to discern how they are of benefit to the learners.
Other dance teachers such as Mariam indicated that they use cultural games that illuminate the movement material of the dances to prepare the bodies of the learners for complex movement material:

When I teach Runyege, I do not go straight away into the movements. There is a game called kimotoka that we have in Bunyoro culture. I make learners do this game first. They do it repeatedly. This game involves stepping with both feet turned. Each turned-out foot moves in front of the other in a rhythmic way. The footwork is very fast. The structure of the game – rhythm, movements of the feet, and weight control – carries resemblance with the rhythmic and corporeal patterns of Runyege dance.

In this excerpt, Mariam rationalised how the kimotoka game links to Runyege dance. She identified the relationship between the movements in the games and the footwork of the dance. She also locates the rhythmic patterns of the dance within the game. It is worth noting that the kimotoka game is common within the communities where Mariam has taught Runyege dance, as her aforementioned reflection revealed. It can be deduced that Mariam has been utilising local knowledge, embedded in community activities such as kimotoka game to advance pedagogy.

Commenting on his choice of children’s games as a warm up for the dance classes, Collin observed that these games are closer to the cultural dances and the learners: “Most of my learners know the games because they have done them before as children. I use these games to support learners to start from what they know to learn complex rhythms and movements”. Collin’s pedagogy borrows ideas from already existing cultural knowledge that learners are familiar with and adapts them to new teaching environments and processes. He rationalises logical, conceptual, and pedagogic frameworks from cultural games to make learning of the movements, rhythms, and songs of the dances intelligible. By using cultural games that learners are already familiar with, Collin’s pedagogy carried resemblances to culturally responsive pedagogy (see Section 3.3.3), which “recognizes,
respects, and uses students’ identities and backgrounds as meaningful sources for creating optimal learning environments” (Gay, 2000, p. 3).

Collin and Mariam’s application of warm-up games as part of pedagogy in central Uganda is not an isolated practice. Reflecting on experiences within Maori culture, George Salter (2000) has observed that making games, the generation of solutions to activity and teaching games as an approach to understanding can guide and facilitate culturally responsive teaching. From the viewpoint of culturally relevant pedagogy, Collin and Mariam’s approaches draws parallel with Melchior’s (2011) observation that teachers in any setting “should become aware of, and understand their own cultures, and more importantly, the cultures of their students and learning environments” (p.119) if they are to offer meaningful teaching and learning experiences.

7.3.2. Singing and drumming as warm up

The findings from the fieldwork indicate that dance teachers use drumming and vocal songs as warm ups to initiate learners into practical dance activities. When I observed the dance activities conducted by Ssenkubuge, Collin and Matthew, I noticed they first took the learners through drum rhythms and songs as a preparatory step for the practical dance movement activities. As soon as the learners arrived at the dance class venue, they would first play instruments and sing songs as a group.

As a participant observer of the class that Collin facilitated in the community in Kabalagala, I also experienced the use of drumming and singing to initiate myself and the other learners into the dance activities:

As soon as I arrived to take a dance class, I was handed a big drum with drumming sticks. The teacher, Collin, stood in front of all of us and showed us rhythms to play. The rhythms progressed from a slow to high tempo. The energy also increased from low to high energy. As we drummed we also
made sound using our voices. The drumming lasted for between 10-20 minutes. At some moments, the drumming also involved some body movements, jumps, and stomping.

As I was playing the rhythms, I felt the connection between these rhythms and my inner pulse. I primarily used my ears to listen and my mind to decode, internalise, process and reproduce these rhythms. The rhythms were new and spontaneous to me, as I had not experienced them before. This stimulated my sense of rhythmic precision and curiosity. I noticed that I had to focus my mind on the activity of drumming and at the same time draw my attention to listening to the rhythmic output produced by other members. Drumming enabled me to personify the rhythm and find my own cadence with the other learners. Although I struggled to grasp the intense exploratory spontaneity of the rhythmic framework, I felt a sense of communal harmony, participatory connection, and collective inclusiveness once I synchronised my own rhythms with other drummers.

Drumming brought me closer to other learners. It created a sense of community where different individualities congregated. I felt that I was a learner because of the other learners, as depicted the Ubuntu worldview (see 2.1.1). This practical involvement in synchronised interactivity with drumming, movements, and vocalisation activated my understanding of cultural heritage dance learning as a complex, collaborative, participatory, integrative, and step-by-step process (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987).

Collin’s approach of using drumming and vocal songs and sounds to initiate learners in the process of learning dances has parallels with Streets’ (2010) experience learning cultural dances in dance camps in northern Ghana. She stated:

In the camps I visited, the following pedagogical format was fairly typical: song instruction, drum instruction, learning how song and drum work together, warm-up, explanation of the dance, breaking down of steps, repetition, and improvisation. (p. 77)
When I asked Collin why he uses this approach to initiate learners into practical dance activities, he said: “Drumming, vocalisation and some movements prepare the body and sharpen the ears and the mind of the learners to be able to understand these elements of the dances. It is also physical, so the learners get into the practice of embodying music and dance ideas, as two inseparable components”.

I experienced a similar feeling when movement and vocalisation were entwined in the drumming exercise. My body was a constellation for the rhythms, movements, and vocal sounds that we created. The sounds, voices, and corporeal movements converged into communal energy that came from other learners as a community. The sense of connectedness created a feeling of mental, rhythmic, and physical readiness to engage in movement exploration. Moreover, this exposure reminded me of the centrality of music and rhythm in illuminating the movement knowledge and skills in African dances, a subject that I examined extensively in Section 2.4 of this thesis.

In relation to this, Olivia highlighted that she also uses music activities to initiate learners into dance material: “With the church community, I use songs a lot for learners to get a deeper understanding of the dance movements. A dance such as Maggunju has many songs. Some of them include: 1) Amaggunju amaggunju; 2) bannage nnali ntéma; and 3) amasagazi. Each song has its own movement patterns”. Olivia sang each song for me and demonstrated how they tie into their attendant movement structures:

**Song 1**

Soloist: Amaggunju amaggunju  
Chorister: Gano amaggunju agazinibwa ab’obutiko, gano amaggunju  
**Translation**  
Soloist: The Maggunju dance, the maggunju dance  
Chorister: This is maggunju dance that is performed by members of the butiko (mushroom) clan
Song 2
Soloist: Bannage nnali ntema
Choristers: Bwe ppo
Soloist: Nentema akatiko
Choristers: Aka Namulondo
Translation
Soloist: As I was cutting
Choristers: Like this (done with movement that depicts cutting. The dancer bends body forward, stretches out one arm and fists as if he or she is grabbing grass. The other arm moves as if it is cutting the grass being held and then it throws the grass at the back)
Soloist: I cut the mushroom
Choristers: That (the mushroom) belongs to Namulondo

Nnali Ntema

Song 3
Choristers: Amasagazi ganyenza laba ganyenza amasagazi
Soloist: Gannyeza ganyenza n’abaafa
Choristers: Amasagazi ganyenza laba ganyenza amasagazi
Translation
Choristers: I am moving as if the leaves of the elephant grass are shaking me
Soloist: They (elephant grass leaves) even shake the deceased
Choristers: I am moving as if the leaves of the elephant grass are shaking me

Amasagazi

Olivia explained that she uses songs to articulate how the rhythms of the songs intercede with body movements. As she sang the songs, she emphasised the central beat through clapping, remarking, “All movements of the dance move on this central beat”. Olivia’s use of songs as a means to introduce dance movements can be linked to dance and music practices among the Akan people of Ghana, where the choice of music the drummer makes in implementing the rhythm sets is controlled by the level of reciprocity with the corresponding dance sequences (Anku, 2000; see also Section 2.4).

Olivia uses songs to expose the learners to the structures of Maggunju dance: “These songs provide the rhythms on which movements are performed, and carry meaning in themselves, and in some dances the songs dictate the movements to be done”. This pedagogic approach integrates songs as an entry into the world of cultural heritage dance movement. This pedagogic approach has connections with Nketia’s (1965) explanation that using songs to understand dances in African practices involves “scales, modes and other details of tonal organisation that contribute to the impact of the piece of music on the dancer and may influence the expressive quality of the dance” (p. 92).
These dance teachers applied rhythms, songs, and vocal sounds as foundational knowledge for cultural heritage dances movements. Instead of jumping straight into the movements of the dances, they subject the teaching and learning to a thought process. The musical frameworks are applied in constructivist manner to make it possible for learners to gradually adapt to the movements of cultural dances. This thought process inquires into the links between the drum rhythms, songs and vocal sounds to the complex kinesthetic structures of the dances. The pedagogy seeks to usher learners into norms of practical dance activities as individuals and community. Thus, the dance teachers pursue mechanisms to accord learners entry into the realm of the dances.

7.3.3. Structured movement exercises as warm up

In contrast with some dance teachers’ use of cultural games as warm up, Herbert, Brian and Ronald indicated they use structured warm up exercises to orient learners into practical dance activities. Ronald mentioned: “Before I start teaching movements, I use warm up exercises for the movements routines that I developed as a result of my interface with Western dance traditions in Europe”. According to Ronald, this structure includes “stretching of the body, rotation of joints, exploring locomotor and non-locomotor movements in space, swinging, and rolling up and down from the head, spine, knees down to toes and then up”. These warm up exercises seem to resemble the warm-up routines that dance teachers and instructors use in teaching dances from and in Western traditions (Guidetti, Emerenziani, Gallotta, & Baldari, 2007).

As an internative learner (see Section 4.2) who has experienced learning cultural heritage dances in my native village, Mbuukiro, and other dance forms, such as modern dance, ballet, contemporary dance, at universities and private studios in Uganda, the U.S,
and New Zealand, I have found the patterns of movement routines that Ronald mentioned common in Western dance education traditions. As Ronald shared his warm up, I reflected on the warm up routines and experiences that I have had as a learner of modern dance, contemporary dance, and intermediate ballet in formal education settings. These routines emphasize structured stretching, body alignment exercises, and body conditioning protocols, among others, and are geared toward preparing the learner both mentally and physically to participate in practical dance activities.

When I asked Ronald to share details of what informs his application of structured movement routines as warm up, he mentioned: “I learned these exercises when I studied dance at universities in Norway, Germany, Hungary, France, and the UK and through the practical workshops that I attended and conducted in these countries”. Ronald justified using these exercises “because they prepare the whole body of the learner and set their mind for the dance activities”. By adapting Western movement ideas, Ronald demonstrated his ability to reconciling knowledge and skills from other cultural movement vocabularies with his pedagogy. Ronald’s use of ideas from Western movement traditions to frame his teaching methodologies shows that pedagogy in Uganda is has complex influences. The dance teachers do not follow one single model of pedagogy. Rather, they draw on their diverse backgrounds and pluralised skill and knowledge base to make pedagogic choices to enhance teaching and learning.

Ronald’s approach of using Western ideas to advance local knowledge has links to what Rowe (2008) has referred to as anti-hegemony in dance education. According to Rowe (2008), “through anti-hegemony, cultural activity is directed by the needs of those in the immediate community, with reference to their past and present experiences and beliefs and their future expectations, rather than by a need to conform to, or defy, the
cultural expectations of others outside the community” (p. 6). As Ronald noted, he considered his use of structured warm-up routines borrowed from Western dance canons as a way of boosting the transmission of local dance knowledge and skills.

However, others contend that the application of foreign ideas in local cultural production and practice may entrench foreign Western cultural hegemony within dance education environments. Bharucha (1993) observed that “cross-cultural activity has had a tendency to be defined by the uneven political platform inherent to Western interactions with colonised population groups…” (cited in Rowe, 2008, p. 7). In response to these concerns, Ronald reasoned that the structured routines that he uses as warm up exercises “are not specific and native to any dance form. They can be used and can benefit a dancer from any dance tradition since dance is primarily centered on the body”. Ronald believes that a dance learner can adapt to and accommodate (Bennett, 1993) complex movement ideas regardless of their cultural source, and that pedagogy needs to recognise the body as a neutral space where movement ideas from complex cultural dances can be negotiated.

In contrast with Ronald’s approach, Brian and Herbert explained that they use structured warm-up exercises they have developed from the techniques and movements of Ugandan cultural dances. Brian described how he has developed and applied his warm-up routines from Kitaguriro dance:

When I am preparing to teach Kitaguriro dance, I develop warm up exercises that emphasise stretching of the arms. I also include movement of the feet and toes and exercises that focus on movement of the ankle and knee joints. I mix up these movements with other creative routines.

Brian explained that the warm-up structure emphasises body parts such as arms, feet, and knee and ankle joint movements because “these are the key body parts that are key in the male and female movements of Kitaguriro dance of the Banyankole people of central
Uganda”. This method of developing and applying warm-up ideas from local cultural dance knowledges into pedagogy can be connected to Novack’s observation (1995) that dance pedagogy may reflect cultural values and practices embedded in the lives of people in communities where it is taught and derived.

When I observed a dance class facilitated by Herbert with a community of youth in Mukono district, I noticed that he applied a warm-up routine for *Kizino* dance class that included movement ideas from the same dance. Herbert led the warm up with movement routines that integrated aerial jumps on both feet, bending of the knees, and polyrhythmic postural and gestural movements while following rhythms played on the drums. When I observed the subsequent classes for *Kizino* dance, I noticed similarities between the actual movements of the dance and the warm-up routines that Herbert had earlier facilitated. As the warm-up exercises borrowed from cultural dances, I deduced that Herbert and Brian were engaging a culturally relevant teaching approach (see Section 3.3.3) to give learners foundational knowledge through a warm up that had a direct connection with the actual movements of the dance.

By drawing ideas from local dance forms and foreign dance practices to orient, the teachers seek “to promote a sense of local cultural autonomy and relevance with their [teachers’] own cultural past…and…to identify ways in which foreign tools and techniques might be evaluated, adapted and selectively incorporated into the local culture, based on their relevance to other local cultural phenomenon” (Rowe, 2008, p. 7).

The reflections of the dance teachers illustrate the multifarious methods, techniques and approaches that they use to prepare the learners for practical dance activities. These methods draw on diverse influences, such as cultural games, songs, drum rhythms, vocal sounds, and the structured movement routines of the dances and Western dance movement
traditions. The dance teachers are using these foundational ideas to immerse the learners into the fundamentals of rhythm, musicality, interactivity, and kinesthetic readiness.

The process of orienting learners into norms of dance movements entails the engagement of thought and reflection by the dance teachers to decenter knowledge, accord the learners agency, and teach dances following a step-by-step approach. The reflections of the dance teachers show that their pedagogies encompass inquiry into the intricate knowledge of the dances, rationalise dances as idioms of cultural practices and production, and deconstruct games, songs, drum rhythms, and structured movement routines as points of entry into complex kinesthetic structures of the dances. The dance teachers engage this process as thinkers, doers, knowers and collaborators, situating learners at the centre of teaching and learning, both as individuals and community.

7.4. Rationalising movements, gestures, and techniques of the dances

This section discusses how individual dance teachers teach dances in different environments. I analyse teaching “as the dynamic, interactive process of transmitting the skills and knowledges of dance, and the total or aggregate influence that a dance teacher shares with students in an instructional (rather than a choreographic or rehearsal) activity situation” (Gray, 1984a, p. 154). The discussion specifically and critically examines how the dance movements, gestures, and techniques are rationalised in teaching processes.

7.4.1. Contextualising movement knowledge: Storytelling and verbal comments

As I investigated this theme, I reflected on the following question from Rowe (2008): “Can cultural influences also be carried by the way dance is actually transferred between individuals?” (p. 5). His question enabled me to examine how complex cultural knowledge of the dances was rationalised. The research findings revealed that they use storytelling to
provide contextual knowledge and information about the history, origins, meanings, messages, and cultural relevancies of the dances.

Matthew emphasised the importance of sharing background information with the learners of the dances: “I always use storytelling to tell learners the history and purpose of cultural dances from northern Uganda. These dances have meaning and messages behind them, which I want learners to know. You cannot fully know the dance without understanding how its meanings are reflected in movements, songs and drum rhythms and the connection it has with the people and the cultures”. This reflection shows the value that Matthew attaches to storytelling as a medium through which the theoretical and contextual information about the dances can be channeled. Furthermore, Matthew attaches value to the meaning of the dances as a foundational basis for understanding not only dance movements, but also the intrinsic knowledge behind the dances.

Ssenkubuge also underscored the significance of sharing background information about dances with learners in the teaching processes: “Because these learners go out to instruct dances in different communities, it is important for them to know this knowledge. This puts them in good position to offer a full picture of the dance – stories, histories, meanings, messages and songs – when they are conducting their own classes”. Ssenkubuge’s viewpoint is that a knowledgeable dancer is one who is equipped with the movements of the dance, in addition to knowing the history and meanings behind the dance and the cultures where they originate. He believes that meaningful pedagogy should be able to address these areas so that the dance learners gain holistic knowledge.

Both Matthew and Ssenkubuge’s reflections relate to Bellinger’s (2013) observation that in the practices of dances from African cultures, “there are texts of movement, sound, symbols and space; and there are the myriad texts that are part of the
oral tradition. African dances are connected to an African way of knowing and a system for expressing that knowledge” (p. 3). Hence, these dances are not only kinesthetic artifacts, but also microcosms for complex dance knowledge and skills.

Collin mentioned that revealing background information of the dances places them in their cultural contexts. He stated: “In Kitaguriro dance, the dancers stretch out arms because they are depicting the long horns of the cows of the Banyankore people of western Uganda”. This, he added:

…distinguishes it from Mwaga dance, where the female movements are centred on the waist because the dance is performed as part of the circumcision ritual of the Bagisu people in which the girls are supposed to entice boys; and Larakaraka dance whose female movements rotate around the neck, waist, bum, and chest because it is a courtship dance, and female and male dancers are expected to entice each other.

Collin’s anecdote shows that through pedagogy, teaching and learning of the dances can be extended to articulate the cultural specificities of the dances. If integrated into pedagogy, information that addresses the ‘why’, ‘where’, ‘why’, ‘how’ and ‘when’ of the dances can advance teaching and learning of dances in their second existence (Hoerburger, 1968). In these terms, it can be argued that Collin’s pedagogic philosophy engages thought and inquiry into the theoretical and contextual foundations of the dances, and triggers reflections on the link between theory and contextual information about the dances and the kinesthetic movement patterns of the dances.

Mariam also disclosed that when she is teaching Runyege dance, she explains the link between the movements and origin of the dance: “The hands of men and women are raised up because this symbolises the carrying of the calabash containing local beer. At certain moments, women kneel down as if they are serving beer to the men. This symbolises how women used to take care of men among the Banyoro people”. Mariam’s
anecdote reveals how the pedagogy incorporated in her storytelling as a way of delving into detailed information of the dances that may not be revealed through the movements.

In covering background information about cultural heritage dances, some dance teachers also place emphasis on delving into the historical origin of the dances. As a participant observer, I attended a class that Herbert taught. The excerpt below presents his introduction to Baakisimba dance:

_Baakisimba_ is a dance from Buganda kingdom. Buganda is one of the ethnic kingdoms in Uganda. Legend has it that one day, a subject (member of the ethnicity) made banana juice. After some days, he mixed juice with sorghum flour. This mixture fermented and turned into alcohol, locally known as _bwakata_ or _mwenge bigere_. As a practice among the Baganda people, they served this alcohol in the Kabaka’s palace. The cultural head of Buganda kingdom is called Kabaka (king). The palace attendants told the Kabaka that Musajjawe (one of his male subjects) had brought beer as offertory. The Kabaka asked palace attendants and his friends to gather and have a feast. After tasting, the Kabaka asked, “Who prepared this beer?” They pointed to the person. The Kabaka then told the crowd, ‘_Abaakisimba beebakiwoomya_’, which translates into, “Those who planted the banana from where this beer was extracted made it sweet”. So, the people around listened to these words. They then coded and played these words into a 6/8 rhythm on the containers. As the king said these words, he was also walking around with his waist and bum relaxed, as if he was dancing. When the Kabaka retired to bed, the women decided to imitate his waist and bum movements while following the rhythm that men played on containers. They created _Baakisimba_ dance and music out of this experiment. The music was transferred from the container to the drums. The _mpuunyi_ drum was added to provide the central beat. The name of the dance was also derived from the Kabaka’s words. That is how the dance started.

Herbert’s account shows the importance of developing a pedagogy that locates the dances in their historical context. Through storytelling, information pertaining to the history, culture, and cosmology of the dances and the cultures from which they originate can be explored. As a participant observer, listening to this story deepened my rationalisation of the content knowledge of the dance, I was able to link the patterns in the information with the practical dance movements, songs and drum rhythms. I learned that dances do not only
exist in movement experiences, but also draw on ontology from oral information and traditions. Herbert’s application of storytelling as a pedagogic tool to illuminate theoretical, historical and contextual knowledge links with Laban’s (1971) view that “to learn a dance step mechanically does not lead to the understanding of its meaning…Verbal explanation and study of the source and purpose of a movement might be considered as an additional way of perfecting the conception of the meaning of it” (cited in Ashley, 2014, pp. 265-57).

The application of storytelling as a pedagogic method to reveal the stories, meanings, messages, theories, and origins of the dances is a subject I have explored in my pedagogy as an interventive dance educator, researcher, writer, and student (see Section 4.2). The stories provided a framework through which the dance teachers challenged learners to find ways of extending, developing and constructing meanings from the corporeal dance movement experiences. I went through the same experience of learning dances, music, and folk games through storytelling when I was still a child in my village. This oriented me into the practice of performing dances as an integrated domain of knowledge that incorporates stories, histories, experiences, identities, and multifaceted meanings.

This orientation has enabled me to develop pedagogic dance models for dances from Ugandan cultures that are based on contextual, cultural, conceptual and historical foundations, and the communities from which they originate (Mabingo, 2015c). This is vital when I am teaching learners from diverse cultural and artistic backgrounds. My philosophy is that this information is important in the pedagogy of dances from Ugandan cultures because it situates them in place, tradition, experience, and culture. Most importantly, this pedagogy invites learners to engage thought, inquire into, and reflect on dance, not only as a kinesthetic activity, but also as a domain of knowledge that provides ontology and relevance. This pedagogic approach and philosophy allies with Banks’ (2010)
observation that dances from African cultures are a “repository of knowledge, history and philosophy. Music and dance house not just physical information in the human body but also theoretical, emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual information in a dance mode” (p. 26).

7.4.2. Rationalising complex movements, gestures and techniques of the dances

This section tackles the pedagogic modalities that the dance teachers use to teach the complex movements, gestures, and techniques of the dances. The analysis specifically examines how the dance teachers make the movements, gestures, and techniques of the dance comprehensible for the learners. I explore the dance teachers’ thought and agency in this pedagogic rationalisation, highlighting how this pedagogy places the learners within the dance skills and knowledge, traditions, experiences and communities of dance practice.

7.4.2.1. Use your eyes to observe: Practical demonstration

The fieldwork findings showed that the dances are constituted of complex movement patterns and techniques, which are made intelligible through practical demonstration during teaching and learning processes. Practical demonstration occurred when the dance teachers physically led the learners through the dance movements, techniques and gestures.

When I observed the dance classes facilitated by Matthew as a participant and nonparticipant observer, I noticed that he moved around and practically demonstrated the movements, gestures, and techniques of Larakaraka dance and Bwola dance beside or in front of individual learners. Matthew would identify an individual learner who he thought needed support, and then stand closer to them to show them the movements, gestures, and techniques of the dance. The learner would observe Matthew and imitate the particular details of movement that he demonstrated.
I made similar observations in Ssenkubuge’s teaching session for *Baakisimba* dance. He moved around the dancing space and would stop, stand in front of learners, and demonstrate the footwork, arm placement, and waist movements of *Baakisimba* dance while responding to the drum rhythms that the drummers played. These practical demonstrations occurred as the dance activities were going on.

Matthew and Ssenkubuge used their bodies as objects that the learners could observe and draw from to explore the movement patterns of the dances. They integrated themselves into the practical activities, interacting with individual learners in corporeal action. Teaching involved breaking down movements into intelligible components delivered through intercorporeal (Merleau-Ponty, 1945), collaborative and participatory practical demonstration.

The practical demonstrations brought Matthew and Ssenkubuge closer to the learners. This pedagogy therefore seeks to engage individual learners in embodied corporeal experiences. By moving around to interactively offer the learners support from different spatial orientations, Ssenkubuge and Matthew also engaged what Kirmmele and Cote (2003) have theorised as three-dimensional demonstration, which is a teaching model that emphasises delivery of movement material from different viewpoints to avail learners varied ways of accessing kinesthetic knowledge.

As a participant observer, I attended dance classes where some dance teachers used practical demonstration to teach dances. However, some of these kinesthetically interactional learning encounters presented dilemmas. For example, the classes on *Mbaga* dance that I participated in at Ssenkubuge’s community yielded the following experience:

When I attended a *Mbaga* dance class with Ssenkubuge, he first told me that it was necessary for me to observe him first, and then observe again as I do the movements alongside him. When the dance session started, Ssenkubuge
approached stood in front of me. He demonstrated for me the footwork and then the waist movements. I first observed and later I practically imitated the movements together with him. As I was executing the movements, I realised that the waist movements originate from the footwork. I felt I was not translating the waist movements exactly as Ssenkubuge demonstrated them. Even after making several attempts, I felt I was not as kinesthetically articulate and precise as him.

This reflection on my place as a learner reveals the different connotations and feelings that the practical demonstrations can transmit. Working with Ssenkubuge gave me the opportunity to visually learn through participatory and collaborative interaction. In this case, Ssenkubuge’s approach carried a semblance of the “demonstration-reproduction model of teaching technique in dance” (Harbonnier-Topin & Barbie, 2012, p. 301), which focuses on body movements demonstrated by the teacher, which the learners reproduce.

As a learner, I had to relationally observe Ssenkubuge and translate the visual observations into kinesthetic practicalities. This created a feeling of intercorporeal (Merleau-Ponty, 1945) connection and embodied scaffolding of learning (Bruner, 1960). This intercorporeality involved sensing my body’s “ability (vision, hearing, kinaesthesia) to perceive someone else’s movement behavior” (Harbonnier-Topin & Barbie, 2012, p. 303) and practically approximate these movements.

My experience learning in this environment also revealed that even in intercorporeal learning experiences such as the one that I had at Ssenkubuge’s community, engaging in these processes can also be personal. Although I replicated the demonstrated movements of *Mbaga* dance, I had moments where I did not fully translate all the dance movements exactly as Ssenkubuge demonstrated them. Even with kinesthetic closeness, my inability to capture movement, technique, poise, and alignment as Ssenkubuge presented it showed the limits of practical demonstration as a pedagogic method. In this
case, practical demonstration still accorded me freedom to diagnose my own needs of learning and translating them into learning objectives (Brandon & All, 2010).

My personal reflections, struggles, and search for attainment of kinesthetic completeness run counter to Foster’s (1998) observation that “To embody another body’s movements, an individual learns to experience what another body is feeling... and ... cultivate their sensitivity to the relationship between visual appearance and proprioceptive sensation” (p. 110). Based on my experiences, as I intercorporeally translated Ssenkubuge’s body movements through conscious imitation (Louppe, 1994), I did not experience the feeling of living in Ssenkubuge’s body. Rather, I only captured the external kinesthetic layout of the dance movements that he demonstrated and reflected on my own kinesthetic explorations. Building on this inner feeling and reflection, I explored how to internalise and externalise the movements through my own kinesthetic voice.

I was reminded of Harbonnier-Topin and Barbie’s (2012) observation that when learning dance movements, “each individual’s background is quite unique, making identical reproduction absolutely impossible” (p. 319). My participatory observation experience also connects to a testimonial from a research participant in the study by Harbonnier-Topin and Barbie (2012) about imitation in a contemporary dance class: “... watching him do it once, it was like ... well that’s his path; now I have to find my own”.

In addition, some dance teachers use practical demonstration to draw the learners’ attention to the particular movements and phraseologies of the dances. Herbert mentioned that he breaks down dance movements into smaller comprehensible components and demonstrates one component at a time:

When I am teaching Ding Ding dance, I emphasise the footwork, neck, and the waist. I always start with the movement of the neck, then I add on the footwork and finally I show them the waist and finally all the movements
as one whole. I ask them to observe each movement component repeatedly. Then I ask them to do each movement component as they observe me. I then combine all the movements into one structure and demonstrate it as they observe. After this, we repetitively go through this structure together. When I am demonstrating, I slow down the tempo so that each person can get the details of the movements.

Herbert’s approach makes reference to Kirmmele and Cote’s (2003) suggestion that using demonstration to teach dance can be effective in facilitating learning if movements are presented in segments at a slower speed. Herbert believes that segmenting complex movements into intelligible small components, and repeatedly demonstrating them for the learners to observe and later replicate fosters effective teaching and learning.

Similarly, Olivia mentioned: “When I teach Kizino, I emphasise the footwork of the dance first, and perform it for learners through practical demonstration. This footwork is the foundation of all other movements. When they get the foot work, I then progress to the body posture and complex postural and gestural movements”.

Herbert and Olivia recognised that the movements of the dances are complex. They have developed pedagogies that emphasise practical demonstration of movement phases as a means to “translate the movement information into symbolic memory to produce the action and detect errors” (Kirmmele & Cote, 2003, p. 176). By applying practical demonstrations, they aimed for kinesthetic empathy and harmony (Dobbels, Rabant, & Godard 1994). The dance teachers established kinesthetic connections between themselves as teachers and the learners as recipients of movement knowledge. Moreover, through practical demonstration the dance teachers engaged the observational, visual, auditory, and reflective faculties of the learners by “providing an image of the body action and clarity of space-time-force components” (Kirmmele & Cote, 2003, p. 177) of the dances.
Further, Collin mentioned that practical demonstration provides kinesthetic clarity and delineates dances that have related movement vocabularies and techniques:

*Tamehnalbuga* dance and *Baakisimba* dance are too close in terms of how the movements of the dances are performed. If you do not isolate independent movements and body parts and articulate them, learners may not be able to differentiate between the movements of the two dances. Therefore, you break down the movements of each dance and provide clarity.

Collin views practical demonstration as a mechanism through which the movement details of dances can be amplified to delineate patterns that may look similar. It addresses the question of what is going on kinesthetically during execution of the movements and techniques of the dances. Collin’s philosophy of practical demonstration as a pedagogic method seeks to illuminate the movement peculiarities of each dance; what distinguishes it from other dance forms and practices.

Furthermore, Mariam highlighted the vital role of practical demonstration in enhancing visual learning: “Dancing is an activity that occurs through the eyes, mind and body. You have to look at the body to think about the movements and learn how to perform them. You have to use your eyes as an observer, thinker and doer of the movements”. Chappell (2007) has previously referred to Mariam’s rationalisation as “thinking body-mind” (p. 44). According to Chappell’s (2007) concept and Mariam’s reflection, practical demonstration of movement phases illuminates the visual, corporeal and cognitive rationalisation of movement patterns and structures. It was meant to enable the learners to identify and use the body as a resource to accomplish the learning goals. This aspect of pedagogy not only emphasises the corporeal imitation of movements, but also explores how the learner can reflect on the demonstrated movement material to process and execute it through practical body action.
When I asked the research participants about the implications, limitations and risks of applying practical demonstration as an approach to teaching dance, some of them emphasised that cultural heritage dances skills and knowledge are specific, even sacred in some cases, and cannot be fundamentally changed and reconstructed. Ssenkubuge observed: “Cultural dances are not like creative dance. The movements are specific, the songs are specific, the contexts are specific, the drum rhythms are specific, the expressions are specific, and sometimes the dancers are specific”. Hence, he added, “You cannot subject them to any other form of creativity or manipulation and expect them to remain true to their forms. A teacher has to teach it as it is. A learner has to get it as it is”.

The narrative confirms that practical demonstration is viewed as the appropriate method for teaching dances in ways that represent their kinesthetic specificity and cultural sensibilities and connotations. In line with the aforementioned viewpoint, Herbert stated: “Practical demonstration is the best way to teach dance movement. With our dances, changing a slight thing about a movement can change the whole meaning of the dance”. By using “showing-by-doing, which functions as an immediate and ephemeral ‘score’” (Harbonnier-Topin & Barbie, 2012, p. 303), Ssenkubuge and Herbert are applying ways of teaching that honour the kinesthetic unique structures of the dances. This approach values kinesthetic qualities as key to offering the essence of the dances.

Practical demonstration represents a pedagogy that centres on the kinesthetic structures of the movements. Visual and corporeal as this pedagogy may be, it presents dance as an embodied domain of knowledge. This pedagogy emphasises intercorporeality and kinesthetic investigation. It challenges the learners to use their bodies as a location to investigate movement complexities. Moreover, it accords the dance learners possibilities for agency in investigating movement possibilities and imaginings. Practical demonstration
centres on the body and seeks to expand the ways in which teachers and learners rationalise the movement patterns through embodied experiences and actions.

7.4.2.2. Teaching movements in oral form

Some dance teachers indicated that they use verbal explanations to articulate the details of the movement phases of the dances. In the classes I observed, I noticed that Collin, Olivia, Mariam, Matthew and Ssenkubuge provided verbal descriptions focusing on how the waist, feet, knees, arms and other body parts move in the dance. Their explanations also covered how these movements intersect with music and drum rhythms.

Herbert highlighted that he uses verbal explanations in the dance classes to illuminate the intricate movement details of the dances: “I talk about the movements as I show the students how it is done. For example, when I am teaching Maggunju, there is a movement of cutting. I tell the learners that this is how you use your right hand to cut, this is how you use your left hand to hold the stick, and this is how the back is bent”. According to Herbert, the verbal descriptions address the question: What is going on in the body and the movement? Herbert’s pedagogic frame engages the oral delivery of dance information to draw the attention of learners to the movement patterns of Maggunju dance. Herbert’s emphasis on description of dance movements can be linked to Kimmerle and Cote’s (2003) observation that verbal instruction in a dance class can direct the learners’ attention to specific movement skills, resulting in appropriate comprehension of movements.

Brian also explained that he uses oral explanations to expand the practical and critical imaginations of the learners: “When I am teaching arm movements of Kitaguriro, I tell learners to join palms together and put the hands in front of the chest as if praying. Then I tell them to push the arms in and push them out and up as far as they can. This teaches them the placement of the arms”. This application of oral explanations as part of
pedagogy enabled the learners to navigate internal navigations of movement knowledge and skills. This has links with Schlaich and DuPont’s (1993) suggestion that to “help a student learn dance technique, the teacher must be as clear as possible in presenting the material and try to help students know exactly what is expected of them” (p. 3).

Oral explanations enable the dance teachers to deconstruct the intrinsic content knowledge of the dances. This is aimed at allowing learners to reflect on this information and locate and construct its link to the corporeal structuring of the dances. Verbal explanations entail engaging thought to discern the complex movements and articulate their kinesthetic foundations.

7.4.2.3. Rationalising dance movements, gestures, and techniques through peer modeling

Peer modeling emerged as one of the methods applied by some dance teachers to teach cultural heritage dances. Within this pedagogic framework, the dance teachers entrust and delegate some teaching responsibilities to learners who act as teaching exemplars. As a new learner at Naguru community where Matthew teaches cultural heritage dances, I was initiated into learning Larakaraka dance through peer modeling:

I took my first dance class with Matthew as a learners and participants observer on a Sunday evening. When I arrived the venue where dance classes are conducted, I met Matthew, the teacher. He asked me to wait for other learners to arrive so that he shows me the people to assist me with learning Larakaraka movements and music. About ten minutes later, Matthew approached me in company of three male members. He asked them to work with me on the basic steps of Larakaraka dance and how it relates with the drum rhythms of the dance. The dancers took me aside and they demonstrated for me the movements as I was imitating them. We went through the movements together as one dancer was providing the attendant drum rhythms of the dance by clapping. The dancers also gave me verbal corrections and I asked questions about the dance movements.

By asking other learners to teach me the introductory movement phrases of Larakaraka dance, Matthew viewed them as what Bruner (1996) has defined as knowledgeable others.
In this instance, teaching was a shared activity between the teacher and learners. Matthew empowered the peer exemplar to facilitate teaching and learning through “cooperative peer exchange” (Damon, 1984, p. 333). Through this participatory and collaborative, teaching, the peer models used practical demonstration, verbal corrections, song texts, and drum rhythms to immerse me in the content knowledge of Larakaraka dance.

This collaborative teaching reflects what Topping and Elhy (2001) have referred to as peer assisted learning (PAL), which is a teaching approach “that involve[s] the active and interactive mediation of learning through other learners who are not professional teachers” (p. 113). Peer learning enabled me to “take on and internalise the communicative procedures that a learner experiences when interacting and working with peers” (Damon, 1984, pp. 333-334). As I was learning movements and rhythms with these peer models, I gradually became orientated and integrated into the pedagogic space and dance knowledge.

Peer modeling enabled me to pay attention to the details of the movements and rhythms, internalise verbal explanations and corrections, and identify the link between dance movements and the attendant musical frameworks. Moreover, the peer models cultivated a sense of community through the connections that I made with them as teachers and fellow learners. Peer modeling cultivates connection between individualities. It allows for individual talents to blossom and for each individual to tap into the collective pool of talent. As I was exploring Larakaraka dance through peer modeling, I reflected on the Ubuntu worldview (see Section 2.1.1). I was able to rationalise my learning as the interplay between my individuality and individualities of the peer models.

I observed a similar approach in a community where Collin taught dance classes: “In every class that I observed, the novice or new learners in the community were always taken aside by fellow learners to go through movements and music. The peer models would
do practical demonstration and provide verbal explanation to the novice or new learners”. In this case, peer modeling distributed teaching responsibility without undermining the overall learning and teaching objective of acquiring dance knowledge and skills. True to social constructivism theory, the learners selected information, constructed ideas, and made decision by relying on cognitive and kinesthetic structures that they shared.

When I asked Collin about why he uses this method to teach dance, he explained: “Some community members who already know the movements are better placed to teach newcomers because they relate with them in terms of age and energy. When you allow them to work together in the early stages of learning, they help in clarifying movements and building teamwork”. Collin uses peer modeling to accord the learners agency in teaching and learning as both learners and teaching exemplars. He decentralises teaching processes to enable the learners to cultivate support for one another.

This collaborative pedagogy that Collin applied is not an isolated case. In a study that Rowe (2008) conducted on dance education in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, he noted that one of the pedagogic mechanisms that communities used to learn and practice specific dances was collaborative learning. The “dancers would often take each other to the side of the studio or meet after hours to help each other learn. These impromptu dance-learning methods suggested a more locally relevant, alternative approach on which the rehearsal process might be based” (p. 15). From my experience as a participant observer, peer modeling provided learners with diverse ways of engaging dance knowledge and learning processes. The peer models had their unique and complex ways of approaching the content knowledge of the dances. For example, some used the drum rhythms, others emphasised verbal corrections and remarks, while others facilitated teaching using
practical demonstration. Hence, it can be deduced that this collaborative learning also diversifies pedagogy by drawing on the unique techniques of the peer models.

Herbert also mentioned that he uses peer modeling to teach: “I identify individuals who have learned the movements and ask them to work with others who are still learning movements. I share with them what to teach and give them freedom to figure out how to pass it on to their fellow learners”. Similarly, Olivia explained the importance of applying peer modeling to teach dance: “Sometimes learners know how to teach movements to others and the means and language to use to teach it. Since they can also find space during their free time to go through the movements, I encourage them to teach each other”. Both Olivia and Herbert’s approach seeks to enable learners to engage in “problem solving in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Ronald mentioned that one of the reasons he applies peer modeling is because there are dances from certain ethnic communities that he does not know as a teacher:

There is a day I was teaching Mwaga dance and I had to teach both male and female movements. I had an idea of how the female movements are performed. I knew the footwork, body posture and body area of emphasis. But I am a man”. I cannot wiggle my waist and move my bum like a woman. But when I demonstrated the basic female movements, I noticed that some female dancers translated it well in their bodies. I asked them to teach other female dancers who were yet to learn these movements.

Ronald’s reflection discloses the centrality of peer modeling in illuminating kinesthetic movements. His pedagogy is centred on identifying the strengths of the learners to support other learners. The peer models that Ronald engaged participated experientially in the “development of knowledge and skill through explicit active helping and supporting among status equals or matched companions, with the deliberate intent to help others with their learning goals” (Topping & Ehly, 1998, 2001, p. 114).
Through peer modeling, the dance teachers facilitate “support and scaffolding from a more competent other, necessitating management of activities to be within the zone of proximal development for fellow learners” (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p. 124). Peer-to-peer support allows learners to listen, explain, question, summarise, hypothesise, and conceptualise dance material through practical demonstration, verbal remarks and corrections, and rhythmic guidance as they support fellow learners in acquiring the content knowledge of the dances. From my personal experience as a participant observer, peer modeling creates peer dialogues, which Damon (1984) has defined as “a cooperative exchange of ideas between peer learners …” (p. 333). This collaborative and participatory teaching approach enables individuals to interact, value each other, and cohabit the same pedagogic space, as reflected in the Ubuntu worldview (see Section 2.1.1). Moreover, for the dance teachers who applied this approach, and from a constructivist viewpoint, they aimed at allowing the learners to develop interpersonal, practical and social growth by sharing different perspectives and changing their internal and kinesthetic representation of the dance knowledge and skills.

7.4.2.4. Use your ears to listen: Vocalising movements into sounds

The research findings show that Ssenkubuge, Mariam, Brian, Matthew and Ronald use vocalised rhythms and sounds as part of their pedagogies. Vocalisation of movements into sounds is a method through which these dance teachers convert dance movements into vocal sounds. These dance teachers then teach the vocalised sounds to learners as a stepping-stone to rationalisation of the kinesthetic movements that each vocalised sound represents. Brian explained how he uses vocalised sounds to teach Kitaguriro dance:

When I teach Kitaguriro, the first and most effective method that I use is to verbalise movements. For example, I get the footwork of male dancers and create a sound ‘Tta tta tata tta’ for male footwork and ‘kumi ni kumi ni satu’
for the footwork of female movements. I say this sound out loud and ask learners to repeat it. I create five squares in the space. Each learner goes to square one and shouts out this sound. Then they go to square two and clap the sound with their hands. I ask them to proceed to square three and play the sound on the drum. In square four they do the footwork. Finally, in square five they do the footwork with the body posture and other movements.

Brian teaches Kitaguriro dance by integrating the rhythmic layout of the footwork as the first step to introducing the basic male and female movement structures of the dance. He derives the rhythmic sounds from the musicality of the footwork and then transfers them to the learners as auditory properties. This pedagogy entails learners repeatedly going through these auditory properties and then translating them into the footwork for Kitaguriro dance. Brian’s pedagogic model theorises the footwork movements of Kitaguriro dance as what I call “vocalised movements”.

Mariam also shared that she first takes learners through vocalising the basic drum rhythms of Bwola dance before teaching the movement patterns: “For Bwola dance, there are two small drums that play the basic rhythm of the dance called Labala. This rhythm guides the basic footwork. I play this rhythm on the drums and ask learners to also clap it and play it with their mouth and then they do the footwork movements that go with this sound”. Mariam’s pedagogy utilises rhythm and vocalisation to make dance movements comprehensible. It exposes learners to varied media for accessing dance skills and knowledge. The meanings of the dances are constructed and rationalised not only as corporeal patterns, but also as embodied rhythmic and musicalised domains.

Brian and Mariam’s pedagogic approach of using vocalised movements to teach dances has similarities with Green’s (2011) experiences when she learned dances in Ghana:

The pedagogical style of teaching African dance by Africans is to teach the music first. I primarily learned from African communities. In each of these situations, I learned the music before the dance. It gave us a greater
understanding of the relationship of the music to the dance, which is sadly missing from a number of African dance classes today. (p. 23)

Vocalised movements are the corporeal phases of the dances and their kinetic flow can be translated into oral rhythms and sounds. The link between rhythm and musicality and dance movements is native to practices of dance in Ugandan cultures. Theorising this link in her research on the interrelationships between music and dance in Baakisimba dance, Nannyonga-Tamusuza’s (2015) concluded that the dance movements are music seen and not heard (see also Section 2.3.2).

The application of vocalised sounds as part of pedagogy shows that the epistemology and ontology of dance exist in complex ways. Each teacher has developed and identified ways of using vocalised sounds to rationalise dance material, making it clear that teaching dance transcends the kinesthetic mimicry of movements. In this regard, Rowe (2008) has observed that “in dance the cultural imitation process involves more than just mimicking movement ideas, and might use multiple modes of transference (kinaesthetic, visual, auditory, verbal, textual)” (p. 4).

The dance teachers apply pedagogies that position vocalised rhythms and sounds as extensions of the movements from which learners make interpretation. Music is centrally positioned in this dialogue as an engine of discovery of nuanced meanings and components of the dances. The use of these vocalised rhythms and sound as a window into complex dance movements, gestures, and vocabulary entails thought and analysis. The dance teachers locate the dance movements according to these vocalised sounds and rhythms. Moreover, they use them to aid learning by offering learners news ways of constructing meanings and engaging and understanding dance material.
7.5. Rationalising the learning gaps: Interactive assessment and feedback

The previous sections of this chapter discussed the techniques, methods, and approaches used by individual dance teachers to teach cultural heritage dances to diverse learners in varied environments in central Uganda. This section extends the aforementioned discussions. I draw on the ideas raised in Section 3.5 of this thesis to consider assessment and feedback as processes through which value and meaning are accorded to dance ideas (Rowe, 2008). The dance teachers’ reflections show that complex assessment and feedback mechanisms constitute rationalisation of the pedagogies of dance teachers.

7.5.1. Relational observation of learners

The dance teachers explained that as part of the assessment criteria, they observe learners to identify their level of knowledge and skills of the dances. The criteria the dance teachers consider during these observations vary. Ronald explained: “When I teach a dance, I make learners run through it severally. I observe the movements of each learner first, and then the look at all dancers as one entire group to see if there is uniformity in the way the dance is presented”. Ronald’s assessment criteria consider learning as a progressive process where the learners grow as they go through the dance material. Moreover, his approach also recognises that a learner’s progress can be evaluated in relation to the group or the performance of other learners. Analysed from the viewpoint of Ubuntu philosophy (see Section 2.1.1), Ronald’s assessment model locates the movement proficiencies of the individual learner (I am) in the framework of the community of other learners (we are).

I next investigated what the dance teachers look out for in their observations, and what particular elements of the cultural heritage dances do they expect learners to know. The research findings revealed that the dance teachers put emphasis on the footwork, body
posture, and placement of body parts such as arms, translation of music by the learners’ bodies, and the quality of execution of gestural and postural movements.

Herbert stated: “When I teach Ding Ding dance, I observe how the individual learners do the footwork, where they place their arms, the movements of the hands and wrists, and how they bend the torso. I look at each of these independently”. Collin also shared that he observes movements to assess the level of knowledge and skills of learners:

For Baakisimba dance, I look at how the learner executes the footwork. From the footwork, I then look at whether the knees are bent. Then I look at the waist. The waist is supposed to move sideways with a percussive quality. I also look at how each individual learn interprets the energy of the dance. Baakisimba is supposed to have a suspended movement quality”.

The elements that Herbert and Collin consider the basis of assessment are integral to the structure of the dances. They accord the dances ontology – being and meaning. Although these elements converge to form the kinesthetic structures of the dances, the assessment criteria that Collin and Herbert apply entails isolating each movement component and rationalising its alignment, quality, motion, and essence in the dance. Isolating these dance components for assessment as part of pedagogy enables Herbert and Collin to attain a clear understanding of the learners’ comprehension of the content knowledge of dances.

I observed a similar approach in the dance classes that Matthew, Mariam and Ssenkubuge conducted. I noticed that these dance teachers identify learners who need support in deepening the movement components of Larakaraka, Runyege and Mbaga dance, respectively. They observe how each learner executes the movements, the way they interpret musicality and rhythm, and the embodied energy of the dance. In response, the dance teachers provide verbal feedback to individual learners directed at improving each of the components they have identified. Assessment forms the basis for humanistic support that the dance teachers extend to learners. Pedagogy is rationalised as a process where the
teacher has a responsibility to extend support to learners as individuals and as a group. Additionally, the dance teachers use the assessment criteria as a system of inquiry and thought. They rationalise movement skills and knowledge into small intelligible units and direct the learners’ mind and bodies to processes of reflection and action.

The dance teachers’ isolation of the independent movement patterns of the dances as assessment criteria is similar to formal teaching in studios in academic and nonacademic settings. Here, as Green (1999) has noted, “very often the dance teacher focuses on specific corrections, placement of the body, proper technique, and efficient performance of particular dance movements” (p. 81). The logic behind this deconstruction of the movement is to allow the learners to gradually build on the blocks of the dance components that they grasp to venture into complex movement structures.

When I asked the dance teachers why they focus on specific components of the dances for assessment, some of them explained that elements such as footwork, body posture, placement of body parts, area of body emphasis are so unique to each cultural heritage dance that they require pointed attention during teaching and learning processes. Olivia observed: “In all cultural dances, footwork is key. It is the genesis of other movements. For example, in Ntogoro dance, the footwork of female dancers guides the waist and torso movements. Learners should get the footwork right, if they are to learn other components of the dance. This is why I assess the footwork of my students first”.

Similarly, Brian emphasised: “For Larakaraka dance, the head movements of the male dancers nod on a vertical axis. This movement is inherent to this dance and every learner has to first get this technique right. That is what I assess when I am teaching this dance”. The assessment criteria that the dance teachers use to evaluate the learning progress of the learners are focused on illuminating the subject matter of the dances. These criteria
are complex and this complexity draws on the uniqueness of each dance. Moreover, the assessment enables the dance teachers to engage pedagogy, as a thought process through which the intricate content knowledge of the dances is made intelligible. The assessment framework also acts as a system through which the dance teachers inquire into the place of each learner within the pedagogic trajectory. The assessment criteria place the dance teachers, the learners and dance knowledge at the centre of the pedagogic experience.

7.5.2. Use your ears to listen: Rationalising assessment through music

Further, some dance teachers mentioned that they also assess the learners’ embodiment and interpretation of music – the songs and drum rhythms as part of dance. They explained that they apply this criterion to identify the ability of the learners to listen, internalise, construct, interpret and externalise any form of dance music as it relates to body movements.

Ssenkubuge highlighted: “The songs and drum rhythms of Baakisimba dance are central to the dance movements. For example, I will know that a learner is making progress if they can listen to mpuunyi drum, consistently follow the tempo of the dance, and have the right footwork that is supposed to be performed on its beat”. Ssenkubuge added: “For Mbaga dance, I can tell that the learner is advancing if they can listen to the syncopations of the ngalabi drum and appropriately translate them into movements”.

When I observed dance classes conducted by Matthew, I noted that he also assesses individual learners’ progress in relation to how their movement execution integrates the constituent music – vocal songs, sounds, and instrumental rhythms. When I discussed with Matthew why he assesses learners using their abilities to translate music, he explained: “You cannot learn Bwola dance without knowing the songs and drum rhythms. The songs and drum rhythms guide the movements and overall development of the dance”.

For dance
teachers such as Ssenkubuge and Matthew, music as an inseparable component of dance (see Section 2.3.2) is a medium through which they rationalise the content knowledge of the dances. Their pedagogy does not consider dance as a domain restricted only to body movements. Rather, they rationalise dance as a holistic epistemological field whose subject matter can be illuminated through music.

Ronald also shared that when he is teaching Kitaguriro dance, he assesses how the learners execute movements in relation to the dance songs: “Kitaguriro has a song ‘enyamurimi nerima ni ndima enyamurimi’. The song is a direct narration of how squirrels dig holes in the gardens and destroy crops. In the dance, the movements of the feet follow particular accents of the songs. The arms are supposed to move as if they are digging to imitate how the squirrels dig crops in the gardens, which the song is about. I look at how a learner is translating the songs into movements”.

Ronald’s reflection shows that musicality, which defines the corporeal action of the dance, forms a guide for evaluating a learner’s grasp of the dance movements. The criticality of music in exposing an individual’s knowledge of dances has connections to Nannyonga-Tamusuza’s (2015) study on the interdependence between Baakisimba music and dance among the Baganda people. The findings revealed “that rather than having a mere accompanying role and offering a supportive background, Baakisimba music is in musical conversation with dancers and vice versa” (p. 93).

The dance teachers apply a pedagogy that recognises music as a frame of assessment for the dance. As an inseparable component of dance, music forms a core item through which they evaluate the learners’ immersion into movement knowledge. These assessment criteria seek to evaluate how the learners embody kinesthetic and musical intelligence (Gardner, 1983) as interwoven aspects of the dances.
Some dance teachers explained that the assessment that they apply is not written up in rubrics, with quantifiable grades and aligned assessable themes. Instead, assessment is visual, qualitative and continuous. The assessment guidelines, which in dance education in academia are referred to as rubrics, focus on the holistic artistic and cultural growth of the learner as an artiste and responsible member of the community, along with the ever-changing teaching and learning circumstances. Collin shared: “My assessments are not written on paper because circumstances of teaching and learning [Ugandan cultural dances] change every day. Each session brings its challenges, experiences, opportunities and dynamics. This requires the assessment to be flexible. I just need to know the kind of knowledge and skills that I expect learners to acquire and assess their progress accordingly”. Collin’s reflection shows that the guidelines of assessment are fluid and reflect the teaching and learning of the dances as ever-evolving phenomena. Rather than a predetermined and premeditated list of aspects dance teachers expect from the learners, the guidelines for assessment exude spontaneity.

Ronald also distanced his assessment criteria from what he termed as “Western ways” of evaluating learners: “Unlike Western education where assessments are written with statistical grading systems, my assessment criteria have always been unwritten. I develop ideas in the mind of where I want learners to go and what I want them to achieve. Assessment aspects are interweaved in the way I interact with learners in day-to-day life. I do not award grades like in Western formal education. I do not promote or demote learners. My assessment inspires growth and encourages participation and constructive comments”.

Both Ronald and Collin’s assessment frameworks seem to emphasise the qualitative aspects of information exchange in the teaching and learning processes for
dance. The frameworks are deeply embedded in the daily practices of the communities, allowing the dance teachers as individuals to interface with the learners and the pedagogic experience. The rejection of what Ronald calls ‘Western ways’ of assessment involves “promoting local dance products that maintain a supposedly historic purity, and disparaging those that appear ‘corrupted’ by colonial influences” (Rowe, 2008, p. 6).

The anecdotes of the dance teachers reveal that assessment “interweaved in the way we interact with learners in day-to-day life” has connections with formative assessment. Shutte (2008) has described formative assessment as the continuous “process of clarifying the learning and performance goals of an assignment, lesson, or unit; providing ongoing feedback about students’ progress toward those goals…” (cited in Andrade, Lui, Palma & Hefferen, 2015, p. 47). The assessment criteria used by the dance teachers emphasise giving support to learners to attain holistic growth and expand the ways through which they deconstruct dance as a domain of knowledge anchored in individual experience, community sharing, and cultural traditions.

By applying assessment as a system to support learners to grow, the dance teachers deconstructed pedagogy as a thought process and method of inquiry, which asks the learners to work towards scaling up their competences in dance both kinesthetically, socially, spiritually, and culturally. They engage reflection on the subject matter of the dance and inquire into the learners’ embodiment and comprehension of dance knowledge and skills. This systematic evaluative mechanism theorises the content knowledge and skills of the dances as complex, integrated and the learners as active agents, whose knowledge bases and skill sets can grow if support is extended to them. The assessment criteria demonstrate that teaching and learning dance is not just an imitative exercise, as some have characterised practices of dance in African communities (see Section 1.3), but
rather it is a complex process that engages thought, experience, tradition, activity, and teachers and learners as active agents.

Throughout the research process, it was revealed that the forms of evaluations that the dance teachers undertook focused on challenging the learners in the communities to grow. There was no rubric that was used by the teachers to track or grade the learners. The assessment positioned engaging in dance activities as a responsibility on the side of the learners. It was not a reward per se. Recognition was made that different individuals have different passions, talents, and contributions to make to the community. Hence, assessment was made to allow them to construct their own worlds and realities in sync with their respective communities. For example, the community where Olivia taught was more concerned with fostering the religious ethos whereas for Ssenkubuge’s community, it was about sustaining dance tradition and the identity of the community through dance.

7.5.4. Providing feedback to the learners

The dance teachers mentioned that they share insights based on the information collected in assessments with learners to clarify dance material and aid teaching and learning. In this section, this process of relaying comments, remarks, criticism, and ideas back to the learners will be discussed as feedback (Race, 2001). In discussing feedback as a pedagogic experience, I also consider Laryea’s (2013) definition that feedback “is the information given to students on a piece of work in order to help them to assess their performance, understand where they went right and wrong, and identify the areas where they need to tackle in order to improve their learning and performance” (p. 666) as a point of analysis.
7.5.4.1. Practical demonstration as embodied feedback

The fieldwork observations showed that practical demonstration is a common method used by dance teachers to relay information back to learners. I observed this method in the dance classes that Collin conducted:

In the *Maggunj* dance class, Collin observed learners while standing in front of the class. He noticed a learner who was not performing the movement right and walked to him. He stood in front of him and repeatedly demonstrated the basic male movement. Collin stood in a position facing the learner as if to mirror him. He first showed the movement to the learner as he observed. The learner then did the movement together with Collin.

Collin was using relational kinesthetic mirroring to relay corporeal information back to this learner. Through this nonverbal and intercorporeal feedback, Collin engaged the learner in kinesthetic refinement of *Maggunj* dance movements. He used practical demonstration as a medium for relaying corporeal information back to the learner. Although this pedagogic technique appears to be visual and kinesthetic, it entails exchange of kinetic information between the teacher and the learner, deeper reflection on the material by the learners, and its de/construction and externalising through corporeal movement action.

Mariam explained that giving feedback through practical demonstration brings the learner closer to the cultural heritage dance material: “When you observe a learner and realise that they need support, you go and show them what they need to do right. My experience is that the learners improve their performance of movements by seeing these movements being performed in front of them”. Similarly, Brian also noted: “When you show learners a movement, they are able to see it, process the material, and memorise it. You practically address all the errors with the learners”. Mariam and Brian’s reflections reveal how the provision of feedback through practical demonstration entails close
intercorporeality (Merleu-Ponty, 1945) between learners and teachers, creating a kinesthetic bond that provides a basis for effective teaching and learning.

There is an underlying logic in Mariam and Brian’s reflections that recognises physical body action as a language that a dance teacher can use to deliver information kinesthetically to a learner in a dance class. In the context of this study, I will call this “reflective embodied feedback”. Reflective embodied feedback becomes effective when the teacher and learners engage in relational interdependence (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and intercorporeal symbiosis (Merleu-Ponty, 1962) that bridge between the minds and bodies of the teacher and learner. The embodied construction of knowledge originated from a series of reflections on the practical dance material by the learners. In this sense, feedback becomes a means of information flow, not just an action. Information is released and processed to form a by-product of visual and kinesthetic movement translation and action.

However, teacher-led demonstration as a mechanism for providing feedback can entrench the banking system of education (Freire, 1999). Commenting on this risk, Green (1999) stated that in teacher-led demonstration, “As the teacher presents specific movements that require rote learning, while students anticipate teacher attention through correction and physical manipulation, the teacher is often viewed as an all-knowing expert and authority. In a sense, dance students give their bodies to their teachers” (p. 81). This can be disempowering to the learners, as they cannot individually identify ways to engage the content knowledge of the dances, which may curtail their ability to cultivate experiences and locate knowledge from a first-person viewpoint.

7.5.4.2. Verbal feedback

Some of the dance teachers emphasised that they offer feedback through verbal comments and remarks to the learners during and after the dance activities. The remarks are meant to
expand the learners’ ability to reflect on the information given and process it to understand
dance material. Olivia shared: “I was called to teach *Kizino* dance to a community. I taught
the basic female and male movements. I noticed that some members were not getting the
movements. I explained to them how to land on soles of the feet, not toes. I also mention
that when jumping, the knees are pulled towards the chest. The jumps are done by only
moving the lower part of the body”.

These verbal explanations are geared toward delivering specific information
directed at the form, structure and feel of the movement material of *Kizino* dance. They
elucidate the specific body parts that execute the movements, the nature of movements,
and quality and depth of technique. Verbal comments as a mechanism of feedback can be
linked to what Duncan (2007) and Brown (2007) have defined as feedforward. In Olivia’s
case, feedforward entails providing “useful information to learners that will help them
recognise where gaps in their learning are with a view to using that information to move
forward with the intent of closing the gaps in their learning” (Laryea, 2013, p. 668).

For Herbert, verbal feedback includes providing learners with information that
inspires them to have active agency in dance activities: “It is important to encourage
learners that they can learn the dances. Sometimes as a teacher, I build confidence and
character of the learners through positive comments”. Herbert uses verbal comments to
give feedback that qualitatively centres the learners in teaching and learning experiences
as active and constructive agents. His pedagogic approach has links to Amegago’s (2013)
analysis of cultural music and dance practices in Ghana, where he noted that individuals in
communities of dance practice use positive verbal remarks, comments, sounds, and body
signals to inspire, teach, guide, and direct dance and music learners and performers.
7.5.4.3. Chanelling feedback through repetition of movements

Some dance teachers cited repetition of movements as means through which feedback is channelled to the learners. They take learners through a process in which they repeatedly revisit the dance material to attain deeper understanding and embodiment of the dances. Mariam and Ronald explained that by applying repetition they engage learners in internalising, processing, refining, memorising, deconstructing and reproducing movements through recurrent patterns.

Ronald mentioned: “I gradually make learners repeat a movement phrase a number of times. I guide the learners through this repetition, pointing out specific details, and then leave them to do it by themselves”. Mariam also stated: “I make learners repeat specific components of the dance such as clapping, footwork, posture, songs, and sounds. When the learners repeat these movements, their bodies tend to learn this material”. The two foregoing reflections show that the teachers use scaffolding to support learners to acquire some specific skills of the dance. This scaffolding is teacher-oriented, showing that whereas there are cases where teachers apply pedagogy that allows learners to construct their experiences, there are instances where pedagogy is teacher-centred.

Ronald and Mariam’s approach is similar to Ssekamwa’s (1997) explanation that repetition is a method that indigenous communities in Uganda have always used to impart knowledge. Learners go over material repeatedly to attain deeper understanding of the themes and meanings encompassed in the stories, activities, and practices. As Ronald and Mariam’s narratives reveal, the rationale for using repetition to provide feedback is to enable learners to come closer to the dance material so that they can gradually attain and advance their kinesthetic intelligence (Gardner, 1983; Snead, 1984).
To facilitate learning through repetitive cycles of movements, Herbert mentioned: “I ask learners to close their eyes as they repetitively go through movements. When the eyes are closed, the learner internally reflects on details of the movements and the issues involved in body action”. Herbert’s pedagogic technique aims to stimulate reflection and the “kinesthetic sense, which allows learners to know what their body is doing even when their eyes are closed” (Stinson, 2004, p. 154). As the learners go through the movements repetitively, they connect their inner reflections and the bodily outlook of the dances. By exploring the movement structures of dances from the inside out, the learners can grasp what Hanna (1988) has theorised as reflections from a first-person perception. In the case of Herbert’s pedagogic rationalisation, the first-person perception emphasises “looking at oneself from the ‘inside out’ where one is aware of feelings, movements and intentions, rather than looking objectively from the outside” (Green, 2003, p. 101).

7.5.4.4. Peer commentary as feedback

Several dance teachers described using peer monitoring to provide feedback to learners, whereby they delegate some learners to observe and monitor the progress of fellow learners and give them feedback through oral remarks and practical demonstrations. Slavin (1994) has refered to this form of peer interaction as “symmetrical relations” (cited in Salomon & Perkins, 1998, p. 6). This feedback technique recognises learners’ ability to collaborate, interpersonally relate, and constructively participate in identifying their learning challenges and work collectively towards addressing them.

Herbert said: “I look at all learners and pick the ones that I think have the right movements. I then ask them to assist other members to learn the movement. I leave the learners with knowledge of the movements to identify how to teach other members”. Peer monitoring and feedback shifts responsibility from Herbert as the centre of authority to
other learners. This can decentralise learning and create possibilities for participatory and collaborative learning and teaching by situating the learners at the centre of the subject matter of dances, the experience, and pedagogic activity. Hebert’s reflection aligns with Liu and Carless’ (2006) view that in peer monitoring, individuals learn through articulating to others what they know or understand and construct a collectively evolving understanding of the complexities of the subject learned.

As I observed the dance classes conducted by all the participants in this inquiry, I noticed that peer monitoring was common as a feedback mechanism. I witnessed moments where learners participated in identifying the learning needs of fellow learners and autonomously and collaboratively assisted them to refine the songs and movements through practical demonstration, verbal explanation and physical touch. The following observation is from a session I took part in with a community that Matthew teaches:

A fellow learner came to me. He stood in front of me as I was performing Larakaraka dance. He specifically looked at how I was holding and striking the calabash with spokes. After some minute, he explained to me how the elbow movement is executed, how the calabash is held, and how the dancer strikes the calabash with the spokes.

Peer feedback constructs a horizontal exchange of valuable dance information and experiences. As a receiver of feedback through peer monitoring, I conceptualised the process of information exchange as a transmission process through which I actively and relationally made a connection between the feedback messages derived from fellow learners (Ivanic & Rimmershaw, 2000 cited in Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) as agents in my learning and the information they shared with me. This participatory intercorporeal (Merleu-Ponty, 1962) connection allowed me to locate my individuality and the individualities of other learners within these learning experiences. It was a process of “social mediation as participatory knowledge construction” (Salomon & Perkins, 1998, p.
1). I perceived other learners as a source of dance and music skills, and the content knowledge of the dances as a free-flowing resource from the other learners. Peer feedback allowed us as “learners to seek feedback from external sources such as peers’ contributions in collaborative groups” (Butler & Winnie, 1995, p. 246).

Peer monitoring can be considered as one way of decentralising and democratising the provision of feedback (see Section 3.3.2) in teaching environments. Based on my participant observation experience, peer mentoring illuminated “the absence of a clear ‘knowledge authority’ (e.g., the teacher) and altered the meaning, structure and impact of feedback” (Gielen, Peeters, Docy, Oghena & Struyven, 2010, p. 305). This is akin to critical dance education pedagogy (see Section 3.3.2), which frames teaching as an emancipatory process that taps into the talents and diverse backgrounds of learners to harmonise epistemological explorations during teaching and learning. Moreover, in teaching environments with multi-skilled dancers, peer monitoring allows these learners to find space to share their complex dance competencies in teaching and learning.

The narratives of the dance teachers and fieldwork observations illustrate the diverse ways through which assessment and feedback is rationalised in pedagogic practices of the dance teachers. These methods are meant to aid teaching and learning, respond to the learning progression of learners, address dilemmas of teaching diverse learners, and deepen comprehension of cultural heritage dance skills and knowledge. Through corporeal, participatory, reflective, musical, and imaginative means of assessment and feedback, individual dance teachers are seeking to illuminate the intelligibility of the dance material.

Assessment and feedback constitutes a thought process, system of inquiry, medium of cultural production, and method of becoming, with multifaceted cognitive, reflective, kinesthetic, and practical dimensions to accrete, tune, and restructure (Rumelhart &
Norman, 1978) dance knowledge and skills. The dance teachers provide scaffolding for learners to advance their skills sets and knowledge bases (see Brunner, 1960). The dance teachers and learners deconstruct this knowledge and skills as thinkers, processors, knowers, doers, and collaborators, underscoring the epistemological depth of pedagogy as a key domain in linking content knowledge, experience, reflection, learning environments, and teachers and learners as active agents in teaching and learning.

7.6. Rationalising dance pedagogies through music

The most intermittent pattern that I encountered during fieldwork is the profound presence of music in all dance education activities. Before reaching the venues of dance activities, I would hear drum sounds and singing voices quivering through villages, valleys and hills. On reaching the sites of dance practices, I would see and hear women leading songs, children singing as choristers, men playing drums and other musical instruments. I would listen to voices calling songs while others provided response. Singers would slickly transit from one chain of songs to another and drum and other instrumental rhythms would swing in sync. Spaces would be immaculately filled with vocal harmonies, well punctuated with humming melodies, and deftly embellished with rhythmic counterpoints. The teachers were singing, drumming, and dancing. The learners were singing, drumming, and dancing. The dancing bodies would coalesce together the entire tuneful field with jaunty gapes and unswerving movements, flavored with freely trickling sweat.

“Are these dancers or/and musician?”
I interminably mooched over my curiosity. The link between music and dance was as hazy as it was conjointly reinforcing.

These fieldwork experiences invited me appreciate the criticality of the interrelationship between music and dance in teaching and learning experiences. As I reminisced about this experience, I made reference to the questions raised by Ronstrom (1999) about the interrelations between traditional music and dance: “What are the relations between music and dance? How do musicians relate to dancers, and dancers to musicians? Which comes first, the music or the dance? What aspects of music are important for dancers?” (p. 136). These questions invited me to raise further queries on the place of music in pedagogy of
cultural heritage dances: 1) what are the implications of music for dance pedagogy? 2) How do dance teachers engage music as a pedagogic mechanism to make the material for dance more intelligible for the learners?

My examination of music as a pedagogic aspect was also triggered by the fact that “in academic discourse, it has long been customary to treat music and dance as abstract ‘text’ that can be laid out and analysed as concrete items of art. This practice has resulted in a distinction between the main object of analysis, that is, the text, and the time and place where the music and dance are performed, that is, the context” (Ronstrom, 1999, p. 137). Fragmenting music and dance from African communities into small autonomous specialities diminishes the epistemological and ontological meanings that originate from the unique ways in which the two domains of knowledge are interwoven.

My ethnographic experiences such as the one mentioned above showed that the inseparability of music and dance still follows a long African tradition that conceptualises and contextualises music and dance as two intermingling knowledge domains (see 2.4). Stone (1998) described this creative, synthesis of music and dance in African cultures as “a highly wrapped bundle of arts that are sometimes difficult to separate, even for analysis. Singing, playing instruments, dancing, masquerading and dramatizing are part of a conceptual package that many Africans think of as one and the same” (p. 7).

7.6.1. Teaching dance songs as dance

The findings revealed that the dance teachers rationalise the teaching of cultural heritage dance through dance songs. Cultural heritage dances are taught together with the songs that constitute their epistemological and ontological foundations. Ronald referred to all the attendant songs for dances as “dance songs”. He explained that the relationship between
these songs and dance movements is so intimate that separating the two during performance, teaching and learning processes renders the dances meaningless.

Ssenkubuge further stated: “Baakisimba and Mbaga dance have songs that must go with their performance. When I teach these dances, I emphasise both the movements and the music – songs. The songs carry multiple meanings that relate directly to the dances”. He added, “For example, in Mbaga, the movements and gestures are narrative and they are meant to offer lessons to the bride and groom about cleanliness, sex, and responsibilities that a husband and wife are expected to fulfill in marriage”. Similarly, Mariam shared: “In Runyege dance, the songs are very important. These songs change depending on the situation of the performance. The songs reflect the purpose of the performance. The songs tell stories about dancers, dances, culture, community experiences, and histories”.

For Ssenkubuge and Mariam, “analysing sounds only is nearly useless, if one does not focus on the visual or movement dimension as well” (Kaeppler, 1996, p. 140). Therefore, they teach the songs to illuminate the movement knowledge. Ssenkubuge and Mariam’s integration of music as a pedagogic aid draws parallels with Euba’s (2001) observation that in African communities, song texts are central in defining the mode of dance practices and how the communities perform the dances (also see 2.4).

Olivia shared that teaching dance songs is necessary because there are dances where the songs guide the movements. She stated: “Owaro dance movements are guided by songs. The movement actions go with the flow of the songs. When I teach this dance, I make sure that I teach these songs together with movements”. Commenting on the centrality of music in Owaro dance, Olivia further stated: “It is difficult for any person to learn the movements and meaning of the dance without learning the songs first”. In instances where the dance songs determine the nature and quality of movements, integrating these songs as a
pedagogic aid is inevitable. The songs offer learners entry into the corporeal movement experience of the dances, framing a foundation upon which they learners begin to rationalise the intrinsic kinesthetic properties of the movements.

Through this study, I further examined the place of songs in pedagogy using the following questions: If the research participants consider songs to be a fundamental part of teaching and learning of dance movements, how do they rationalise and deconstruct the epistemological structures of these songs to illuminate dance knowledge and skills?

The dance teachers ensure that the learners understand the detailed sections of each dance song to unveil its extensive association with the dance. This involves taking the learners through and immersing them in the content of these songs, and emphasising the meaning, tempo, pitch, and timbre and how all these qualities extend into kinesthetic movement action. By doing so, the dance teachers create possibilities for the learners to have varied ways of engaging dance knowledge and skills as constructivists, doers, knowers, and inquirers. Herbert explained:

When I teach Maggunju dance, for example, I say out the words of the songs at a slow pace. For a song like ‘amaggunju amaggunju, gano amaggunju agazinibwa aboobutiko’, I say out each word first and the learners repeat it. For example, I say, ‘amaggunju’, and ask the learners to repeat after me a couple of times. Usually in Uganda our songs are composed in long sentences, so I have to breakdown the words. We work on pronouncing each word of the sentence. Then we turn the words into complete sentences. From there we translate the sentences into a melody. After getting the melody then we sing it repeatedly as we run through movements.

Herbert’s excerpt shows that breaking the songs down into intelligible words and phrases can enable the learners to grasp the subject matter of the dance. This understanding prepares them to adequately engage the movement structures of the dance, using the musical and rhythmic structure as a frame of reference, rationalisation, and exploration.
As a participant and nonparticipant observer, I noticed that Mariam, Ssenkubuge, Matthew, and Collin taught the accompanying songs of the dances using oral means first. For example, Matthew taught individual phrases of the songs for *Larakaraka* dance one at a time. We went through the phrases of the song texts a number of times, and later put the phrases together into the melodic structures.

In a subsequent discussion with Matthew, he explained that he broke down the songs to aid “some learners who do not come from Acholi tribe and do not know the languages in which the songs were composed and sung to learn these songs”. I was one of the learners that Matthew’s reflection alluded to. Matthew’s pedagogy positioned music at the centre of dance learning.

However, as a learner from an ethnic community outside Acholi, I still struggled to learn the songs. Accordingly, Matthew’s assumption that breaking down songs into small phrases offers diverse learners smooth access to this knowledge is not entirely valid. Even with isolated song phrases, I still experienced difficulties as a learner in grasping, understanding, and embodying the new dance songs. Berry (1997) has referred to the difficulty of grasping new cultural experiences as acculturative stress (Berry, 1997). In my personal experience, acculturative stress manifested in the challenges I encountered in learning the pronunciation of lyrics and general intonation and pitching of the *Larakaraka* dance songs in an entirely alien Acholi language.

During the fieldwork, I continued to experience the inseparability of music and dance in the dance teachers’ pedagogic rationalisation. When I visited Ssenkubuge’s class as a nonparticipant observer, I noticed that he used music, the space and dance movements as integrated elements to teach *Baakisimba* dance:
Ssenkubuge started the class with dancers and drummers revising *Baakisimba* dance movements, which they have learned previously. After 30 minutes, he spread out the drummers with each one of them occupying a different spot in open spaces. The drummers included: a *mpuunyi* drum player, two *entabuzi* players, two *mbuutu* player, three *ngalabi* players, four *nsaasi* player, and one *madinda* player. He asked that 2-3 dancers to go and stand close to a drummer. He asked the drummers to play *Baakisimba* rhythms. He then requested the dancers to listen to the rhythms, sing the dance songs, and perform *Baakisimba* dance movements. Each drummer and dancer were supposed to also listen to and watch other drummers and dancers. This exercise lasted for one hour. Later, all the dancers and drummers came together as one group and ran through the rhythms and movements.

Ssenkubuge’s rationale in exposing learners to this experience is to enable each learner to first use the body to capture and internalise the music, dance movements and energy that are both proximal and distant from where he or she is positioned. He explained: “When learners and drummers are spread out, each of them is challenged to listen to this music that is spread out, internalise it and produce the exact movements to it. There is a certain way this distance between drummers and dancers sharpens the ability of learner to grasp the music and translate it into movements”.

Ssenkubuge’s pedagogy theorises that the quadruple relationship between the dancers, the space, the drummers and the rhythmic output challenges each individual learner to listen, process, internalise and respond to this synthesis with enhanced body movements. This approach was highly constructivist as it enabled the learners to question, interpret, analyze, and think about information to come up with meaningful practical actions, experiences and meaning of dance and music as a practice, dancing as an activity, the fellow dancers as agents and the environment of teaching as stimuli (Liu & Ju, 201). Ssenkubuge combined auditory, spatial, and kinesthetic forms of intelligence (Gardner, 1983) by creating embodied relational interdependence between the learners, drummers, space, and the music output. This synthesis between music and dance was also reported by
Nketia (1965) to be common in the *Agbeko* dance of the Ewe people of Ghana: “…rhythm and movement are more closely knit in *Agbeko* dance. A series of pre-arranged movement sequences or figures may each be identified with a distinctive rhythm pattern so that changes in rhythm are automatically followed by changes in dance movements” (p. 96). Ssenkubuge uses music not only as a medium of accompaniment, but also as a system of immersing the learners into listening, understanding, and distilling and reproducing dances.

In contrast, Ronald explained that he emphasises the vocal songs of the dances as the starting point of teaching movements. He shared that “all dances have songs that accompany them”. These songs, he further elaborated, “have meanings and messages that speak to their history, the people, the cultures and geographical places of origin. In some dances, these song texts are directly translated in the movements of the dances”. Citing the example of *Maggunju* dance, he stated:

*Maggunju* dance has a song:
Soloist: *Bannage nnali ntema*
Chorus: *Bwe ppo*
Soloist: *Nentema akatiko*
Chorus: *Aka Namulongo*

The song is about cutting of mushrooms. The movement depicts the cutting. So, when I teach this section of the dance, I teach the song first, explain its meaning and then show how it correlates with the movements. There are accents in the songs that coincide with stresses in the way the movement is executed.

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**Nnali Ntema**

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Ronald’s pedagogic rationalisation considers that dance movements are best understood if their constituent songs are interwoven into the learning experiences of the learners. The song of *Maggunju* dance that he cited shows how learning a song can orient learners into movement structures and the contextual meanings of the dances, and the communities from which they originate. This pedagogic approach aligns with Nzewi’s (1999) analysis that music is an integral part of orienting learners into dance. Nzewi further observed that in African communities, it is common for learners to go through three stages of life-music: music sensitisation, which happens at birth when a baby is carried and jogged to a regular pulse; rhythm sense, which includes exhortative rhythmic chants and claps that a child goes through before they learn how to stand, balance and walk; and general musicianship.

Learning dance songs as part of dance also relates to the pedagogical philosophy of teaching Ugandan dances that I have developed through research and practice (Mabingo 2014, 2015c). The philosophy is founded on the premise that to embody dances from Uganda in teaching and learning processes is to personify their inherent music and rhythmic constructions. The songs frame, illuminate, and sustain the corporeal movement capabilities, sensibilities, and patterns of the dances. Through dance songs, learners explore the embodied complexities, rationalise the intersections between the dance songs and dance movements and understand dances as a knowledge domain that exists in kinesthetic and musicalised forms. The dance songs cause the teacher and learner to bring thought to bear on questioning, exploring, deconstructing, and illuminating movement action.

7.6.2. Teaching drum rhythms as dance

In addition to dance songs, the dance teachers mentioned that they use different drum rhythms to rationalise movement knowledge. Green (2011) has described drumming in
African cultures as the rhythmic language of the dance. I located how drum rhythms are engaged as pedagogy to teach the movement knowledge of cultural heritage dances.

7.6.2.1. Rationalising movement knowledge through vocal mnemonics of rhythms

Some of the dance teachers mentioned described using vocal mnemonics of the drum rhythms to teach dance movements. In the context of this study, vocal mnemonics entailed translating drum rhythms into rhythmic-verbal sounds, which the dance teachers passed on orally to the learners to help them process, understand, and reproduce rhythms as integral components of dances. Olivia said that because she cannot practically demonstrate drum rhythms for learners, she “plays the rhythms using the mouth” for learners to listen, process, internalise, and practically replicate the verbalised sounds on the drums, and later transfer this knowledge to dance movements:

I do not know how to play the drum rhythms myself, but I have them in my head. I use my mouth to play drum rhythms for the learners. The learners then translate my verbalised sound on the drums. For example, for the Baakisimba dance rhythm I say, ‘mpata mpata mpa’, which the mbuutu drum plays. After the learners grasp it, I then ask them to do movements as they loudly sing these sounds.

According to Olivia, verbal mnemonics offer a medium through which she channels knowledge of drum rhythms to learners. Her application of mnemonics is based on her recognition that the drum rhythms for dances can be transferred to the learners through verbalised sounds. Once the learners process and understand these mnemonics, they can then create links between the rhythms from which they are derived and the dance movements. Mnemonics make movement knowledge comprehensible for learners.

Collin explained that vocal mnemonics are important in teaching dances because there are drum rhythms that codify set verbal phrases of either songs or stories behind the dance and the people. Mushengyezi (2003) described these as talking drums that carry
“acoustic speech surrogate” (Stern, 1957 cited in Ong, 1977, p. 411), and which are common in music and dance performances in African communities.

In connection with the drum rhythms as acoustic speech surrogate, I noted when I observed a drumming class taught by Ssenkubuge for Baakisimba dance that he repeatedly vocalised the words “Nsaba katonda akumpe” and “ssinga nnamera byoya ssinga mbuuse” for drummers and dancers. The dancers and drummers would shout out the words loudly and explore the corresponding movements. Below is the music notation of the song:

**Nsaba Katonda'kumpe**

![Music notation for Nsaba Katonda'kumpe](image)

**Ssinga Nnamera Byoya Ssinga mbuuse**

![Music notation for Ssinga Nnamera Byoya Ssinga mbuuse](image)

This observation from Ssenkubuge’s dance classes demonstrates how his pedagogy engages verbal sounds to illuminate movement knowledge. These sounds were individually constructed by Ssenkubuge and then relayed to learners so that they identified how to assimilate them [verbal sounds] and translate them into drumming and dance movements. These sounds immersed learners into the link between the rhythms and movements. The mnemonics exposed learners to how different drum rhythms and their tonality, tempo, pitch, texture, and quality expand the movement realities of Baakisimba.
dance. The mnemonic offered a point of deeper reflection for Ssenkubuge and learners. Instead of jumping straight into imitating movements, they routed their examination of the kinesthetic structures of the *Baakisimba* dance through embodied vocal rhythms.

Herbert also explained that he uses vocal mnemonics to allow learners to develop and apply their own ways of translating rhythmic structures into movement knowledge: “I do not want to give learners everything. I play drums using my mouth to challenge learners to listen, process and produce this material in practical rhythms on the drums. I further expand the learning by having the learners do movements depending on these verbal rhythms”. This approach acknowledged that learning happens in the mind and body, and it is participatory. The vocal mnemonics forms what Salomon and Perkins (1998) refer to as “Critical condition” (p. 3), which is a stimulus that triggers learning.

Vocal mnemonics allow learners agency in learning as active participants in learning, challenging them to search for ways of deconstructing the movement knowledge of the dances. The mnemonics create a connection between a learner’s “consciousness and the activity” (Nardi, 1996 cited in Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, 1999, p. 64), decentring learning as a space for reflection, exploration, inquiry, and experience. This participatory pedagogic approach has parallels with Jonassen’s (1999) view of participatory learning as “an act of transformational interaction between the learner, the object that the learner is acting on, and the signs and tools which mediate this interaction” (p. 222).

### 7.6.2.2. Rationalising movement knowledge through practical demonstration of rhythms

The research revealed that there are dance teachers who use practical demonstration of drum rhythms as a way to illuminate movement knowledge. When I observed dance classes conducted by Matthew, Ronald, Ssenkubuge and Collin, I noticed that they repeatedly showed and explained to the learners how the drums were supposed to be played, and the
quality of rhythms. They then linked this formulation to the movements and gestures of the dances to which the drum rhythms were constituent. Collin highlighted the importance of practical demonstration and verbal explanation in teaching drum rhythms as dance:

It is important to show learners how the drums are supposed to be played. When I teach new learners how to play ngalabi drum, I tell them, ‘put your right or left hand in the middle of the drum surface. This hand has to get outside the surface of the drum. At this point to you have to press or hit the surface harder. Here you strike it twice or more. At this point you strike, slap, scratch, or mute the sound on the drum surface using your hands or the drumming sticks. This gives them an idea of the nature and quality of the rhythmic outputs and the movements that go with them.

Collin’s excerpt reveals how learning dance movements that are accompanied by the ngalabi drum is a thought process, which entails reflecting on the technique for playing instruments, the quality of rhythmic output, and how this is embodied through movement. Collin further emphasized this link: “I teach drumming, but I have to make sure that learners of drum rhythms are seeing the dancers performing the dances. Demonstration enables learners of drum rhythms to reflect on movement action. They have to know what drum rhythms are played and how they tie into the dance. We do the two [learning drumming and dancing] together”. In Collin’s pedagogy, practical demonstration of drum rhythms is not isolated from the corporeal movements of the dances. Pedagogy sits between the rhythmic framework and the dance movements.; it connects the learner to the rhythm, the fellow learners, the experiences cultivated, and the activity of teaching and learning.

Brian mentioned that he teaches learners drum rhythms by progressing from simple to complex drum rhythms and later transfers the rationalised structures of rhythms into dance movements: “Drum rhythms can be broken down into basic and complex rhythms. For example, when I am teaching the drumming for Kizino dance, I start with a single mono-rhythmic beat on the drum. Then I progress to complex polyrhythms. After learners
acquire this rhythmic knowledge, I teach them how to interpret it in movements”. For Brian, breaking down drum rhythms into basic intelligible components is necessary for learners because it advances their ability to transfer this rationalised rhythmic knowledge into understanding of the detailed components of the dances. Brian’s practice of breaking down the rhythmic and movement patterns of the dances into smaller intelligible units echoes Merrill’s (2002) idea that any form of learning is strengthened when new and complex knowledge is demonstrated to the learner in intelligible parts, which the learner can explore in their isolated form and then consolidate into one whole structure.

The research findings demonstrate the divergent ways through which dance pedagogies are rationalised. By using dance songs and drum rhythms as frameworks of inquiry and exploration, the dance teachers place the learners at the intersection of the learning experience, the content knowledge of the dances, and their individual reflective thought processes. In all cases, “there were two of more entities that were involved in the learning system: the learner and the "other," entities sometimes in complementary relations” (Lepper, Aspinwall, Mumme & Chabay, 1990; Lepper, Drake & O’Donnell-Johnson, 1997 cited in Saloman & Perkins, 1998, p. 6). Teaching songs and drum rhythms as dance enabled the dance teachers to accord the learners agency in learning experiences as listeners, thinkers, doers, participants, constructivists, and collaborators.

7.7. Teaching complex movements, gestures, and techniques of diverse ethnic dances

The fieldwork findings revealed that the dances taught by the dance teachers originate from varied ethnic backgrounds, are diverse in terms of techniques, histories, movement vocabularies, and are taught in complex environments composed of various populations of learners. Each dance teacher indicated that they belong to one particular ethnic community
in Uganda, but they still teach dances from other ethnic communities that make up the Ugandan demography. Among the dance teachers in this study, the pedagogies that drew on complex cultural knowledge took the following forms: 1) dance teachers who teach in communities with people from diverse cultural, economic, social backgrounds, learning styles, and interests; 2) dance teachers who teach dances that originate from cultures outside their own; 3) dance teachers who teach cultural heritage dances to people from cultures other than the cultures from which these dances originate; 4) dance teachers who teach learners who come from cultures outside their own; 5) others who teach their own cultural dances to people from other ethnicities in different environments; 6) dance teachers who have been influenced by cultures and settings outside Uganda; and 7) other than their ethnic dances, all the dance teachers indicated that they have never learned other diverse dances in the communities where these dances originate.

This spectrum of diversity of cultures represents a blend of contexts and experiences in which pedagogic rationalisation is anchored. When I encountered this reality as a fieldwork researcher, my inquiry was directed by the following questions: 1) How do dance teachers rationalise pedagogies in ways that respond to and address these issues of complex cultural contexts, experiences, learning, and teaching?; 2) How do dance teachers use pedagogies to enable learners to think about and inquire into these complex cultural issues?; and 3) What are the implications of these cultural complexities to pedagogy as a system of thought, inquiry, cultural production, creation, expression, and transformance? My pursuit of these questions yielded the reflections, observations and empirical experiences that constitute the following subsections of this section.
7.7.1. Teaching diverse populations of learners

The study investigated how the dance teachers teach learners of diverse gender, social background, age, family background, learning style, and ethnicity in ways that cultivate participation and inclusion. I examined how they use “a set of mechanisms…to establish and maintain order, apply effective instruction, deal with students as individuals and as a group, respond to the needs of individual students, and effectively handle…cultural particularities of individual learners” (Emmer & Stouch, 2001, p. 104).

Underlining the diversity in learners, Herbert stated: “The community that I work with has all sorts of learners. These learners come from different ethnic backgrounds. Some have never practiced dances that come from other cultures. Others learn by seeing. There are those who learn very fast, and I have some who learn by listening to songs and drum rhythms”. Similarly, Collin also mentioned: “Our members have different learning interests. Some want to dance, others want to play instruments, and there are those who want to sing, whereas others aim to learn specific dance forms”. The preceding narratives reveal that the populations of learners to which Herbert and Collin apply pedagogies are heterogeneous, not homogeneous.

Herbert and Collin’s reflections relate to observations made by educational theorists that any teaching and learning environment is a microcosm for diverse learners who may include: visual, auditory, analytic, kinesthetic-spatial, kinesthetic-external, kinesthetic-internal (Mainwaring, Dona & Krasnow, 2010); imagery, imitative, verbal, concrete-reflective, abstract-reflective, abstract-active and concrete-active (Kolb, 1984); sensing, intuitive, inductive, deductive, active, reflective and sequential (Felder & Silverman, 1988); and self-authoring and socialising knowers (Drago-Severson, Helsing, Kegan, Broderick, Popp, & Portnow, 2001). In recognising that learning populations are
diverse, the question arises: How do the teachers apply pedagogies that embrace and respond to the complex diversities of learners?

The reflections of the dance teachers and fieldwork revelations showed that different approaches are used to respond to the diverse populations of learners. Herbert stated: “I find time to attend to individual learners when I provide feedback. I also monitor individual learners to establish the areas of dance that they are passionate about and skilled in and what they need to learn. I aim to know the learning weaknesses and strengths of individual learners and handle them distinctively”. Herbert’s pedagogic approach emphasises support to learners through scaffolding, which is founded on a strong and meaningful teacher-learner relationship. He applies an interpersonal interface with the aim of identifying the learning interests and abilities of each learner.

I observed a similar approach in the dance activities conducted by Mariam, Ssenkubuge, Matthew and Collin. They constantly moved around the space during dance activities, identifying individual learners who needed support, and providing corrective support using verbal remarks and practical demonstration. These dance teachers engaged in-depth observation and analysis of individual learners and applied case-by-case feedback provision mechanisms. This pedagogic approach recognises the ability of individual learners to grow with targeted support from the dance teachers. The dance teachers embrace diversity and build on the unique positions that each learner occupies to offer them support that is responsive to their distinctive learning needs, interests, and conditions.

The dance teachers Brian, Olivia, Mariam and Collin shared that they allocate different responsibilities to individual learners to tap into their diverse and unique skills, knowledge and backgrounds. By allocating these responsibilities, they are seeking to support these learners in exploiting their areas of strength, while at the same time exposing
them to new knowledge sets and skill bases needed to advance their competencies. Mariam observed: “I divide the learners into small groups. I have learners who play drums, some sing, some lead the songs, others dance, whereas there are those that I ask to teach newcomers. I rotate all these learners between these responsibilities. Then I make them work together as one group covering all the different aspects of a dance”.

Mariam recognised the diversity of skills and knowledge that learners could explore through pedagogy. She teaches learners through different activities, such as songs, dancing, and peer modeling. As the learners move between these different activities, they experience relational interdependence (Lave & Wenger, p. 191) to support each other as individuals and within the group. Mariam’s pedagogy enables each learner explore their individual competencies (I am) and seek ways to integrate these competences into the group and learn from this group as well (we are) (see Section 2.1.1). This also represents the aspect of constructivism as learners cultivate experiences and search for meanings through active participation in the different activities of the dances.

Brian explained that exposing learners to different activities and responsibilities encourages relational sharing and practical immersion in complex skills, which in turn supports the unique qualities each learner brings to the pedagogic process: “Having responsibilities in the different dance activities such as drumming, dance, singing, and leading songs allows learners to work together and build a sense of a community. Dancers need drummers, choristers need drummers, a soloist needs the choristers, and novice learners need learners with advanced skills, to be able to learn and perform. Because the learners are always diverse, these different activities afford them different entry points into dance skills and knowledge”. 
Brian and Mariam’s narratives illustrate that their pedagogic rationalisations utilise a range of dance related activities to foster interactive, symbiotic, and collaborative learning. This approach is intended to unlock the potential of each individual learner. Within this pedagogy, learners bring and share their varied competencies and at the same time explore new areas of cultural heritage dance skills and knowledge, which they may not have proficiency in and practical exposure to.

Exposing learners to different epistemological aspects of dances through activities such as drumming, singing, leading songs, telling stories, among others is also intended to shape these individual learners into holistic thinkers, knowers, doers, and collaborators. Collin mentioned: “In cultural dances, it is important for a person to possess several skills encompassed in the dances. The richness of dance practices offers opportunities for diverse individuals to come into dance traditions from any angle using varied skills of learning”. The diversity of activities and responsibilities that each learner assumes in these activities challenges them to apply their different faculties to advance their dance skills and knowledge. For example, drumming and singing call for reflective listening, dancing requires inquisitorial observation and exploratory embodiment, and storytelling entails deconstruction of the information behind the dances.

As a participant observer, I worked with a small group of drummers as a learner in the community where Ssenkubuge taught dance classes in Rakai district. Within our group, which consisted of seven instrumentalists playing drums such as ngalabi, mbuutu, mpuunyi, nankasa and idiophones such as nsaasi, some learners organised the rhythms played by each of the members. They also identified points of entry for each instrumentalist. I played the mpuunyi drum. As we gradually made our rhythmic entries to form a whole, each individual was allowed to improvise and find and add their own
rhythmic voice. We then rotated around different instruments and continued to create rhythms that were based on individual improvisation. This approach allowed individual talent to blossom. We were able to share our diverse creative abilities and imaginations.

As an individual, I located my learning progress in the experiences and actions of other members of the group by socially constructing my meanings from a blend of rhythms created by other members of the community. Working in this small group allowed me agency in experiencing learning from the first-person perspective in the context of the community. I searched for new ways of keeping in sync with the drumming styles and audio output of other learners within the group. This experience was constructivists as it invited me to find my own ways of navigating the dance activities and their nuanced knowledge and skills. I explored individual improvisation and at the same time adhered to the communal drumming as an individual player.

My learning experience can be linked to Bruner’s (1996) observation that learners in participatory, and interactive learning environments and situations explore:

…agency, which entails taking more control of your own mental activity; reflection, which implies that ‘not simply learning is raw’, but making what you learn make sense, understanding it; collaboration, which involves sharing resources of the mix of human beings involved in teaching and learning since mind is inside the head, but it is also with others; and culture, which is the way of life and thought that we construct, negotiate, institutionalise and finally end up by calling ‘reality’ … (p. 87).

In order for the dance teachers to apply pedagogies that honour the diversity of learners, they have to first recognise existence of this diversity. The pedagogies applied by the dance teachers aim at enabling the diverse learners have agency in teaching and learning experiences. The learners are challenged to reflect on their individual strength, interests, and conditions to launch themselves into the pedagogic experiences. Reflecting the Ubuntu worldview (see Section 2.1.1), the pedagogies afford the learners different points of entry
into dance knowledge, the learning environment, and pedagogic experience as individuals and as a community. Building on the diversities of learners, the dance teachers created knowledge-building communities (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1996), which encompassed the multiplicity of backgrounds, talents, abilities, needs, and conditions of the learners.

7.7.2. Rationalising ethnically diverse dances through pedagogy

Uganda, like other African cultures, is endowed with numerous dances that serve distinct purposes (see Section 1.2). Some of the dance teachers explained that this diversity is a resource that they tap into to make their pedagogies responsive to different cultural traditions. Mariam explained: “I cannot limit myself to dances from Bunyoro culture. As a dance teacher, I continue to learn dances from different cultures in Uganda in order to be able to offer this wealth of knowledge to learners”. Similarly, Herbert observed: “I know many dances from Uganda. As a teacher, this wealth of knowledge enables me to make choices on what to teach, to who, where, and when”. Both Mariam and Herbert feel that to advance teaching competences in environments where dance traditions are complex, a dance teacher needs to know a range of these dances.

Ronald mentioned that possessing extensive knowledge in a variety of cultural heritage dances enables the dance teachers to aim at offering a range of content knowledge to the learners to advance their cultural awareness. He stated: “Performing in different cultural groups with different people from varied cultural background has allowed me to learn dances from different ethnic cultures in Uganda. At my community, I teach as many dances as possible to give member a broader cultural awareness”.

The reflections of the dance teachers such as Ronald, Mariam, and Herbert demonstrate that within the pedagogic regime of cultural heritage dances in Uganda, there
is recognition that teaching varied cultural heritage dances enables the dances to transcend their ethnic and cultural communities of origin. This pattern of practice shows that the teachers seek to use pedagogy as an expression of what Bennett (1993) has referred to as the shift from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism.

This shift is well captured in Brian’s approach to teaching the diverse dances. He explained that he teaches dance medleys, which draw on movements, songs, stories, and drum rhythms from different cultural heritage dances in Uganda: “When I teach dances, I look out for motifs, songs, and drum rhythms in each cultural dance. I identify these motifs and develop medleys out of this complex material to create one whole piece with different patterns of varied cultural dances representing different cultures of Uganda”.

Brian’s pedagogy recognises possibilities for using pedagogy as a space to create new cultural products by blending together different elements of diverse dances. Brian further noted: “Since my goal is to train dancers to perform in different local and international contexts, I want to present medleys that show this diversity of cultures. I use teaching and learning to deliver this cross-cultural knowledge”. Brian’s pedagogy seeks to reconcile the different ideas from a variety of dance knowledge and skills.

The dance teachers engage in conscious reflections on the diversity of dance forms and frame their pedagogies to accommodate, illuminate, and support this diversity. Their recognition of the value these diverse cultural heritage dances adds to teaching and learning experiences demonstrates the intercultural sensitivity (Berry, 1997) encompassed by the dance teachers’ pedagogies of the dance teachers. The pedagogies encompass dance traditions from more than one distinct community. The dance teachers attach value to miscellanies of cultural epistemologies.
In addition to inquiring into the ways the dance teachers value diverse cultural heritage dances, I examined how they deal with teaching these distinct dances, with particular focus on the dances for which they may not have knowledge and skills. Ronald stated: “At my community we have members from Acholi, Ankole, Buganda and other cultures in Uganda. Some of them come when they know their cultural dances. I ask them to share this knowledge and skills by teaching us all”. Similarly, when I observed the activities at the community where Collin teaches dance, he explained to me: “That group of boys who are playing Madinda are being assisted by the other two boys who came here from Busoga region. The Basoga are renowned madinda players in Uganda. They learn to play them when they are still young and they are good at it. It is part of their tradition. The two boys are assisting me to teach others how to play madinda”.

From the above reflections, it can be deduced that Collin and Ronald view some learners as what I will call “native knowers and bearers” of ethnically diverse dance knowledge and skills. Their pedagogies engage these native knowers and bearers of dance knowledge as teaching exemplars. They tap into the varied cultural heritage dance skills and knowledge bases of learners to accord them agency as co-teachers. Possession of specific ethnic dance knowledge and skills by the learners is considered a resource that the community can benefit from and the individuals that possess it get an opportunity to construct their own ways of sharing this knowledge with fellow learners.

Other dance teachers noted that they contract individuals from ethnic communities to teach dances. As a participant observer working with a community in Naguru where Matthew taught, I took part in learning dances from Teso ethnic culture, which were taught by a teacher hired by Matthew. When I asked Matthew why he hired this teacher, he explained: “For me I do not know these dances. I hired a dancer who comes from this very
culture to come and assist me because he knows the dances”. Olivia also shared Matthew’s views on teaching dances with particular skills and knowledge: “There are dances that I do not know to perform. These are mostly dances from other cultures such as Karimojong people. What I do is to get a person who comes from a culture and ask them to come to my church community and teach their dances as guest instructors”. To Olivia and Matthew, these instructors are “native knowers and bearers”.

The dance teachers also revealed that they use audio-visual images to illuminate authentic aspects that are distinct to the dances. Brian disclosed: “I use audio-visual recordings of the dances to show learners how movements look like. I use this approach when there are details that I want learners to see”. I had a similar experience when I met with Matthew during fieldwork. He gave me a DVD, which contained Larakaraka dance and Bwola dance and told me: “Go home, watch, and practice the movements so that by the time you start to work with us, you will know the movements. The recordings will show you movements as they are supposed to be”. The idea of constructivism came to my mind because Matthew challenged me to identify ways of interpreting the dance material to broaden my knowledge of the dances. By going through this material individual, I experienced what Vygotsky (1978) has referred as Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by activating my own learning without assistance from a dance teacher.

The pedagogy applied by Brian and Matthew values audiovisual recordings as aids in teaching and learning dances outside their cultural performance contexts. However, this philosophy underestimates the difficulties learners can encounter in learning new dances, even with use of audio-visual recordings as teaching and learning aids. As a learner and participant observer at the community where Matthew taught cultural heritage dances, I encountered difficulties in learning the songs and movements of both Bwola dance and
Larakaraka dance from the audio-visual recording that Matthew gave me to aid my learning. I could not thoroughly learn the pronunciation of the song lyrics and texts and playing of the drum rhythms by watching the audio-visual recordings. In relation to my experience, Kozel (2007), Glendola Mills (1995), and Bakka and Karoblis (2010) have observed that the application of audio-visual recordings in teaching dance cannot cover the dance skills and knowledge that is embodied in the ephemerality, historicity, and corporeality of dance practices. I believe there are aspects of the dances whose essence exists in the spontaneous forms in which the dances are practiced.

As an internative teacher of Ugandan dances in the U.S and New Zealand (see Section 4.2), I have noticed the inability of visual-audio recordings to capture the spontaneous and contextual essences of the dances. When the context in which the cultural heritage dances are practiced shifts, the essence of the dances is also altered. There are experiences and knowledge that are contextually specific, and which cannot be replicated when dances are appropriated in a new setting. The limitations of audio-visual recording in aiding teaching and learning contextually specific dances reflects Kozel’s (2007) observation, which questions the disembodied teaching of dance: “What is human movement in the absence of the body? To deny the abstract qualities of the real building or body, like denying the sensuous qualities of a virtual creation, is to ghettoise both the real and the virtual in definitional constructs that are incomplete” (p. 236).

This section has provided a critical examination of how the dance teachers use pedagogy to deconstruct the diverse cultural heritage dances in varied environments in central Uganda. This deconstruction begins with the dance teachers’ recognition and valuing of the diversity of the dances as a resource in local cultural heritage dance education practices. The dance teachers build on their competencies in these dances to
teach them. In cases where the dance teachers have limited knowledge of varied cultural heritage dances, they deploy individuals from these ethnicities with extensive knowledge to work as guest instructors. In some cases, the dance teachers reported using audio-visual recordings as teaching and learning aids for the diverse cultural heritage dances. The pedagogies employed by the dance teachers embrace the diversity in dance traditions and cultures, express intercultural sensitivity, and seek to position the learners at the centre of complex cultural experiences. Pedagogy enables the dance teachers and learners to engage thought and inquire into the new cultural and artistic realm of the dances. It broadens dance learning and teaching as a cultural practice and ushers the learners into new techniques, vocabularies and forms of embodied and reflective expression.

These pedagogies that value difference enable the dance teachers to shift thought and practice from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism (Bennett, 1993) as individuals within the diverse communities. Furthermore, it shows that the environments of dance practice in central Uganda are complex and dynamic. The ethnic complexity has allowed for flexibility and openness, which is noticeable in the teaching practices of the dance teachers. There is a blend of dance ideas across different ethnic boundaries. This trend reflects a new culturally reality in which local communities are becoming more diverse.

7.7.3. Dilemmas of rationalising pedagogy for the diverse cultural heritage dances

The reflections of some dance teachers disclosed the dilemmas they are confronted with in teaching the diverse cultural heritage dances. They expressed that adapting cultural heritage dances to new teaching environments (see Section 5.3) creates tensions in relation to cultural appropriation (Rowe, 2008; Williams, 2000) and representation of the embodied and historicised authenticities of the dances. The dance teachers are always concerned
about misrepresenting the content knowledge of the dances and their associated cultures, falsifying their meanings, and de-contextualising these dance practices in their second existence (Hoerburger, 1968), all of which may dislocate the essence and relevance of the dances in relation to their communities of origin. These dilemmas can be linked to what Berry (1997) has referred to as acculturative stress in intercultural interfaces. Matthew raised concerns about these issues:

I have seen some people teaching dances from Acholi region. What they teach is wrong. Songs are not sung well. The drumming is also not done the way it is supposed to be. I have seen individuals who teach male dancer to perform Larakaraka dance with the calabashes held and played in between the legs. This is wrong and discourteous.

Matthew’s reflection shows the tensions that exist in teaching ethnic dances that are tied to the cultures, norms, beliefs and practices of the communities from where they originate culturally. Similarly, Collin cited the example of Runyege dance songs to underscore the importance of applying pedagogies that address the “authentic” cultural meanings of the dances: “When you are teaching dance songs you have to pronounce the lyrics correctly. If the lyrics are not pronounced accurately, the meaning of the songs may change”. He cited the leg rattles that male dancers use in Runyege dance: “In Runyege dance, the male dancers wear rattles around the legs called ebinyege. If you pronounce ebinyege without emphasising y, the word changes to ebinege, which in Luganda means human testicles”.

Collin’s reflections reveal that the way “a dance idea is transferred extends culture-specific knowledge onto that dance idea” (Foster, 2003 cited in Rowe, 2008, p. 5). Hence, pedagogy, if not rationalised and applied appropriately in complex cultural teaching and learning processes can be a “complex processes through which spaces, objects, and other “cultural expressions” can be brought to represent something different from their original purposes and misrepresent the diversity of forms and effects that appropriation can have”
Collin advocates for intercultural sensitivity (Berry, 1997) when teachers are dealing with complex cultural dance knowledge and traditions to accord these practices the cultural recognition they deserve.

The desire to claim authenticity and the surge in re-contextualization of dances outside their places of origin reveal the tensions that the teachers have to navigate as they steer dance education in a rapidly changing demographic in central Uganda. While some dance teachers have addressed their minds and practices to these tensions, other have embraced the new trends that acknowledge the changes in demography, shifts in application of dances, and their individual roles as the new cultural catalysts and activators in ever transforming central Uganda.

One of such teachers is Brian who expressed that addressing the issue of “authenticity” in teaching cultural heritage dances in not important: “Cultural dances like cultures are not static, they keep on changing. Teachers and dancers have to accept this reality”. Therefore “teachers can translate these dances in various ways to fit the environment of teaching, purpose of teaching, and needs and conditions of the learners”. Brian explained that he believes in the “theory of diffusionism”, which, according to him, “shows that all cultural practices came from the same place, but they have continued to evolve over time depending on the place, context of practice, and actors”. Brian’s philosophy theorises that instead of engraining cultural and ethnic specificities, pedagogy should interweave the skills and knowledge of dances regardless of their origin and cultural purposes. In this sense, Brian views pedagogy as a space for interculturalism where dances from different cultures can congregate.

Brian’s opinion is also reflected in Olivia’s view of pedagogy as a location for intercultural re/production: “I alternate the traditional dances to fit the beliefs and
preaching of the church and the bible, and the evangelical expectations of the community members” at Harvest Christ Church. Herbert shared a similar view: “Cultural dance teachers need to understand that the situation in Uganda is changing every day. Dances are now performed on weddings, festivals, music videos, and on tours abroad. You cannot teach dances the way they were 100 years ago. You have to find a way of fitting them in these ever-changing cultural environments”. Herbert and Olivia’s reflections see the ever-changing cultural environment as a reason for dance teachers to develop and apply dance pedagogies that seek to support this intercultural dynamic instead of encouraging ethnic and cultural isolationism. Pedagogy can be means of utilizing intercultural richness and framing intercultural connection, and a method for engaging learners in embodying, reflecting upon, rationalising, and investigating complex cultural experiences as thinkers, inquirers, knowers, constructivists, doers, and collaborators.

7.8. Conclusion

Nzewi (2013) decried the fact that the philosophical rationality of epistemological civilisations in African communities has more often than not been misperceived, prejudicially interpreted and fundamentally demeaned and excluded in constructing and prescribing what should be considered intellectual knowledge. Like Nzewi (2013), I have had numerous experiences where people have shared notions insinuating that practices of dances from African communities are devoid of intellectual thought and reflective rationality (see Section 1.3). In this chapter, I have pursued the epistemological foundations of cultural heritage dance education. Using the reflections of dance teachers, and my own participant and non-participant observations, the chapter has provided a critical examination of pedagogy as a system of thought and inquiry – thinking and knowing,

The dance teachers embark on the journey of rationalising their pedagogies when they develop teaching plans. In this process they elicit information about the dances, prospective learners and environments of teaching practice to inform pedagogy. This is followed by consideration of activities such as cultural games, vocal songs and drum rhythms, and structured warm-up exercises to initiate learners into pedagogic processes. The dance teachers apply practical demonstration, verbalised sounds, verbal explanations, and peer modeling to facilitate teaching and learning of the dances. The knowledge and skills of the dances are further deconstructed through the use of music as a teaching aid. The pedagogy is multidimensional and individual dance teachers explores unique pedagogic mechanisms as an individual operating within varied communities of practice.

The pedagogies of the dance teachers position individual learners at the center of the learning experience, activities, and content knowledge of the dances. As active agents in pedagogic rationalisations, the dance teachers use practical demonstration, repetitive movement cycles, peer feedback, and verbal explanations to immerse learners in the content knowledge of the dances. These pedagogies draw on the reciprocal interface between their individual imaginations and collective ingenuities of communities of practice to rationalize the dances as embodied, constructivist, reflective, concrete, abstract, storied, and historicised epistemological and ontological domains.

The research also revealed that the dance teachers apply pedagogies to teach ethnically complex dances to diverse learning population in varied environments in central Uganda. These pedagogies seek to scaffold learners through reflective, experiential, and embodied learning (Bruner, 1960). They further expose learners to varied cultural and
artistic experiences by valuing, engaging, and integrating the diversity of knowledges and skills. Regardless of dilemmas of the dance teachers used pedagogy to deepen interculturalism instead of catalysing cultural differences.

Dyer (2009) stated that “Each teaching and learning circumstance in dance is a complex weaving of personal and social experience involving individuals, communities, movers, and viewers” (p. 68). The pedagogies of the dance teachers engage cultural heritage dances as concrete, abstract, embodied, musicalised, reflective, historical, conceptual, textual, and contextual epistemological and ontological purviews. The teachers claim agency in teaching and learning processes as reflective individual knowers, constructivists, thinkers, doers, and collaborators operating within the contexts of their communities of practice. Pedagogy sits between individual imagination, embodied and reflective experiences, dance traditions, and communal innovation. The discussion has shown how rationalisation of pedagogy is a complex process through which thought is engaged, inquiries are made, identities are explored, experiences are embodied, creativity and expression are nourished, and artistic and cultural growth is advanced. Pedagogy is an intricate framework through which individuals and communities search for creative voice and embrace different ways of positioning the dances as ontological and epistemological domains. The analysis in this chapter repudiates notions that have tended to characterise dance education practices in African communities as processes without deeply and inherently established intellectual and systematic foundations (see Section 1.3).
Chapter Eight: Deconstructing the research coda: Conclusion and final reflections

8.1. Introduction

Writing the conclusion for this thesis was filled with retroactive ruminations. With my eyes glued on my computer screen and my fingers zigzagging on the keypad, my mind was preoccupied with recollections of the complex research journeys. I reminisced the drum rhythms, vocal songs, laughter, movements, ululations, sweats, and gazes and grooves that the dance teachers shared with me. I mused about Brian demonstrating for me movements of Kitaguriro dance inside his house. I recalled Collin leading us in drum rhythms. I recollected Ssenkubuge showing us movements of Mbaga dance. I remembered Herbert sharing with me stories about his childhood dance experiences. I had memories of Olivia’s use of mnemonics to teach drum rhythms and dance movements. I was reminded of Mariam leading Runyege dance songs. I visualised Matthew gazing at me as he shared the histories of Larakaraka dance. Ronald’s voice about why he believes in the ability of cultural heritage dance education to empower communities resounded pungently inside my head. Writing the conclusion felt like wrapping all the unique voices of these varied individual dance teachers and my whole PhD journey into one envelope.

The recollections of the fieldwork encounters reminded of the complex rationalities that the dance teachers engage as individual pedagogues operating within a framework of communities. The abovementioned contemplations made me appreciate pedagogy as an epistemological domain that links people with practice, experiences and traditions.

As a researcher collaborating on this project with other individuals in and from diverse communities, I examined how the Ubuntu worldview (see Section 2.1.1) acts as an idiom of thought to amplify their embodied, reflective, constructivist, and rationalised pedagogic practices. The fieldwork experiences and the multifaceted forms of interaction I had with the dance teachers reminded of my childhood dance encounters, where individual imaginations, exploration, and innovation in dance practices were anchored in the community. I engaged in personal discovery, considering the community as a re/source of experiences and subject matter. Similarly, to my childhood experience as a dance and
music learner, going back to carry out fieldwork as a researcher made me feel that “I was because they were, and because they were therefore I was”.

This thesis is a stream emerging from a pool of varied reflections and discoveries that I explored before, during, and after the fieldwork. The inquiry was guided by the following question: How do the dance teachers rationalise pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in varied environments in central Uganda? The research findings provide complex answers to this question. The research data indicate that the manner in which the dance teachers rationalise pedagogy is complex. Each dance teacher claimed agency in teaching and learning as an individual constructivist operating within communities of practice. They are partaking in pedagogic processes as thinkers, knowers, doers, explorers, collaborators, and participants. Pedagogy is a mode of reasoning through which the teachers expand their inquiries and thought about dance, explore dance as a cultural practice, navigate different forms of kinesthetic embodiment of dance ideas, and deconstruct the theories surrounding dance skills and knowledge and the communities from which these dances originate. The thesis counters notions that have tended to characterise dances from communities in Africa including central Uganda as physical activities devoid of intellectual manifestations (see Section 1.3). My hope is that the perspectives presented in this thesis will expand the discourse on research, policy, scholarship and practice in dance education in the current global environment that is becoming increasingly diversified.

This chapter offers conclusive observations on the key themes that emerged out of this inquiry. These themes include: 1) the Ubuntu worldview as an idiom of thought in dance pedagogy; 2) objectifying discourses on dances from African communities; 3) review of scholarly narratives on dance pedagogy and the gaps; 4) autoethnographic reflections on intenative ethnographic experiences and other fieldwork methodology; 5)
the dance teachers’ multifaceted journeys into cultural heritage dance practices; 6) dance teachers’ acquisition of content knowledge of the dances; 7) dance teachers’ rationalisation of pedagogies; 8) rationalisation of assessment and feedback by the dance teachers as part of pedagogy; 9) rationalisation of music as a cultural heritage dance pedagogic aid; and 9) rationalisation of teaching techniques of diverse ethnic dances in varied cultural environments. In the following sections of the chapter, I provide summaries of each of the aforementioned themes, highlighting how they converge to de-centre pedagogy as a system of thought and inquiry, method of cultural practice, means of creating and expression, and framework of transformance. The chapter discusses the recommendations and implications that the research findings have for policy, practice, theory, and scholarship. It concludes with a wrap-up of my final thoughts on this entire research inquiry.

8.2. Decosntructing Ubuntu as an ontological and pedagogical idiom of thought

Ubuntu is a way of thinking, knowing, doing, and becoming, which reflects the reciprocal convergence between individuality and communality in African society. The fieldwork dance pedagogy sits between the teachers as individuals and the communities in which they practice dance education. The rational foundations of the pedagogies that the dance teachers use have hallmarks of Ubuntu philosophy. These pedagogies usher the learners into a worldview of dance practices and invite individuals to construct meanings drawing from and in relation to their individual imaginations and community innovations. The teaching and learning encounters accord individuals agency as reflective and participatory agents in the sharing and sustenance of complex dance knowledge. Within the context of dance education in complex cultural environments, Ubuntu situates the dance teachers and learners in ethnically diverse cultural heritage dances (Le Roux, 2000).
The Ubuntu worldview frames the dance teachers as knowers, inquirers, thinkers, collaborators, constructivists, and doers in their pedagogic practices. As a way of being thinking, the Ubuntu worldview interweaves into the dance teachers to application of pedagogy as a system of thought and inquiry, method of cultural practice, framework of becoming, and means of creating and expression.

Throughout the fieldwork, I noticed the rich experiences that dance teachers and learners constructed in the pedagogic processes. I developed a belief that the Ubuntu worldview permeates into interface between dance teachers and learners. While this subject of learners’ rationalization of pedagogy was outside the scope of this inquiry, future research could be conducted on how learners of the dances in African communities construct meanings from pedagogy. The following questions could guide these inquiries:

- How do dance learners draw on the Ubuntu worldview to acquire knowledge and skills of African cultural heritage dances?
- What meanings do the learners construct from engaging in pedagogies of African dances?
- How do dance learners engage pedagogies of African cultural heritage dances as frameworks of thought, inquiry, cultural practice, creation, and transformance?

### 8.3. Pedagogies of dances from Africa and the prevailing gaps in the literature

The research study was grounded in the body of knowledge on dance education and pedagogy generated by researchers, writers, theorists, and educators. My review of these discourses was based on the premise that as dance education influences have permeated the local Ugandan scholarly fabric, locating the research topic within this broader body of knowledge was necessary. It became clear that the literature on dance education has tended
to focus on dance traditions and education and pedagogic models derived from Euro-American scholarly traditions, while ignoring pedagogic perspectives from non-Western communities such as Uganda. The literature revealed that pedagogy covers assessment guidelines, curriculum development, feedback provision tools, development of lesson plans, the teacher-student relationship, dance teacher competencies, and critical theories that guide teaching and learning procedures.

Although the existing discourses showed that dances from African communities are gradually claiming a place in academic thought, no critical inquiries have been made into the kinds of pedagogies that local teachers use to teach dances in their communities. Moreover, the literature revealed that integration of pedagogic ideas from African communities in dance education in academia is still minimal. The existing academic literature on the teaching and learning of African dances showed the complex dilemmas that teachers of dances from African communities encounter when they appropriate these dances into academic settings. Further research could be conducted on this theme to examine how teachers negotiate teaching culturally and contextually specific dances in academic environments, guided by the following questions:

- How do dance teachers mediate teaching and learning processes of dances from African communities in schools and universities inside and outside Africa?
- How do dance teachers reconcile the cultural heritage dance knowledge with Euro-American pedagogic and curriculum frameworks in teaching and learning processes in schools and universities?
- How do the teachers of African dances in academic settings develop and apply pedagogies that draw on and respond to the diverse populations of learners and dances?
8.4. Deconstructing internative fieldwork identities and research methodology

One of the revelations that I had during the fieldwork was recognising my internative identity (see Section 4.2). As I carried out research in my culture of birth and origin, I reflected on how my indigenous upbringing, religious orientation, formal education in Uganda, and cultural, and academic and artistic encounters as an international student, educator, researcher and performer played out during my research encounters. These interweaving thoughts continued throughout my fieldwork experience. The interplay between my complex cultural, religious, indigenous, professional and academic orientations during the fieldwork placed me beyond the conventional outsider, insider, and halfie ethnographic identities. Through this experience, I became strongly aware of the potency of introspective reflection and emphatic reflexivity for a researcher during fieldwork. As a reflexive and reflective researcher, I sought ways to create negotiated reality to close the ethnographic gap between the dance teachers as research participants, me as a researcher, and fieldwork environments and experiences (see Section 4.2.3). Amidst these reflections, I viewed myself (I am) from the viewpoint of research participants and their communities of practice (We are).

In the process of navigating negotiated reality, I identified storytelling as a medium through which the dance teachers were comfortable exhaustively sharing their stories and reflections on cultural heritage dance education and pedagogy. Storytelling enabled the dance teachers to dig deep and exhume their memories and imagination to unveil the experiences and stories that formed the research data.

Because some experiences are specific to individuals and contexts of practices, I used interviews to enable dance teachers to reveal specific information and insights. As an internative fieldworker, I also used participant observations to immerse myself in the
embodied and experiential experiences of dance as an active agent. Additionally, I applied nonparticipant observation, where I took a distance from the dance activities to rationalise pedagogic application from the viewpoint of an inquisitorial observer. The combination of these methods of data collection allowed me to investigate pedagogy as a historicised, lived, storied, embodied, and experiential knowledge domain.

As part of the inquiry, I also drew on the Ubuntu worldview, constructivist theories, and a phenomenological research paradigm as frameworks of inquiry analyses. The synthesis of the aforementioned theoretical and analytical frameworks allowed me to locate how the teachers engage pedagogy as a system of inquiry and thought, method of cultural practice, framework of transformance, and means of creating and expression.

Researching cultural heritage dance practices in local environments in Uganda revealed the opportunities and dilemmas of studying dances as embodied complex cultural practices. Some of these issues, relevant as they appeared, were outside the frame of my inquiry. I developed questions during my fieldwork experience that could be used to pursue future inquiries in these areas:

- How do ethnographic researchers engage in examining cultural heritage dances as practices that carry embodied and ephemeral knowledge that is specific to a place, culture and tradition?
- How effective are academic research frameworks and methodologies in guiding research on cultural heritage dances in native communities in Africa?
- How does constructivism impact the transformation of knowledge and skills of cultural heritage dances in local communities inside Africa?
8.5. Deconstructing the multifaceted dance journeys of dance teachers

A premise of this study was that the biographical information of each dance teacher could illuminate his or her dance education and pedagogic viewpoints. The research findings divulged the complex journeys and unique experiences of each dance teacher. Most dance teachers first made contact with cultural heritage dances at home, in village communities, at school, in dance troupes, whereas others expanded their critical and theoretical understanding of the dances through university education. All these contexts shaped the ways each dance teacher identified within the realm of dance practice.

In particular, the journeys of the dance teachers framed their modes of reasoning and the philosophies that guide their pedagogic practices. This biographical information revealed that some dance teachers view dance practices as modes of cultural sustainability. Others appreciate the dances as drivers of community building and cross-generational transmission of cultural knowledge. There are dance teachers whose dance trajectories have deepened their view of the dances as spaces where complex cultural knowledge can be exchanged, negotiated, and contested. The dance teachers’ reflective participations, inquisitorial experimentations, interrogative observations, rational concretisations, and corporeal explorations grounded them in their unique dance identities and practices.

Throughout my interaction with the dance teachers, their distinct pedagogic identities became more apparent. However, this subject was not the focus of this study. Hence, studies could be conducted to examine the complex identities of individuals who work as dance teachers in varied local environments, guided by the following questions:

- What are the pedagogic and professional identities of the teachers who teach cultural heritage dances in African communities?
- How do the dance teachers in African communities form their teaching identities?
• How do the identities, competences and philosophies of the cultural heritage dance teachers impact their pedagogies in African communities?

• How have the ever-changing cultural environments of teaching and learning of dances in communities in Africa constructed the identities of the dance teachers?

8.6. Deconstructing acquisition of cultural heritage dance content knowledge by the dance teachers

The research data showed that the dance teachers’ entry into dance practices begun at their initial orientation into dance learning experiences. Examination of the dance teachers’ content knowledge bases was carried out on the premise that both content and pedagogical knowledge are interwoven. The initial dance learning experiences of the dance teachers occurred in homes, village communities, schools, dance troupes, and university. Within these contexts, they acquired the subject matter of the dances, which included movements, gestures, songs, drum rhythms, techniques, body areas of emphasis, stories, and physical expressions, histories, the specific locations where the dances are performed, and experiences that are cultivated during performance of the dances.

The dance teachers first explored the content knowledge of the dances through inquisitorial observations, reflective experimentations, musicalised explorations, interactive storytelling, corrective verbal explanations, and repetitive practical performances. Dance knowledge and skills were translated from infinitive, abstract, and imagined forms to concrete, embodied and corporeal structures. Dance learning occurred in frameworks of community, where each dance teacher integrated his or her individuality to learn, grow, share, create, reflect, and rationalise.
As learners, the dance teachers also engaged in learning dances in complex cultural. Because Uganda is endowed with diverse ethnic cultures, communities practice a myriad of dance traditions. The dance teachers were able to tap into this wealth of knowledge in schools, dance troupes and at university. Both the content and pedagogy of the dances enabled the dance teachers to acquire knowledge and skills of dances that transcended their cultural orientations. In examining how the dance teachers acquired the content knowledge of the dances and what constituted this knowledge, I aimed to locate their current pedagogic practices within these initial dance experiences and encounters.

While carrying out this study, I noticed that the contexts and mechanisms of teaching and learning did not only impact the individual dance teachers, but also shaped the meaning and being of the dances as forms of cultural expression within different communities in Uganda. Again, as this theme was outside the scope of my research, I suggest future research on this topic guided by the aforementioned questions:

- How do the contexts in which cultural heritages dance are learned and taught in communities in Africa shape the meaning and being of the cultural heritage dances?
- How do the dance teachers use pedagogy as a space to make the dances relevant and adaptable to the different contexts of practice in communities in Africa?
- How does the complexity of the contexts of practice in central Uganda frame teaching and learning of diverse cultural heritage dances in communities in Africa?

**8.7. Deconstructing the dance teacher’s application of pedagogies of cultural heritage dances**

The fieldwork findings revealed the centrality of pedagogy in facilitating transmission of dance skills and knowledge. The complex pedagogies used by the dance teachers link the
learner, teacher, cultural heritage dance knowledge and experiences cultivated through
learning, and the environments in which teaching and learning occur. Pedagogy
is an epistemological domain through which the essences, meanings, experiences, and
realities of cultural heritage dances are embodied, rationalised and deconstructed. Through
pedagogies, the dance teachers claim agency in rationalising dance skills and knowledge
as thinkers, knowers, doers, and collaborators.

The dance teachers prepare for the dance classes as part of pedagogic
rationalisation. This preparation includes acquiring information about the dances, selecting
the dance material to be taught, acquiring knowledge about the learners and teaching and
learning environment, and designing teaching strategies that are suitable for the learners.
The preparation for the dance classes acts as a thought process through which the dance
teachers reflect on the subject matter, the learners and environments of pedagogic practice.

The pedagogic rationalisation also covers activities that dance teachers use to
practically orient the learners into dance norms. These activities include cultural games,
singing and drumming, and structured movement routines. The activities act as warm-ups
and ground the learners in the corporeal, musical, social, cultural, and reflective structures
of cultural heritage dances. The warm-up activities gradually draw the learners from the
periphery to the centre of learning and teaching experiences.

Furthermore, the inquiry unveiled the pedagogic techniques that the dance teachers
use to teach cultural heritage dances. The pedagogic techniques include: 1) storytelling,
which the dance teachers use to deconstruct the stories and meanings of the dances; 2)
practical demonstration, which the dance teachers apply to make the movements and drum
rhythms of the dances comprehensible; 3) verbal explanation, which the dance teachers use
to illuminate the detailed information about the dances; 4) repetition of the dance
movements, songs, and drum rhythms, which the dance teachers use to deepen their kinesthetic patterns; and 5) imagery which the dance teachers apply to ignite reflective thoughts about the quality and structure of dance movements. Each individual dance teacher applies a combination of these different techniques in a distinct way, depending on their identities, objectives and the nature of the learners, the dances, and the teaching and learning environment. These techniques place the dance teachers as individuals (I am) at the center of the communities of dance learners and practice (we are). The ways in which the dance teachers rationalise pedagogy situate the learners in teaching and learning processes as knowers, doers, thinkers, collaborators and constructivists. Each method challenges the dance teachers and learners to reflect on, embody, de/construct, and expand their epistemological imaginations and kinesthetic abilities. This pedagogic rationalisation deconstructs the dances as historicised, kinesthetic, conceptual, personalised, and philosophical narratives and constellations of complex dance knowledge and experiences.

The data showed that the pedagogies used by the dance teachers also double as systems of thought and inquiry, means of creating and expression, methods of cultural practices, and frameworks of transformance. Pedagogy acts as a bridge that links individuals, communities, dance traditions, experiences, and the varied environments in which these pedagogies are applied. Through pedagogy, the learners make contact with content knowledge of the dances. From a social constructivist viewpoint, pedagogy allows for interface between the agents (teachers and learners), action (teaching and learning), experience, and environments of teaching and learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

While carrying out this study, I noticed the complex ways through which learners negotiate learning experiences in each of the aforementioned pedagogic techniques. Since
this study did not cover the learners as a population of inquiry, future studies could be conducted on this topic based on the following questions:

- How do the dance learners rationalise dance knowledge through the different pedagogic techniques of dances in African communities?
- How do the techniques that cultural heritage dance teachers use facilitate the relationships between these teachers and learners in communities in Africa?
- In what ways do the learners construct identities by engaging in teaching and learning processes of cultural heritage dances in communities in Africa?
- What kind of interests, motivations, and expectations do the learners bring to the teaching and learning processes of dances in communities in Africa?

8.8. Deconstructing assessment and feedback methods as pedagogy

Assessment and feedback emerged as one of the mechanisms that dance teachers use to rationalise pedagogy. Assessment and feedback are conducted through reflective observation of learners, verbal comments and questions geared towards supporting the learners to learn, peer monitoring focusing on cultivating constructive interventional support between learners, and practical demonstration of dance movements and music aimed at illuminating the complex subject matter of the dances and music. Each dance teacher applies assessment and feedback depending on the needs of learners, the nature of the dance taught, and the state of the environment in which teaching and learning is conducted. The assessment criteria used by the dance teachers are qualitative, not quantitative. The teachers do not give grades to students. Instead, they use qualitative remarks, comments, questions, and conversations to encourage learners to participate in
dance activities, give corrective ideas, and provide detailed information for learners to gain multiple perspectives about the pedagogy and content knowledge of the dances.

The assessment and feedback place both the teachers and learners at the center of pedagogic processes. They encourage individual explorations and group innovation and interactivity. Teaching and learning are centered on dance knowledge and the learning experiences of the learners. Both assessment and feedback allow the teachers and learners to engage in teaching and learning as a process of thought and inquiry, means of collaborating and embodiment, framework of connection to the dance experience and community of practices, and method of unveiling deeper insights surrounding dance as an epistemological domain. This counters notions that have characterised African dance practices as activities devoid of inherent intellectual foundations (see Section 1.3).

During fieldwork activities, I realised how assessment and feedback provision bring the teachers and learners closer to one another, immerse them in the dance material, cultivate individual and community experiences, and situate them in the environments of teaching. I suggest that specific studies be carried out on this topic to examine how assessment mechanisms and feedback aid learning of the dances. The following question could guide such inquiries:

- How do the different assessment and feedback methods used by the dance teachers enhance or inhibit learners’ acquisition of cultural heritage dance skills and knowledge and cultivation of learning experiences?

8.9. Deconstructing music as a pedagogic aid of cultural heritage dances

The centrality of music – drum rhythms, songs, and other forms of vocal sound – as a teaching and learning aid was a key finding in the study. The data revealed that music is
not just an accompaniment for cultural heritage dances, but rather a central instrument that facilitates pedagogy. As a pedagogic tool, it makes the dance movements intelligible, providing the dance teachers with multiple ways of ushering the learners into dance skills and knowledge. Music grounds the learner into the way energy, musicality, and physical and emotional expression are embodied and rationalised as intrinsic qualities of dance.

The teachers use music as a pedagogic tool to allow learners to reflect on dances from the perspective of their audio properties and construct ideas and ways to deepen their understanding of the dances. The learners listen, process, and externalise their musical and rhythmic interpretations through corporeal actions. The guiding principle for the use of music as a pedagogic aid is: Use your ears to listen, your hands to play drums, your mind to think and process, and your body to move. Music provides a space of reflection, process of rationalisation, and possibilities for embodiment of the dances.

Although I covered music as a pedagogic aid in this study, I did not examine how music expands the abilities of learners to learn the dances. The following questions could provide the basis upon which future research engages with topics related to music and learning of cultural heritage dances in African communities from the learners’ perspective:

- How do the learners use music to expand their understanding of the knowledge and skills of cultural heritage dances?
- How does music frame the meanings of the content knowledge of cultural heritage dances if analysed from the pedagogic perspective?

8.10. Deconstructing the embodied teaching of diverse cultural heritage dances

The research findings show that central Uganda is endowed with diverse cultural heritage dances whose practices have permeated different environments that are ethnically and
culturally diverse. Through pedagogy, the dance teachers reconcile these diversities of dance traditions in environments such as religious communities, orphanages, schools, youth centres, and dance troupes. Pedagogy sits between the following diversities: 1) the diversity of dances; 2) the diversity of learners; and 3) the diversity of teaching and learning environments. Thus, pedagogic rationalisation acts as a space for adaptation, negotiation, and deconstruction of the ethnically diverse cultural dances in their second existence.

Looked at from a learning and teaching perspective of diverse cultures, pedagogy provides: 1) a framework through which the dance teachers and learners think about the complexity of the dances and inquire into their meaning of being; 2) a mechanism in which the dance teachers and learner engage new cultural practices; 3) a means through which the dance teachers and learners explore the embodiment and deconstruction of the ethnically diverse cultural heritage dances in their second existence; and 4) a process through which the dance teachers and learners seek to transform as citizens who embrace different cultures.

In the process of negotiating their places within complex cultural dance experiences, the dance teachers encounter acculturative stresses. These stresses stem from the anxiety of shifting from cultural ethnocentrism to cultural relativism. Some dance teachers expressed their inability to teach dances from other cultures as a trigger for acculturative stress. These reflections revealed the dilemmas of teaching and learning complex cultural dance in central Uganda. The dance teachers reported using ‘knowledgeable natives’ who possess extensive knowledge and skills of the cultural dances as teaching exemplars. Other teachers indicated they use audio-visual recordings of cultural dances in their practice to teach these dances in a way that addresses issues relating to representation, appropriation, and approximation of the dances in teaching and learning processes. The research data showed that addressing complex cultural experiences through
pedagogy is complex. As key mediators between diverse learners, diverse dance traditions and diverse environments of practice, teaching and learning of diverse dances positions the dance teachers as thinkers, knowers, doers, and collaborators in pedagogic practices.

Carrying out this study revealed how pedagogy plays a key role in facilitating cultural re/productions of dances outside their original cultures of origin. I suggest that studies could be conducted on this theme underpinned by the following questions:

- How does pedagogy act as space through which communities appropriate, negotiate, and adapt the ethnically diverse cultural heritage dances?
- How does pedagogy reframe the ontologies and epistemologies of the ethnic dances when they are taught and learnt in environment outside their cultures of origin?
- What are the pedagogical impediments of teaching the ethnically diverse dances in their second existence, and how can these constraints be addressed?
- In what way are the pedagogies that the dance teachers use a response to or/and reflection of the changing cultural dynamic in local communities?
- How do the pedagogies of the ethnically diverse dances re/construct learners’ identities to embrace the complex cultural realities in central Uganda?

These questions warrant further investigations into the subject of pedagogy to unveil how dance acts as an embodied, reflective, reflexive, contextualised, and rationalised space of thought and knowledge domain.

8.11. Recommendations and implications

This research comes at a time when there is intensity in the flow of ideas and people between demographic spectrums and geographic spaces. Different dance forms are part of this new reality. The knowledge and skills that the dances offer is key in mediating and
animating the prevailing cultural, social, and civilizational realities and conditions. As an internative dance researcher and scholar (Section 4.2), I am a living embodiment of these experiences: I have lived in and worked with communities in Uganda with people of different ethnic background, studied with students from diverse racial, national, gender, and social backgrounds in the U.S and New Zealand, learned dances from diverse civilizational traditions in Europe, the U.S, New Zealand, and Uganda, and taught classes and workshops for ethnically diverse cultural heritage dances to varied populations in academic and nonacademic environments in the U.S, Australia, the Caribbean, Europe, Uganda, and New Zealand. Through these experiences spanning local and global encounters, I have noted how dances from African communities are still devalued as activities not worth academic attention and critical examination (see Section 1.3). The following recommendations discuss how the findings of this inquiry can expand perspectives on teaching and pedagogy, research, policy theory, and practice.

8.11.1. Teaching and pedagogy

The study provides the following philosophical and pedagogic frameworks that can be integrated into dance education curricula in formal, informal, and semiformal learning and teaching environments:

- Reciprocal interplay between individuality and communality in teaching and learning, which is founded on appreciation of the individual experience in building communities and changing human condition.
- Emphasis on agency of teachers and learners as knowers, constructivists, thinkers, doers, collaborators, and inquirers.
• Focus on diversity of dance traditions, complexity of learners and variances in the teaching and learning environments as a source of knowledge.

• Consideration of dances as domains of epistemological, historical, contextual and ontological knowledge that reflects the place, action, people, and the experiences.

• Acknowledgement of music as an integral part of dance and the role it plays in aiding teaching and learning of dance.

• Recognition of the dynamic contexts in which the dances are taught and learned and how these dynamics impact the content and pedagogy of the dances and the experiences that the students cultivate.

• Celebration of the ability of individuals to draw from their experiences, histories, and environments of learning to construct complex meanings and realities.

• Leveraging storytelling as a teaching and learning stimulus of dances.

• Acknowledgement of qualitative ways of living as opposed to excessive quantification of human experience.

• Ability artistic evolution by embracing new ideas while at the same time remaining true to the tenets of the environments of application.

• Leveraging the interrelationships between different epistemological domains such as music, drumming, history, storytelling, children games.

• Emphasis of co-existence and acceptance, not just inclusion and diversification.

The dance teachers and curriculum developers can use the abovementioned foundations to engage pedagogy as systems of thought and inquiry, methods of creating and expression, means of transformance, and frameworks of cultural production and practice. These pedagogies can inspire learners to reflect on learning processes and advance their rational, cultural, social, musical, embodied, experiential, and reflective abilities.
8.11.2. Research

The thesis also offers insights that can inform the field of dance research. Research on African dance pedagogies in East and Central African communities is still skeletal. This inquiry provides a snapshot into the wide range of pedagogy as an epistemological domain in dance practices in African communities. Most importantly, the inquiry reveals how these pedagogies are complex, and are informed by thought, theory, and practice. The thesis provides ideas that can expand discourses on how research techniques, methodologies, and analyses of African dances can be pursued. Whereas research on dances in African communities has generally tilted towards choreography, ethnochoreology and anthropology, this study decenters the education and pedagogy as key knowledge domains on which critical inquiries can be made to generate knowledge of the dance traditions, the dance phenomena, and the people and communities who participate in the dance practices.

8.11.3. Practice

The findings of this study offer a wealth of insights beneficial to the field of dance practice. Although the main inquiry of this study focused on dance pedagogy, the ideas generated can be integrated into areas such as choreography, performance, and community dance. The pedagogic models offer transferable ideas such as musicality, collective creativity, using traditions as a creative re/source, offering support that focuses on building healthy communities, use of storytelling as a teaching aid, among other, which can be beneficial to choreographic processes, community dance activities, and performance.
8.11.4. Theory

The theory of pedagogies of African dances is still inadequate in academia. This absence of theory is part of broader notions that have conceptualised dance, as a knowledge domain where the Cartesian body-mind split is preeminent (Pakes, 2006). African dances have suffered this characterisation (see Section 1.3). The findings of this study break new ground in the theory on pedagogy of African dances. The analyses frame pedagogies of dances as a process, phenomena, and epistemological domain that weave people, environments, practices, and experiences. The thesis theorises the pedagogic realities of dance teachers as space where they de/construct and rationalise knowledge as thinkers, doers, knowers, and collaborators. The thesis offers theoretical and critical insights into pedagogies of African dances as systems of thought and inquiry, means of creating and expression, mechanisms of cultural production and practice, and frameworks of transformance.

8.11.5. Policy

The analyses provide possibilities for the transferability of ideas illuminated in this thesis into policy in arts education in formal, semi-formal and informal settings. The myriad of ideas articulated in this thesis drew on the pedagogic practices of dance teachers in complex local environments in central Uganda. Both governmental and non-governmental entities can integrate these ideas into their policy frameworks to leverage the power of dance in changing human condition and empowering communities. This is more so since these ideas accord individuals agency, diversify their thought, and immerse them in new ways of embodying, adapting, reflecting on, and thinking about diverse cultural realities as knowers, constructivists, thinkers, explorers, collaborators, and doers.
8.12. Deconstructing the research(er’s) journey: An internative’s wrap up

This thesis is a response to the notions that have tended to characterise dances from African communities as just corporeal activities without underlying intellectual foundations. In this study, I engaged the dance teachers in central Uganda as bearers of pedagogical knowledge and experiences to reveal empirical evidence about the intellectual manifestations of cultural heritage dance education practices. This thesis has examined the complexity of pedagogy as an epistemological domain in these dance practices to reveal how it acts as a system of thought and inquiry, mechanism of creation and expression, framework of cultural production and practice, and method of transformance. Anchored in the reciprocity between individuality and communality, the pedagogies mediate between the diverse dance traditions, complex populations of learners, and varied environments of teaching and learning. Moreover, the pedagogies position the learners at the intersection of teaching and learning and enable the dance teachers to claim agency in the pedagogic processes as thinkers, doers, knowers, and collaborators. As a thought and embodied process, pedagogy is theorised as a “mental activity, [which] depends essentially not just on the brain but on the body as well” (Legrand, Grunbaum & Krueger, 2009, p.279). In African dances, this has been an ever-changing reality for generations – an actuality that warrants well-deserved intellectual scrutiny. In the words of Chinua Achebe (2012):

The reality of today, different as it is from the reality of my society one hundred years ago, is and can be important if we have the energy and the inclination to challenge it, to go out and engage with its peculiarities, with the things that we do not understand. The real danger is the tendency to retreat into the obvious, the tendency to be frightened by the richness of the world and to clutch what we always have understood. (cited in Edeh, 2015, p.62)
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