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***Finding common ground:***  
**Dance studio teachers' responses to cultural  
difference within rural towns in Aotearoa**

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Dance Studies, the University  
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## **Abstract**

This thesis reports an investigation of cultural inclusion and social integration in dance studio contexts within rural towns in Aotearoa. Focussing on dance studio teachers' perspectives and reflections, the key question driving this research is: How are dance studio teachers responding to cultural difference within their dance studio classes in rural towns in Aotearoa? In the 21st century, amidst growing tensions caused by Eurocentrism, Whiteness and discrimination, dance teachers are increasingly expected to function as agents of social integration for young people. In rural locations, dance teachers are significant to their communities, as they are central to young people's feelings of inclusion and social integration through participation in dance.

Within a post-positivist, qualitative ethnographic paradigm, semi-structured interviews were used to investigate seven dance teachers' responses to cultural difference in their dance studio teaching practices. Following thematic analysis, four key findings emerged from the interview data. The first theme explores how the dance studio teachers may consider inclusion and socialisation relevant to dance studio classes. The second theme investigates how dance studio classes may be considered relevant to cultural difference by the dance teachers. The third theme discusses how the dance teachers may maintain an ethnocentric bias within their dance studio classes through denying, denigrating and minimising cultural difference. The final theme explores the ways the dance studio teachers may aspire to allow space for ethnorelative practices to emerge within the dance classes through accepting cultural difference, attempting to understand and adapt to cultural difference, and aspiring to integrate different worldviews.

This research provides a critical reflection on the ways dance studio teachers recognise, reflect on and respond to cultural difference within their dance studio classes, particularly in the context of rural towns in Aotearoa. This study reveals the complexity of multiculturalism within dance studio classes and contributes to existing discourse and dialogue surrounding issues of inclusion and exclusion within dance education.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

*While visiting a rural town during my field work, I was sitting with four teenagers in a small room where they had just been rehearsing a dance. We sat together on the floor as they had agreed to speak with me about their experiences of living and participating in dance in a rural town. I asked them if they did any dance classes outside of school. One of the girls, Mele, replied suggesting that there are dance studios in the town but that “it’s not really an option” for them. The others nodded in agreement. I was puzzled, as I knew there were many dance studios offering lots of different dance styles. Mele explained, “Because for the parents, it’s not really a suitable career path – and the studios are all mostly white. I guess the Islanders here, we kind of just stick with each other.” I continued listening as one of the other girls, Talia, added, “Yeah, let’s be honest. I’ve always wanted to be part of like a dance group, but they are all low-key here.” This made me think about the dance being offered in the rural town, and I questioned why the teenagers thought the classes weren’t an option or were ‘low-key’. It made me wonder how these ‘white’ dance studios might actually be exclusive of some young people. I was intrigued and asked them what they thought about cultural diversity in the rural town. One of the boys, Fetu, hesitant to share, sat up and said, “I don’t think we celebrate cultural diversity that much here in this town, like you can tell there’s heaps of different nationalities, but we don’t do much about it.” Mele picked up on Fetu’s point and said, “Yeah thinking about like our Pasifika group, we tend to keep our celebrations to ourselves, we don’t do much to involve other people in the town.” Talia nodded and added, “There’s this sense of feeling like, our culture’s not welcome.”*

This narrative has stuck with me throughout my research process. For me, it highlights a problem within rural towns in Aotearoa<sup>1</sup>, and the dance studio classes being provided within these towns. Growing up in a rural town myself, participation in dance studio classes had a big impact on how I belonged and participated within the rural community. I began learning jazz dance at the age of seven years old, where I would train for technical examinations in the middle of the year, followed by a dance production at the end of the year. By the age of fourteen I was learning hip hop and salsa while training to be a leader and teacher of dance. It was here that I nurtured my passion for dance education, built life-long friendships, increased my self-confidence, and felt like a significant part of my community. I continued to nurture my love of teaching dance by pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Dance Studies at the University of Auckland. My tertiary studies affirmed that dance education is an area that I hope to keep exploring through education and research.

I was motivated to carry out this doctoral study as I perceive the research as a way to give back to my community – through exploring and generating new knowledge which could support dance teachers and young people in my hometown, as well as those in similar rural towns throughout Aotearoa. For myself, as a dance educator and researcher, knowing the potential of dance to build inclusive and integrated communities, I was motivated to investigate how dance studio teachers might be responding to cultural difference in rural towns, particularly as cultural diversity has been growing throughout Aotearoa. However, as cultural diversity increases throughout Aotearoa it seems both issues and opportunities are emerging – issues of discrimination and assimilation, alongside opportunities for multiculturalism and integration.

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<sup>1</sup> Aotearoa is the Māori name for New Zealand

Migration is largely contributing to the growth of multicultural communities in Aotearoa, with migrant arrivals to Aotearoa recorded at 149,200 in the year ending April 2019, and net migration more than three times that of the United States of America and United Kingdom (Statistics New Zealand, 2019). In 2019, the net migration rate for Aotearoa was 11.4 per 1,000 people, compared to 3 per 1000 people in the United States (Statistics New Zealand, 2019). This migration is presenting diverse responses to cultural difference from both migrants and local residents in rural towns. For example, people in minority cultural groups are seeking inclusion within predominantly European rural communities, while host communities may seek to include and/or exclude migrating people.

In considering various responses to cultural difference globally, anti-immigration and xenophobic remarks from the likes of Donald Trump, Theresa May and Boris Johnson are brought to the forefront of discourse, and criticised for the discrimination and exclusive perspectives they express (De Waal, 2019; Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2018; Huber, 2016; Pitcher, 2019). These approaches contrast political leaders who have led strong immigration policies of social integration and inclusion that support cultural diversity. The likes of Germany's Angela Merkel, Norway's Erna Solberg, and Aotearoa's Jacinda Arden advocate for equity and social justice in their communities (Cardiello, 2019; Dostal, 2019; Greenbank, 2019; The Local, 2019; RNZ, 2018; Stensrud, 2018). Yet, I question how people like Trump and Johnson who hold such exclusive views stand in power, and how so many citizens have contributed to their positions of power. While these exclusive perspectives are shared in the United States of America and United Kingdom, there is no doubt they also exist in Aotearoa. For instance, a terrorist shooting in Christchurch in March 2019, which resulted in 51 people being killed while at prayer in two mosques, sparked conversations around the existence of white supremacy and racism in Aotearoa (Battersby & Ball, 2019; Besley & Peters, 2019; New Zealand Herald, 2019a, 2019b). Growing up pākeha<sup>2</sup> in a rural town I recall my own naivety as a teenager about how I 'hung out with the Maori's', or blindness around how 'white' my hometown was. I remember people's comments around avoiding local stores because that was where the 'darkies' were. These Eurocentric and hegemonic perspectives are very much present throughout rural communities in Aotearoa, and therefore this research provides a critical examination of people's responses to cultural difference.

In particular, this research investigates dance studio teachers' responses to cultural difference within their dance studio classes in rural towns in Aotearoa. In the twenty-first century, amidst these growing tensions of Eurocentrism, whiteness and discrimination, dance teachers are increasingly expected to function as agents of social integration for young people, such as those in the narrative shared above. Dance studio teachers in rural locations are significant to their communities as they are central to young people's feelings of inclusion and social integration through participation in activities such as dance. This research provides a critical reflection on the ways dance studio teachers recognise, reflect and respond to cultural difference within their dance studio classes, particularly within a rural context in Aotearoa. This study reveals the complexities of multiculturalism within dance studio

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<sup>2</sup> Pākeha is the Māori term for a New Zealander of European descent

classes in order to contribute to existing discourse and dialogue surrounding issues of inclusion and exclusion within dance studio education.

### **1.1 Research question**

This thesis investigates issues around cultural inclusion and social integration in dance studio contexts. Focussing on the perspectives and reflections of seven dance studio teachers, the key question guiding this research is:

*How are dance studio teachers responding to cultural difference within their dance studio classes in rural towns in Aotearoa?*

The dance studio teachers' responses to cultural difference may be understood through their perspectives, reflections and actions within their teaching practices situated in the context of their dance studio classes. Within the research, I aim to understand and develop meanings for these responses to cultural difference, and how they may contribute to the inclusion, exclusion and social integration of young people in rural towns. Alongside the main research question, the following sub-questions have been formulated to help guide and develop the research process. The sub-questions are:

- 1) *How might dance studio teachers value inclusion and social integration within their dance studio classes?*

Valuing inclusion and socialisation may be expressed as aspirations to build an inclusive and integrated environment, help students find senses of belonging and social connectedness, and provide equal opportunities equally to diverse students. Valuing inclusion and socialisation could also be evidenced through the dance studio teachers' pedagogical practice, the content offered, and the ways they interact with their students. Exploring these values will establish the dance studio teachers' perspectives prior to unpacking their responses towards cultural difference.

- 2) *How do dance studio teachers perceive and understand cultural difference?*

The rationale for this sub-question is to unpack the various ways the dance studio teachers perceive and understand cultural difference within their dance studio classes and teaching practice. Gaining an understanding of what culture means to the dance studio teachers and how they recognise it within their classes and the wider context of their rural towns will assist in constructing meanings from their narratives. This is important as each dance studio teacher may hold different meanings of culture and cultural difference, and this in turn may affect the ways they respond to cultural difference.

- 3) *How might dance studio teachers' responses reflect ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism within their dance studio classes?*

This question stems from the key curiosity around the dance studio teachers' responses to cultural difference and draws on a theoretical framework to understand various intercultural sensitivities the dance studio teachers may hold. Focussing on paradigms around ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, Milton Bennett's (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity provides a framework to guide the research process. The dance studio teachers' narratives could potentially illustrate their ethnocentrism and/or ethnorelativism, as shown in their perspectives, reflections, and practices in a rural dance studio context.

## **1.2 Rationale and significance**

A key contribution of this research lies with the emerging meanings and understandings for the field of dance education. The study provides new insights and knowledge of dance studio teachers' experiences within dance studio classes. In particular, it provides a viewpoint from rural towns in Aotearoa that captures distinct social structures and engagement with cultural difference. The ideas developed through this study, while not generalisable, may in some ways be transferable to other rural communities and wider societies experiencing cultural difference, multiculturalism and migration. It may provide new meanings and ideas for educators responding to and accommodating cultural difference within learning environments. This research is an opportunity to explore and reflect upon dance studio education, and this reflection I believe is significant to fostering inclusion and social integration in our communities within Aotearoa, and globally.

Secondly, this research project has significance for rural communities throughout Aotearoa. Having myself grown up in a rural town and experienced dance studio classes, and subsequently facilitated and taught dance classes, I am eager to continue supporting Aotearoa communities and the young people growing up in a similar environment. As cultural diversity increases in rural towns throughout Aotearoa, I am interested in how local dance studios are acknowledging their role as agents of social integration and supporting the inclusion and integration of young culturally diverse students. I feel significant new understandings and meanings may be developed through this study, which could create opportunities for supporting young people within rural communities.

I further believe the research could prove significant to the dance studio teachers interviewed in this research. The study may provide insights and an opportunity to reflect on the ways they are engaging with and responding to the migration of youth. The findings may also present ideas and recommendations to enhance inclusive and integrative practices within dance studio classes. These ideas may inform the ways dance studio teachers engage with cultural difference in their rural towns, and wider communities.

The significance of the research can also be extended to dance education institutes and organisations, such as those who train dance teachers and/or provide dance education syllabus. The ideas presented throughout this thesis may contribute to what and how dance is taught in dance studio contexts, highlighting the significance of dance teachers' knowledge and training. The findings

may provide insight into issues emerging around dance studio education, and prompt consideration of how dance studio education may or may not be contributing to inclusion and exclusion.

The research may also be significant to key stakeholders within the arts and culture sector, such as local district councils within rural towns. While arts and culture are often acknowledged by councils, the ideas developed in this research may assist in identifying ways local governance can provide support to dance educators in communities. Thus as well as providing insights relevant to dance studio education and social integration, the research findings may inform the policies and practices of governmental agencies and community organisations.

Lastly, this research may also contribute to existing literature as the study builds on current literature within fields such as cultural inclusion and dance education (see the literature review in Chapter Two). The research I carry out may fill a gap within these fields of literature, and could provide greater understanding and new knowledge to add to that established by prior research. This may be useful to researchers, educators and tertiary students who are working in similar areas. I therefore hope the ideas, issues and recommendations raised in this thesis are transferable, with the potential to inform, support, and extend discourse and practice within communities in Aotearoa and globally.

### **1.3 Key terms**

This section of the introduction chapter outlines the key terms in my main research question and used throughout the thesis. As words and phrases can be understood in various ways, I hope to clarify how I perceive and understand the terms in relation to this study and the research context. The key terms I will be unpacking in this section are *dance studio classes*, *dance studio teachers*, *cultural difference*, *rural towns*, and *Aotearoa*.

#### **1.3.1 Dance studio classes**

In the context of this research, the term *dance studio classes* refers to the place in which the teaching, learning and sharing of dance takes place. Dance studio classes are described in various ways in literature, including as informal, private, institutional, conservatoire, recreational and afterschool dance classes or education (Cohen, 2002; Green, 2003; Kerr-Berry, 2012; Stinson, Blumenfield-Jones, & van Dyke, 1990; Werbrouck, 2004). Generally, dance studio classes differ from dance education which occurs within a formal school context. Dance studio classes are offered through a privately or independently sustained dance studio, which often operates as a business. Dance studio classes can be viewed as contributing to assimilation within a colonial context, and often maintain a Eurocentric focus on the development of dance technique and performance for exams, competitions and performances (Dei & Simmons, 2010; McCarthy-Brown, 2018; Posey, 2002). Alternatively, some dance studio classes may also incorporate dance activities that focus on creativity and self-expression (Koff, 2000). Forms of dance which are predominantly taught in dance classes stem from a Western influence and include ballet, contemporary, jazz and tap (Kerr-Berry, 2012; Posey, 2002;

Risner & Stinson, 2010). Within the context of this study, the term 'Western' will be understood as ideas and practices situated or originating from Western areas such as the United States, Western Europe and Australasia. The term 'Eurocentric' will be understood as the ways Western culture and practice is often focussed on and held superior to the culture and practices of oppressed groups (McCarthy-Brown, 2018; Zamudio, Russell, Rios & Bridgeman, 2011). For the purposes of this study, dance education within a dance studio class will be understood to include both technique and creative dance activities. This term may also appear as *dance classes* or *classes* throughout the thesis in the interests of writing flow and brevity.

### **1.3.2 Dance studio teachers**

In the context of this study, the term *dance studio teachers* refers to individuals who teach within *dance studio classes* (as discussed above). In addition to teaching, dance studio teachers may hold numerous roles such as studio owner or manager (Cohen, 2002). Dance studio teachers do not necessarily require formal dance education qualifications, and may start up their own dance studio, or be employed within one or more dance studios. All the interviewees participating in this research were dance studio teachers. This term may also appear as *dance teacher* or *teacher* through the thesis for writing flow and brevity.

### **1.3.3 Cultural difference**

In order to understand the key term *cultural difference*, I will firstly discuss *culture*. In this study, *culture* is understood not only as ethnicity or race, but also as a "dynamic system of values, beliefs, and behaviours that influence how people experience and respond to the world around them" (Guo & Jamal, 2007, p. 29). While groups of people with similar cultures share commonalities in values, beliefs and behaviours, they are rarely homogenous and cannot be viewed as fixed based on race or ethnicity (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004; Guo & Jamal, 2007). Culture is therefore understood as dynamic and in flux as it can be socially constructed and is constantly shifting (Hall, 2006; O'Shea, 2006).

*Cultural difference* refers to the ways people may recognise and engage with differences and similarities in culture, both within their own cultural group and with other cultural groups. Within this research I seek to move beyond fixed labels and categories of similarity and difference which may emerge within understandings of cultural diversity (Bhabha, 1994). Labels and categories are often used to locate people and their differences, but give rise to notions of 'othering' (Anttila, Martin, & Svendler Nielsen, 2019). In the context of this study, the non-dominant cultural groups in the rural towns may be identified as the marginalised 'other'. Bhabha (1990) explains "the 'other' is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously 'between ourselves'" (p.4). Drawing of concepts of other, Meredith (1998) explains it is the "indeterminate spaces in-between subject-positions that are lauded as the locale of the disruption and displacement of hegemonic colonial narratives of cultural structures and practices"

(p.2). Thus, cultural difference may recognise culture as hybrid, demanding “an encounter with ‘newness’ that is not part of the continuum of past and present” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 7).

#### **1.3.4 Rural towns**

The term *rural towns* describes the locations in Aotearoa in which the dance studio classes are taking place, and which provide the context for this study. The term *rural towns* may be understood as part of the urban-rural dichotomy, a binary where “past constructions of ‘the rural’ have tended to be in opposition to ‘the urban’” (Nairn, Panelli, & McCormack, 2003, p. 11). However, understandings of rural towns are shifting beyond the binary to acknowledge they are not rigid, but rather “diverse and dynamic, with varying prosperity and demography” (Pomeroy & Newell, 2011, p. 3). This study aligns with this understanding of the rural context as centred, rather than holding a binary perspective (Corbett & White, 2014).

Rural towns in Aotearoa are commonly perceived as having key characteristics such as a small population, isolation from larger cities, a strong farming and agricultural economy, and are predominately European (Cloke, 2006; Forrest & Dunn, 2013; Ministry for Primary Industries, 2019). Statistics New Zealand offers a classification of urban and rural areas in Aotearoa based not only on their population, but also social and economic characteristics (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). In addition to these characteristics, and most relevant to my study, rural towns can also be understood as homogeneous in nature, and are often “perceived as ‘white’ landscapes where cultural diversity and even ethnicity is rarely ‘seen’” (Forrest & Dunn, 2013, p. 1). Within rural towns, cultural diversity can be perceived as not existing, or it is ignored, and minority non-dominant cultural groups are highly visible (Agyeman & Spooner, 1997; Cresswell, 1996; Vergunst, 2009). Where people of non-European ethnicities are present in rural towns, they are often a minority group, spatially distributed, and subject to discrimination (De Lima, 2001; Forrest & Dunn, 2013; Vergunst, 2009). This raises issues around inclusion and exclusion, which I unpack further when discussing multiculturalism in Section 2.1.1. In this thesis, the term *rural town* refers both to the geographic locality and characteristics of the towns where the interviewees were teaching dance studio classes.

#### **1.3.5 Aotearoa**

*Aotearoa* is the Māori name for New Zealand and provides the wider context for this research. I have chosen to use the term *Aotearoa* as an acknowledgement to the cultural context and history of the country. I have neither the ability nor knowledge to engage fully in Te Reo Māori<sup>3</sup>, however it is important to use Māori terms and understandings in Western scholarship (Mahuika, 2015; Smith, 1997). The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document for Aotearoa and was signed in 1840 by the representatives of the indigenous Māori people and British colonial settlers (Chile, 2006). The signing of this document signified the establishment of a bicultural society in which the two groups would equally found the nation state and build a government (Orange, 1990). However, the Treaty of

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<sup>3</sup> Te Reo Māori is the Māori language

Waitangi agreement was not honoured by the settlers, contributing to the oppression and ongoing marginalisation of Māori people and culture (Orange, 1990; Smith, 1997). More recently, the demographics of Aotearoa have become increasingly diverse as a result of immigration (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012; Statistics New Zealand, 2018). It is important to note that in this thesis, the concepts of cultural difference are discussed within the bicultural and multicultural context of Aotearoa.

#### **1.4 Overview of thesis**

This overview aims to provide a summary of each chapter as a guide to the structure of this thesis. Chapter One introduces this doctoral study, the main research question driving the study and three sub-questions, the significance and rationale for this study, and some definitions of the key terms used throughout the thesis.

Chapter Two presents the literature review undertaken for this research. In this chapter, key literature surrounding arguments and theories related to cultural inclusion, dance education, and dance studio teachers' roles within dance studio classes in Aotearoa is explored. Concepts and theories around multiculturalism and multicultural education are discussed, followed by acculturation to provide some focus to the integration and assimilation paradigms. Next, intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity are unpacked. The chapter then moves on to investigate dance education and pedagogy within dance studio contexts in Aotearoa and globally. Here, critical discussions are presented around what and how dance is being taught in a dance studio context, particularly in relation to the influence of mainstream media and dominant Eurocentric practices. The final section of the literature review explores cultural inclusion within dance studio classes, firstly discussing concepts around sense of belonging and social connectedness. Social integration and dance studio teachers' roles as agents of social integration are then explored, followed by a discussion of culturally responsive dance pedagogy.

Chapter Three outlines the research methods used in this study. The research aims and theory are discussed and rationalised. The primary research method of ethnography is described, followed by a discussion of the research design comprising the literature review and semi-structured interviews as the modes of data collection, and a review of the process for analysis. My position as researcher is then analysed, and the ethical issues, limitations and challenges discussed.

Chapters four, five, six and seven form the discussion chapters and present the results, analysis and discussion of the research process. I begin each of these chapters with a reflective narrative based on my own personal experience to open the discussion of each particular theme. It is important to note that these narratives are provided to paint a picture for the reader about each chapter's theme, rather than serving as data that has been analysed.

Chapter Four explores how the dance studio teachers consider inclusion and socialisation in relation to dance studio classes. Here, narratives are presented that illustrate the dance teachers' attitudes

towards inclusion and socialisation, and the ways they might recognise dance studio classes as a place for students to feel included and socially connected to others. The ways the dance teachers recognise difference, seek to welcome students, and foster a sense of belonging are also discussed. The dance studio teachers' attitudes towards social connectedness are then explored in relation to fostering social bonds and social bridges for young people participating in dance studio classes.

Chapter Five then extends the results, analysis and discussion to investigate how dance studio classes might be considered relevant to cultural difference by the dance studio teachers. This chapter first unpacks the meanings of culture within a dance studio context for the seven dance studio teachers. The ways in which the dance studio teachers hold attitudes of openness towards cultural difference and understanding cultural difference, respectively, are then discussed.

Continuing with results, analysis and discussion, Chapter Six discusses how the dance studio teachers might maintain an ethnocentric bias within their dance studio classes. Drawing on concepts of ethnocentrism, this chapter investigates how the dance teachers may express exclusion through ethnocentric bias, despite their aspirations to foster inclusion and social integration. Throughout this chapter, the narratives are analysed and discussed in relation to the ways the dance studio teachers may variously express that there is no cultural difference within their dance studio classes, denigrate cultural difference by perceiving it as not important, and minimise and diminish cultural difference within their dance classes.

Chapter Seven, the final discussion chapter, explores the ways the dance studio teachers may allow space for ethnorelative practices to emerge within their dance studio classes. This chapter builds on the ideas shared in the previous discussion chapters, and further investigates how some of the dance studio teachers hold aspirations for ethnorelative practices within their dance studio classes that may foster inclusion and social integration. This is discussed in terms of the ways the dance studio teachers express their recognition and acceptance of cultural difference, how they attempt to adapt their teaching practices through understanding cultural difference, and how they may aspire to integrate different worldviews and build relationships within dance studio classes.

Lastly, Chapter Eight presents the conclusions of this thesis. An overview is provided, and the key findings of the research reiterated. Relevant recommendations are then made for dance educators, educational institutions and governance bodies to consider. Finally, directions for future research and concluding thoughts are presented.

## **Chapter 2: Literature review**

This chapter explores key literature surrounding arguments and theories relating to cultural inclusion, dance education and dance studio teachers' roles within dance studio classes in Aotearoa. The review seeks to explore literature relevant to the research question: How are dance studio teachers responding to cultural difference within rural dance studio classes in Aotearoa?

The first section of the chapter examines key theories and concepts surrounding cultural inclusion. First, theories of multiculturalism are discussed in an exploration of multiculturalism in Aotearoa, and multicultural education. Following this, acculturation is discussed, and integration and assimilation unpacked. These discussions are relevant to both the context of immigration and increasing cultural diversity in Aotearoa, as well as education. The concepts of intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity are then explored as a lead-in to a discussion of Milton Bennett's (1986) developmental model of intercultural sensitivities. It incorporates a continuum between ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism and is a key theoretical framework for this study. The concepts of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism are identified as key to unpacking the research question, and critical reflections on Bennett's model are also discussed.

The second section of this chapter investigates dance education and dance studio pedagogy within dance studio contexts in Aotearoa. A discussion of the types of dance being taught examines the use of competition, Western media and commercial dance influences, and dominant Eurocentric practices. This then leads to an examination of how dance is being taught in dance studio contexts, which explores authoritarian pedagogical approaches, the power and hierarchy of race, class and gender, and hegemony. Alternative pedagogical approaches are also introduced.

The third and final section of the literature review explores cultural inclusion within dance studio classes. First, concepts of belonging and social connectedness are discussed to support an argument for dance studio classes as a place for young people to belong, socialise, and be included. Concepts of social integration are then explored, and an argument made for dance studio teachers as agents of social integration for young people. Lastly, culturally responsive pedagogy is discussed and identified as a key pedagogical approach for dance studio classes.

### **2.1 Cultural inclusion**

As this research investigates and critically reflects on dance studio teachers' responses to cultural difference, literature in the area of cultural inclusion provides significant theories and concepts for the analysis and meaning making for this study. In the context and scope of this study, cultural inclusion refers to experiences of inclusion, exclusion and social integration for young people within dance studio classes. With a focus on cultural inclusion, the key concepts explored in this section are multiculturalism, acculturation, and intercultural competence and sensitivities. These areas of theory

and research provide a lens and framework for developing critical discussions and help add context for this study.

### **2.1.1 Multiculturalism in Aotearoa**

Homi Bhabha's (1990, 1994) views of difference, in particular his concept of hybridity, offer a theoretical framework that is important and useful for this study. Hybridity is the idea that cultures are always creating new spaces where all cultures are hybrid. Hybridity is a continual process that all cultures go through as they interact with each other. Furthermore, Bhabha argues that integration is a cultural phenomenon that commonly takes place within intercultural contexts, whereas non-integration results from deliberate hegemonic and dominant practices. Nancy Foner (2007) discusses the "cultural hybrids" and "creative multiculturalism" that may occur through interaction between migrants and descendent communities within institutions (p.1015). While ethnic diversity may be common in some public spaces throughout Aotearoa, harmony is not always found and "the development of new ethnicities or cultural hybrids will continue to add dimensions and imperatives to cultural values and practices in New Zealand" (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012, p. 284). Bhabha (1990) explains that "the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (p.211). These new spaces are being constructed within society, including within dance studio contexts. Bhabha (1990) signifies the importance of acknowledging hybridity, stating "If you keep referring those new sites to old principles, then you are not actually able to participate in them fully and productively and creatively" (p.216). As cultural diversity increases, society needs to adapt to the changing demographic and integrate cultural differences to allow for full participation. The process of hybridity creates space to challenge essentialist and hegemonic practices as it "provides a spatial politics of inclusion rather than exclusion" (Meredith, 1998, p. 3), and initiates "innovative sites of collaboration and contestation" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1). Eeva Anttila, Mariana Siljamäki and Nicholas Rowe (2018) draw on hybridity, explaining "it seems sensible to claim that for integration to occur, all of those involved must be willing to renegotiate the possibilities and pluralities of culture. Successful integration may enhance cultural pluralism and the birth of new, hybrid cultural form and expressions" (p.4). These concepts of integration, cultural pluralism and hybridity align with the ideas being explored in this thesis as I seek to examine dance studio teachers' responses to cultural difference and the potential maintenance of hegemonic and ethnocentric practices within dance education.

The concept of multiculturalism holds various meanings in the literature and has been greatly debated within diverse contexts around the world (see for example: Bartram, Poros, & Monteford, 2014; Kymlicka, 1995; Ward & Liu, 2012). In seeking to understand multiculturalism in the context of this research, multiculturalism is recognised as a complex paradigm that extends beyond the mere presence of cultural diversity to include how this diversity is perceived and managed. As mentioned in Chapter One, immigration is contributing to a culturally diverse and multicultural society within Aotearoa, particularly through economic migration to rural towns. In relation to immigration, multiculturalism can be described as "an 'orientation' to immigration that embraces difference and

diversity” (Bartram et al., 2014, p. 102). Contributing to the theoretical argument, Will Kymlicka (1995, 2010) disagrees with perspectives of assimilation where one cultural group must lose their culture to fit in with another (Berry, 1997; Huntington, 1993). Kymlicka (1995) believes that minority cultural groups at a minimum deserve respect, but also advocates for their rights. He contests anti-immigration fears by explaining that migrant groups typically seek to maintain their cultural practices and traditions within family and voluntary associations, and are “not asking to set up a parallel society” (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 15). Kymlicka (1995, 2010) advocates for multiculturalism and argues that the public or host communities’ perceptions are key to the integration of migrants – for example anxiety from the public may lead to backlash and discrimination, while confidence may lead to integration.

Within the concept of multiculturalism, theorists suggest three aspects – as demographic fact, as an ideology, and as public policy (Berry & Sam, 2013; Stuart & Ward, 2019). To elaborate, multiculturalism as demographic fact is the cultural diversity within a society, while multiculturalism as an ideology relates to the general desirability of maintaining that fact for the host society, and multiculturalism as public policy is governmental orientation and action towards the fact. Drawing on these three aspects, Jaimee Stuart and Colleen Ward (2019) further add that “a multicultural society is characterized by cultural diversity, by a widespread ideology that such diversity is valuable, and by policies and practices that support cultural maintenance and ensure equitable participation for all groups” (p.314). Most relevant to this study is multiculturalism as an ideology and host communities’ perceptions of multiculturalism and immigration. Questions are raised around the ways the dance studio teachers interviewed for this study perceive multiculturalism, immigration and cultural difference, and further, how these perceptions might influence their dance teaching practices.

Multicultural education has been discussed in relation to social justice, particularly where dominant and non-dominant cultural groups may be interacting. Sociologist Milton Bennett (2013) discusses the terminology for multiculturalism, stating “the term ‘multicultural’ refers to a particular kind of situation, one in which there are two or more cultures represented” (p.10). He further explains that multiculturalism may address “the existence and treatment of power difference” (Bennett, 2013, p. 11). One example in multicultural education is embracing diversity in such a way to possibly help “diminish the idea that the non-White model is wrong or inferior. It forces one to understand that non-White is as important or is as significant as White; all races are valuable” (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 74). John Berry & David Sam (2013) share that the “positive effects of multicultural education are suggested to be due to the youngsters’ improved cultural knowledge and understanding, and the establishment of anti-racism norms within the classroom” (p.155). The establishment of such anti-racist norms can contribute to an inclusive and integrated learning environment. It has been argued that “multiculturalism is an instrument for integration” (Duncan, 2005, p. 12), and that participation in recreational activities, like dance studio classes, can “provide a common ground where integration can be cultivated” (Berry & Sam, 2013, p. 155).

In considering cultural inclusion, it is also important to acknowledge that Aotearoa is a bicultural nation founded on the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (as mentioned in Section 1.3.5). The colonialization which resulted from the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi led to the marginalisation and oppression of Māori people, their culture and customs (Orange, 1990; Smith, 1997). The results of colonialization can be seen in many areas including education (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Carlson, 1997). Therefore, in this study, the concepts of multiculturalism and cultural difference are discussed within the bi-cultural and multicultural context of Aotearoa. Furthermore, rural areas in Aotearoa will differ from urban areas, in particular due to smaller populations, less cultural diversity and the differing social dynamics that may exist. While Aotearoa is a New Zealand European/pākeha dominated society, there are generally higher ratios between the dominant and non-dominant cultural groups in rural towns. Migration to rural towns throughout Aotearoa means that “diversity and difference have become the hallmarks of rural communities rather than uniformity and sameness” (Pomeroy & Newell, 2011, p. 17).

As mentioned in Section 1.3.4, the dominant European culture and increasing migration commonly occurring in rural towns throughout Aotearoa can be problematic when considering inclusion and exclusion of diverse cultural groups. As Sarah Neal (2002) highlights, “the dominance of whiteness and the pervasiveness of the pastoral idyll, [and] the small size and scattered nature of rural minority communities are crucial factors which mark racism in rural areas” (p.457). It is argued that within rural towns, those in non-dominant cultural groups are highly visible and can feel vulnerable as a result (De Lima, 2001; Henderson & Kaur, 1990; Vergunst, 2009). It is also suggested that service providers in rural towns lack experience in providing specific support for these minority groups, and “generally the understanding is that ‘there is no problem’ with migrants” (Vergunst, 2009, p. 255). These tensions are important to consider when seeking to foster equality and inclusion within multicultural towns and education contexts. My research question raises the issue of how the dynamics of rural towns might affect dance studio teachers’ pedagogical practices? Further research could also seek to investigate wider community responses to cultural difference and dance education in rural towns, and how stakeholders such as those in local governance can support the fostering of inclusion and social integration through dance classes.

### **2.1.2 Acculturation**

Building on the ideas of multiculturalism, acculturation is a useful framework for understanding social encounters, and helps to determine transitions for cultural groups moving from one cultural context to another (Berry, 1997; Kuo, 2014). Acculturation has been written about extensively with regard to immigration and is therefore important in the context of this study. The concept is relevant when considering the expectations and responses of both the dominant and non-dominant cultural groups within a dance studio class or the wider community. As classically defined by Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton and Melville Herskovits (1936), “acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (p.149). Extending this

definition, Berry (1997, 2005) has contributed significantly to the literature on migration studies and acculturation by making the key points that changes may occur more for one group than the other, acculturation may occur on a collective level or psychologically at an individual level, and people acculturate in a variety of ways. The ways in which migrants may acculturate can be identified under four strategies – assimilation, separation, integration and marginalisation. Berry (1997) defines these as follows:

From the point of view of non-dominant groups, when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the Assimilation strategy is defined. In contrast, when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the Separation alternative is defined. When there is an interest in both maintaining one's original culture, while in daily interactions with other groups, Integration is the option; here, there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network. Finally, when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) then Marginalisation is defined (p.9).

The names of these strategies may vary depending on whether the dominant or non-dominant cultural group is being considered (Berry, 1997). For example, when separation is forced upon a non-dominant cultural group it may be understood as segregation, and when people choose to assimilate it may raise the notion of a melting pot, in which case cultural and psychological homogenization will occur within the community (Berry, 1997; Berry & Sam, 2013). Alternatively, a pressure cooker may be described where non-dominant cultural groups are forced to assimilate into the dominant cultural group (Berry, 1997). Given that rural towns in Aotearoa are common places for economic migration, acculturation may be occurring within the rural towns where the interviewees are teaching dance (Spoonley & Bedford, 2008). These concepts of acculturation strategies are important to consider when developing meanings from the interviewees' narratives, as they provide lenses to understand intercultural encounters and how acculturation strategies may be occurring among many individuals and groups within dance studio classes.

Berry (1997) acknowledges that many societies become culturally plural as a result of immigration, where people of diverse cultural backgrounds come to live together. In many cases immigration may contribute to the forming of "cultural groups that are not equal in power (numerical, economic, political)" (Berry, 1997, p. 8). Assimilation is a theory discussed and critiqued by many scholars within the migration literature. Adding to Berry's definition, Bartram et al. (2014) define assimilation as "the process by which immigrants become similar to natives – leading them to reduction (or possibly the disappearance) of ethnic difference between them" (p.15). Assimilation can be considered as something people migrating might do, but also as something they might be expected to do by the host community. It has also been considered as both beneficial and detrimental to migrants themselves – beneficial in the sense that people migrating are accepted and included in the host society, but detrimental in the way that their ethnic and cultural identity may be decreased (Bartram et al., 2014; Portes & Zhou, 1993). It is worth acknowledging that diverse opinions are held around acculturation and cultural inclusion – not only within the literature, but also potentially among the interviewees. It

raises questions around how the dance studio teachers' opinions and bias in relation to their own and other cultures may transfer to their teaching practices within the dance studio classes.

Contrasting perspectives and opinions on immigration are evident in debate between those who are supportive of immigration and those who are more sceptical. This debate stems primarily from differing ideas of what happens to a society when immigration occurs. In relation to this research, these concepts can be explored when students of a non-dominant cultural group enter a dance studio class predominantly made up of students from the rural town's dominant New Zealand European culture. Alexis Zhang and Joel Kreiger (2015) explain that "debates over immigration are intimately bound up with disagreements about culture, diversity, and identity" (p.1). Culture, diversity and identity may be further entwined with not only social and cultural aspects of society, but also political and economic aspects. Several writers and analysts of immigration provide critical perspectives, such as Samuel Huntington (1993, 2004) and Myron Weiner (1995). Huntington, Weiner and others are concerned that immigration has posed a threat to national stability and security in recent decades (Huntington, 1993, 2004; Rudolph, 2006; Weiner, 1995). Indeed in 1993, Huntington hypothesised that "the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural" (p.22).

Based on this view, Huntington (2004) has further argued that as the dominant culture in America, the Anglo-Protestant culture is integral to the United States identity, and that immigrants should assimilate when arriving in America. His oppositional perspective suggests that immigration may contribute to the dominant culture losing their dominance, identity and rights in the nation-state. By failing to assimilate, Huntington (2004) argues that minority ethnic groups are resisting the adoption of Anglo-Protestant culture and 'Americanisation'. In addition, if minority ethnic groups hold group rights, this may further encourage these groups to remain "culturally fractured rather than unified" (Zhang & Kreiger, 2015, p. 13). As a result, Huntington views the immigration of minority ethnic groups as posing a threat to the economy, crime and societal values. Furthermore, Zhang and Kreiger (2015) argue this view may be shared by many Americans, who feel that the immigration system is flawed, that immigrants do not learn English quickly enough, and that levels of migration need to be reduced (Pew Research Centre, 2015; Zhang & Kreiger, 2015). These understandings of assimilation can also be understood through concepts of colonialization where marginalised groups may face the pressure of colonial power and as a result abandon their cultural values and practices (Bishop & Glynn, 1996). It is important to note that Huntington's interpretation of 'assimilation' differs from alternative views held by writers such as Kymlicka (1995) and Berry (1997) in the sense that assimilation is seen as a unidirectional shift into the dominant or majority culture, rather than a two-way process (Huntington, 1993, 2004; Zhang & Kreiger, 2015).

Also arguing against immigration, Weiner (1995) holds that societies can only absorb limited numbers of immigrants, perhaps echoing the public concerns highlighted by Huntington about immigration systems and policies. With regard to the political implications, Peter Brimelow (1995) echoes these

perspectives, arguing that the influx of non-White immigrants into Western society poses a cultural threat to liberal democracy. These concerns also seem to be reflected in major current shifts in immigration perspectives around the world, such as 'Brexit' in the United Kingdom and 'Trumpism' in the United States. Here, politicians in recent elections in both countries expressed intense xenophobia throughout their campaigns (Younge, 2016), challenging ideals of transnational, cultural exchange and social inclusion" (Anttila et al., 2018). The many tensions associated with the social, cultural, economic and political aspects of immigration may contribute to anti-immigrant perspectives. As Stephen Castles (2011) states, anti-immigrant perspectives are present in many countries where "immigrants become the target, because they are the most visible symbol of these changes, while the real causes are invisible, complex and difficult to influence" (p.361). Nicholas Rowe, Rose Martin, Ralph Buck and Eeva Anttila (2018) collected the opinions of dance education researchers worldwide on how the political wave of Brexit and Trumpism, which reflects the "growth of protectionist nationalism in diverse parts of the world" (p.95), may affect meanings of inclusion and exclusion within dance education. When considering these manifestations of critical views on immigration and cultural diversity, it is possible that the dance studio teachers interviewed in this research may emulate similar opinions and perceptions towards their students in their approaches to what and how they teach. This raises questions around how the dance studio teachers perceive and understand cultural difference within their dance studio classes, and how this may foster both inclusion and exclusion.

Alternatively, concepts of integration provide a different approach to cultural difference. Integration in relation to cultural groups has been discussed by many scholars and involves a two-way process between immigrants and the host society (Berry, 1997; Berry & Sam, 2013; Portes & Borocz, 2010). Understanding the key concepts of integration is significant for understanding the dance studio teachers' responses to cultural differences. Integration has been defined as:

...the process by which immigrants gain social membership and develop the ability to participate in key institutions in the destination country...Broadly speaking, integration refers to the changes that immigrants undergo after arrival in the destination country; in recent years it has been extended to indicate changes in the receiving society as well, thus integration as a two-way process (Bartram et al., 2014, p. 83).

In this sense integration can be relevant to economic, political, social and cultural aspects of the lives of both migrants and the host society. In the context of this study, it seems appropriate to consider the dance teachers, students and wider community as 'dominant' or 'non-dominant' cultural groups rather than as migrants and the host or local community, as not all people in the community who may face exclusion and marginalisation will have immigrated to the rural towns. For example, some of the students who may be perceived as part of the non-dominant cultural group, may have been born in the rural towns to parents who had immigrated to Aotearoa.

When considering integration of non-dominant cultural groups, Berry (1997) further explains "integration can only be 'freely' chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity" (p. 10). This correlates with contemporary immigration paradigms, where immigration and integration are

considered a two-way process (Portes & Borocz, 2010). The two way-process is significant as “the dominant group plays a powerful role in influencing the way in which nondominant cultural groups relate” (Berry & Sam, 2013, p. 153). As described by Berry and Sam (2013) from the host society’s perspective, integration occurs “when diversity maintenance and equitable participation are widely-accepted features of the society as a whole” (p.153). In this case, integration may be referred to as multiculturalism. Considering this role of the dominant cultural group to which many of the dance teachers interviewed for this study belong, their orientation towards cultural difference may greatly reflect how they integrate, assimilate, segregate or marginalise cultural diversity within their dance studio classes.

### ***2.1.3 Intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity***

To assist in developing an understanding of the dance studio teachers’ perceptions and responses to cultural difference, concepts of intercultural sensitivity provide a further theoretical lens for analysing the interview data. Intercultural sensitivity has been discussed widely in the literature, and is defined and articulated in various ways, but is commonly understood as one component of intercultural competence (Bennett, 2013; Deardorff, 2006). Darla Deardorff (2006) investigated various understandings and definitions of intercultural competence and the potential for developing one’s intercultural competence, concluding that definitions have, and will continue to evolve and differ. However, several understandings stood out as predominantly agreed upon and commonly used by scholars (Deardorff, 2006). Michael Byram (1997) summarised intercultural competence as “knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others’ values, beliefs, and behaviours; and relativizing one’s self” (p. 34), highlighting that it is comprised of particular knowledge and attitudes.

Similarly, intercultural competence has been summarised as “five different components of global competence: (1) knowledge: (2) empathy: (3) approval: (4) foreign language competence: and (5) task performance” (Lambert, 1994, p. 9). Each of these definitions identifies key components that dance teachers may hold and develop within their intercultural competence when engaging in a multicultural dance studio class. Lastly, a commonly used definition is offered by Deardorff (2004), who defines intercultural competence as “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p.194). Again, this definition highlights knowledge, attitudes and skills, but also indicates the significance of effective and appropriate communication with other people.

In the context of multicultural dance classes, as cultural diversity, internationalisation and globalisation increase, it will be important for dance teachers to maintain and develop components of intercultural competence. Michael Byram, Adam Nichols and David Stevens (2001) explain that the attitudes and knowledge of the teacher provide the foundation of intercultural competence. Attitude is described in terms of:

...a willingness to relativise one's own values, beliefs and behaviours, not to assume that they are the only possible and naturally correct ones, and to be able to see how they might look from the perspective of an outsider who has a different set of values, beliefs and behaviours (Byram et al., 2001, p. 5).

The knowledge component is described by Byram et al. (2001) as "not primarily about a specific culture, but rather knowledge of how social groups and social identities function, both one's own and others" (p.5). Sabine Krajewski (2011) argues that intercultural competence may occur within different aspects of multicultural classrooms:

Ideally some of these elements (attitude, openness) will be brought to the classroom; others can be developed in the classroom (knowledge about own and other cultures), and the outcome levels can be achieved through experiential learning (adjustment to new cultural environments, flexibility, behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately) (p.140).

The attitudes and knowledge held by dance teachers may therefore have an effect on the ways they engage with students in their dance studio classes, the content they teach and their approaches to teaching dance. Another aspect of intercultural competence important to highlight is that it is also "linked to social justice, which, from a pedagogical point of view, refers, among other things, to equal opportunities for students to participate in education regardless of their cultural background or religion" (Anttila et al., 2018, p. 611). Louis Harrison Jr and Langston Clark (2016) explain that "the development of culturally responsive teachers can foster a pedagogical lens that seeks to empower students socially, politically, and emotionally, as well as physically and intellectually" (p.236). Therefore, the teachers' intercultural competence and their ability to use culturally responsive pedagogies are key issues to explore within this doctoral research, particularly when investigating issues around belonging and social integration.

Intercultural sensitivity, which is closely linked to intercultural competence, has been defined and discussed in various ways. An early study focussing on the concept of sensitivity was conducted by Urie Bronfenbrenner, John Harding and Mary Gallwey (1958). They proposed two major types of social perception: sensitivity to the generalised other, and sensitivity to individual differences (also understood as interpersonal sensitivity). Sensitivity to the generalised other is relevant to the social norms of one's group, whereas interpersonal sensitivity is the ability to distinguish differences in others' behaviours, perceptions and feelings (Bronfenbrenner et al., 1958; McClelland, 1958). Building on this, sensitivity can be understood as a mindset utilised within many aspects of people's everyday lives (Hart & Burks, 1972; Hart, Carlson, & Eadie, 1980). Drawing on these understandings of sensitivity, Guo-Ming Chen (1997) recognises similarities between interpersonal sensitivities and intercultural sensitivities, suggesting that intercultural sensitivity is related to the cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects of interactional situations, but mainly deals with the affective.

Guo-Ming Chen and William Starosta (2000) use the term 'intercultural communication competence' as an "umbrella concept which is comprised of cognitive, affective, and behavioural ability of interactants in the process of intercultural communication" (p.3). In particular, they articulate that the affective aspect of intercultural communication competence can be understood in terms of the

concept intercultural sensitivity. In other words, in their feelings and attitudes, people can hold an “active desire to motivate themselves to understand, appreciate, and accept difference among cultures” (Chen & Starosta, 1996, p. 367). Similarly, a study by Dharm Bhawuk and Richard Brislin (1992) attempted to draw on the perspective of individualism versus collectivism to measure intercultural sensitivity. The study focussed on aspects including understanding individuals’ different behaviours, open-mindedness when encountering difference, and the amount of behavioural flexibility demonstrated in intercultural situations. These aspects may be significant for the dance teachers interviewed in the study when engaging with students from different cultures.

Bennett (1986, 1993, 2013) has discussed and researched intercultural sensitivity extensively, concluding that it is not only affective but also cognitive and behavioural. He describes intercultural sensitivity as “the ability to discriminate cultural differences and to experience those differences in communication across cultures” (Bennett, 2013, p. 12). Further, unlike Chen and Starosta (1996), Bennett perceives intercultural sensitivity as a developmental process for the individual’s affective, cognitive and behavioural abilities. Within this concept, Bennett (2013) considers the individual’s ‘cultural worldview’, explaining that “by being aware of one’s own culture and that of other people in a situation, one is better able to understand why people are acting as they are, and how one might best respond” (Bennett, 2013, p. 109). These understandings of perceptions and responses to cultural difference provide a lens with which to analyse the data collected for this study and explore questions such as: How might the dance teachers in this study be aware of their own and other’s cultures?; and how might their awareness and responses to cultural difference inform their teaching approaches within the dance studio classes?

Bennett’s (1986, 2013) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivities (DMIS) provides a key starting point for further understanding intercultural sensitivities and how these may be understood within the interviewees’ narratives in this study. Bennett’s (1986, 2013) DMIS model describes a progression of worldview orientations towards cultural difference as people become more culturally adaptive or interculturally competent. “The model supposes development from less complex perceptions and shallow experience of cultural difference to more complex perception and consequently more sophisticated experiences of cultural difference” (Bennett, 2013, p. 86). The development of intercultural sensitivities is described as a process of moving from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism through six stages – Denial, Defense, Minimisation, Acceptance, Adaptation, Integration. Bennett (2013) explains:

In general, the more ethnocentric positions represent ways of avoiding the experience of cultural difference, either by denying its existence (Denial), by raising defenses against it (Defense), or by minimizing its importance (Minimization). The more ethnorelative positions represent ways of seeking the experience of cultural difference, either by accepting its importance (Acceptance), by adapting perspective to take into account (Adaptation), or by integrating the experience into one’s personal or organizational identity (Integration) (p.86).

Bennett (2017) further explains that “movement along the continuum from Ethnocentrism to Ethnorelativism is accomplished through elaborating categories for otherness, so that eventually the

perception (and thus the experience) of cultural difference is as complex as that of important events in one's own culture" (p.264). Each of the six developmental stages of the DMIS model will be referred to throughout the discussion chapters, however it is important to note that it is not the focus of this research to identify where each dance teacher may fit within the six stages.

While Bennett's DMIS model is used extensively throughout the literature (see for example: Mellizo, 2018; Rissanen, Kuusisto, & Kuusisto, 2016; Westrick & Yuen, 2007), several researchers have argued against the methodological and chronological nature of stages of development. Lynn Kapitan (2015) suggests that although perceptions from ethnocentric to ethnorelative appear to move in a continuum, it should also be considered that people's lived experiences can be understood as a kaleidoscope that is complex and shifting. Similarly, Shahila Zafar, Shabistan Sandhu and Zaved Ahmed Kahn (2013) suggest that while the definitions of each stage of the model are believable, "perhaps it is too perfect and clear-cut to be put into practice. The reason being that human psyche and its reactions and adaptation to different phenomenon are as varied as there are human beings on the earth" (p.569). Therefore, while the findings of this research may relate to the six stages of the DMIS model, it seems unlikely that each interviewee will fit solely into one stage. Rather the complexity of people's experiences and attitudes may mean they fit several points of the continuum, with some aspects of their practice perhaps being considered ethnocentric, and others ethnorelative.

A further critique is also raised by Zafar et al. (2013) regarding the use of the DMIS model "in countries with not much exposure to multiculturalism" (p.570). They suggest it is more applicable in the United States, which may be considered a 'melting pot' (Berry, 1997), compared to isolated and underdeveloped countries. While this doctoral research is situated within Aotearoa, which is not considered an underdeveloped country, it can be argued that some rural towns in Aotearoa that are predominantly New Zealand European may have little exposure to multiculturalism. Therefore, the dance studio teachers interviewed in this study may not have the opportunity to develop and move between the DMIS stages if their intercultural interactions are limited. Considering the limitations of Bennett's model, Jennifer Mellizo (2018) reminds educators that "every individual (including the teacher) will navigate the continuum in their own unique way, and at their own pace, and learning experiences must be tailored to fit the unique needs of the people in the learning environment" (p.53). Bennett's (1986) developmental model of intercultural sensitivities therefore provides a starting point for making meaning from the narratives, particularly with regard to ethnocentric and ethnorelative viewpoints.

The term ethnocentrism refers "to the experience of one's own culture as 'central to reality'" (Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 64). This means that the "beliefs and behaviours that people receive in their primary socialization are unquestioned; they are experienced as 'just the way things are' and alternative behaviour seems unreal" (Bennett, 2013, p. 86). People with an ethnocentric orientation towards cultural difference may deny the existence of cultural difference or experience it as 'foreign' or 'immigrant', stereotype cultural differences, view people as us versus them, or generalise cultural

differences and assume people are the same. Within the literature, ethnocentrism may be understood as a moral bias or feelings of affiliation and loyalty to one's own cultural group (Anderson, 2010; Etinson, 2018). Within the context of this study where New Zealand European is the dominant cultural group, concepts of colour-blindness, difference and deficit, and 'whiteness as the norm' may be expressed through ethnocentric bias (DiAngelo, 2018; McCarthy-Brown, 2018; Metzl, 2019; Schupp, 2018b; Sue, 2004). These concepts will be discussed further throughout the literature review and discussion chapters.

In comparison to ethnocentrism, ethnorelativism refers to "the experience of one's own beliefs and behaviours as just one organization of reality among many viable possibilities" (Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 64). People with an ethnorelative orientation towards cultural difference may variously accept cultural difference yet not experience it in much depth, attempt to adapt their behaviour to be appropriate within a cultural context, and experience themselves as 'in process' and move in and out of different cultural worldviews. In addition to these ideas, Michèle Ollivier (2008) writes about openness towards cultural diversity in terms of binary oppositions that may also be relevant when considering ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. She explains that terms such as "diverse, open, hybrid, fluid, eclectic, global, and cosmopolitan tend to be associated together and most often to have positive connotations. These notions are opposed to what tends to be negatively perceived as unitary, homogeneous, local, static, permanent, and closed" (Ollivier, 2008, p. 121). The suggested positive and negative connotations are closely linked to ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. As such, ethnocentrism may lead to exclusion and isolation within the dance studio class, and ethnorelativism may promote inclusion with the dance studio classes. Therefore, when analysing the narratives from this study, questions may arise as to the way the dance studio teachers express ethnocentric and ethnorelative perceptions and practices within their dance studio classes. In particular, when considering the dance teachers in rural towns in Aotearoa where engagement and exposure to cultural diversity may be limited, how might the dance teachers hold ethnocentric bias within their dance studio classes?

## **2.2 Dance education in dance studio contexts in Aotearoa**

This section of the literature review seeks to explore research and literature surrounding dance education in dance studio contexts. The context of this study is dance studios within rural towns in Aotearoa, and where possible I draw on available literature specifically relevant to this context. However, I also draw on a global body of scholarship where the topics discussed are relevant to the context that I am looking at here in Aotearoa. First, a discussion around what is being taught in dance studio contexts both globally and in Aotearoa is presented, highlighting the presence of dominant Western practices and influences. The following section explores how dance is being taught within these dance studio contexts, where authoritarian style pedagogies are predominantly used that may result in power imbalance and hierarchies between the teacher and students. This section also acknowledges some alternative pedagogies that may be utilised within dance studio contexts and are therefore relevant to the findings of this research.

### ***2.2.1 What is being taught in dance studio contexts in Aotearoa?***

The section seeks to discuss literature around what is being taught in dance studio contexts both globally and within Aotearoa to provide further contextual information on dance studio classes for this study. This literature will provide insight into what is predominantly being taught in this context, and assist in situating the narratives gathered from the interviews. Alongside the dance genres being taught, issues of Western and Eurocentric practices and ideals, and influences from mainstream media will be explored. Many scholars globally have discussed the ways dance studio contexts are dominated by Western practices, and how Eurocentrism and whiteness is maintained within dance studio classes (Kerr-Berry, 2012; McCarthy-Brown, 2018; Schupp, 2018b). As Karen Schupp (2018b) explains, “Eurocentric and white aesthetics dominate the ideas about technique and performance” (p.38). Additionally, Julie Kerr-Berry (2012) shares that “in most institutions, Western concert dance represents the dominant training mode, a universal standard” (p.51). Ayo Walker (2019) provides further support, stating that the “present culture of dance in higher education represents a monocultural paradigm by over-privileging whiteness via an ethnocentric perspective” (p.38).

This dominance of Eurocentrism and whiteness within dance studios can be problematic as it may contribute to the segregation and marginalisation of some students within dance studio classes. Considering institutions broadly, Derald Sue (2004) suggests that “more damaging, however, are the insidious and invisible programs and policies that represent ethnocentric values and beliefs. Because most institutional systems are monocultural in nature, they represent a potential source of cultural oppression” (p.766). This can be applied to dance studios, which can be ethnocentric and monocultural due to dominant Eurocentric practices. Nyama McCarthy-Brown (2018) explains how her body was colonized through her dance education “indoctrinated into an ideology of privilege that preserves and protects whiteness, while it devalues the cultural heritages of others” (p.469). In relation to the structures of society and states, McCarthy-Brown (2018) further argues “it is evident that arts education is not excluded from the permeable racism that seeps into all aspects of society” (p.485). Like Sue (2004), McCarthy-Brown (2018) also refers to “insidious” racism, suggesting it exists not only among people but also in the “racist structures of society that ensure its perpetuation” (p.485). It is possible that these societal structures may exist within dance studios and dance studio classes, and that dance teachers are contributing to these structures. This research therefore seeks to learn how the dance teachers interviewed for this study might be contributing to the perpetuation of ethnocentric values and beliefs within their dance studio classes, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

Despite the issues arising from Western and Eurocentric practices and ideals within dance studio classes, these aspects are nevertheless maintained through strong influences from mainstream media. Media such as television dance programmes and social media further promote the hierarchy of dance genres and cultural appropriation, dance competitions, and expectations and ideals about who can dance and how they fit in. This influence from media is evident within dance studio classes, both globally and here in Aotearoa. It perpetuates the dominance of Western culture in dance studio classes in rural areas of Aotearoa, further privileging whiteness and marginalising or segregating non-

Western people and practices. Schupp (2018b) explains how YouTube, Instagram, and dance-focused reality television shows such as *Dancing With The Stars*, *So You Think You Can Dance*, and *Dance Moms* are easily accessible throughout the world. She suggests they perpetuate Western norms, saying “each of these scenarios can be framed as cultural exports that convey specific cultural and political values that thrive in the United States” (Schupp, 2018b, p. 36). In particular, mainstream media perpetuate the strong influence of Western and commercial dance through the genres of dance being taught in dance studio contexts.

This claim finds extensive support throughout literature, where ballet is considered the staple, foundation or norm within dance education and dance studio contexts (McCarthy-Brown, 2018; Risner & Stinson, 2010). As Petra Kuppers (2000) explains, “ballet and its imagery can still be seen arguably as the main cultural image of dance in Western culture” (p.122). Schupp (2018b) refers to the influence of commercial and competition dance, stating that “the primary dance forms drawn upon in commercial dance include jazz dance, contemporary, hip hop, ballet and specialty skills, such as acrobatics, all which can be seen on dance competition stage” (p.35). Here in Aotearoa, these are also the predominant dance genres being taught within dance studio classes. Dagmar Simon (2016) recognises the mainstream dominance and seeks to acknowledge the diversity within Aotearoa: “The dance landscape of New Zealand may appear to be dominated by mainstage companies [...] but it is worth remembering that New Zealand’s backyard community is brimming with diversity across our dance language and form” (p.11). This suggests that the primary dance forms seen in mainstream media and commercial dance are situated within dance studio contexts, and perhaps non-Western dance forms are being practiced in other contexts beyond the dance studio. It is thus worth investigating where and how non-Western dance forms may be practiced within a dance studio context, as will be discussed further throughout the thesis.

An additional issue arising from the dominance of Western and commercial dance is the promotion of dance competitions and dance competition culture. Schupp (2018b) explains that the dance competition culture is primarily a United States phenomenon, which is spreading worldwide as “part of the appeal of dance competition culture comes from the entertainment factor and familiarity of the dance styles performed and taught” (p.35). However, Schupp (2018b) also argues that the “dance competition industry is unregulated, expensive and responds to and drives the ideas of their consumers, who are largely middle- and upper middle- class white Americans, the same demographic that voted for Trump” (p.40). Dance studio classes that have a strong commercial and competition focus may marginalise or segregate non-Western students due to their financial situation, dance ability, or socio-cultural background. In the context of this study, students may not be able to participate due to expensive classes, not having a sufficiently strong dance technique, or if they are not perceived as ‘fitting in’ with the predominant cultural group. The narratives gathered in this study provide a basis for exploring how the dance studio teachers and their classes are influenced by Western and commercial dance and perpetuate Eurocentric ideals.

Dance competition culture promotes a focus on product over process where the focus is on dance technique, skill-mastery and winning. According to Elsa Posey (2002):

Dance schools in the private sector reflect the image the public holds of dance. In this image, dance is perceived to be highly competitive, modelled after sport where winning holds greater importance than learning, and dance is available only to the elite few who can earn their living in the profession (p.46).

This perception is reflected within Aotearoa dance studios where it has been noted that “children associated dance with dancers, that is, they were mostly familiar with dance as a ‘product’, an outcome of skill, practice and mastery” (Buck, 2004, p. 25). Linda Ashley (2012) also connects these ideas to the Aotearoa context, stating that “often the teaching in informal education is aimed at perfecting dance performance for passing exams or competing against others” (p.74). A dance studio teacher in Aotearoa also commented recently on the influence of competition and media, remarking that “in the age of the horrific reality show *Dance Moms* and American dance shows where tricks seem to have overtaken actual dance, the competition scene is no longer as palatable for us” (Jacqui Cesan as cited in *Dance Aotearoa New Zealand*, 2019, p. 6). Where there is a focus on exams or competitions, the dance studio teachers interviewed in this study may potentially neglect to consider diverse students as they concentrate on the way the students’ dancing bodies look and execute dance movements. This may lead to ethnocentric intercultural sensitivities, as in this case, students are perceived universally as working towards a focussed dance syllabus, technique or performance outcome.

Therefore, a focus on technique and competition can be problematic as it has potential to maintain Eurocentrism and whiteness within dance studio classes, as well as construct race and class hierarchies and increase segregation. This may occur through the Western genres of dance being taught and promoted in the media and dance competitions. In their study of dance within a high school, Matthew Atencio and Jan Wright (2009) identified segregation, suggesting that “the standardisation of ballet and modern dance created conditions whereby ‘skinny’ disciplined bodies associated with middle-class ‘whiteness’ became imbued with a higher institutional value”, and was “set up to privilege the classically trained dancers from wealthier sections of the city” (p.43). Similarly, Tracey Patton (2011) recognises hierarchies and segregation within dance practice:

From the marginalizing hierarchical perch where ballet sits, the view is rather limiting. The narrow acceptance of who can and cannot become a ballerina is looking more antiquated, as other forms of dance styles thrive and find allure in racial diversity. This racial tracking in dance perpetuates the myth that ballet is all White, that ethnic minority dancers are not interested or talented enough to perform ballet, and that the ethnic minority body is just too different to be normalized into ballet (p.114).

Patton’s (2011) suggestion for normalising the ethnic minority body into ballet aligns with ideas of acculturation, where a student from a non-dominant cultural group seeking to participate in ballet must assimilate to Western ideals and practices. It seems that non-Western students may be perceived as ‘different’ or ‘other’ within a class such as ballet. How then might they participate despite the differences and similarities among the students of a class? In the rural towns where this study was

carried out, Western practices are dominant and considered normal, and those who do not fit are more visible and highlighted through segregation (Castles, 2011; De Lima, 2001; Vergunst, 2009). Therefore, when considering the research question guiding this study, it is important to explore how the dance studio teachers may be perpetuating these influences from mainstream media and Eurocentric practices in their responses to cultural difference. In the context of this study where the genres of dance being taught in the dance studios most likely include ballet and contemporary, are non-dominant cultural groups of young people being marginalised and segregated through the dance being taught, and how does this occur? Further, what role is there for dance studio teachers in contributing to the reduction of such exclusive approaches to dance education?

Other than ballet and contemporary – jazz, hip hop and tap are the other genres predominantly used in dance studio contexts. These genres are often understood as Western dance forms (despite originating in non-Western contexts), while other genres of dance may be understood as ‘non-Western’. This sets up a hierarchy between dance genres whereby ballet and contemporary in particular are considered ‘fine arts’ in dance due to skill-based techniques and mastery performance (Shapiro, 1999, 2008). Tamara Thomas (2019) suggests that “dance forms that do not fall into ballet, contemporary, or modern dance categories are often rolled into courses titled ‘World Dance Forms’ or ‘Ethnic Dance Forms’” (p.101). This also appears to contribute to the hierarchy and binary between Western and non-Western dance forms or genres, however it is arguably much more complex. In this study I intend to avoid perceiving these dance genres as a binary and where appropriate, unpack the complexities of this perceived binary. For instance, despite the sharing of World and Ethnic dance forms, often they are shared from a Eurocentric paradigm with Western practice dominating the ways they are taught and performed (Leaf, 2015; Young, 2018).

This perceived hierarchy of dance forms is further unpacked by Betsy Leaf (2015), according to whom ethnocentric bias means that “teachers affirm Western forms of dance, such as ballet, as the starting point from which to understand “other” dance forms from around the world” (p.56-57). Angeline Young (2018) articulates this further, claiming that “the Western ethnocentric bias in dance education that maintains a Eurocentric status quo constructed by the aesthetic, political, and sociocultural norms of a white, heteronormative majority remains a classic problem” (p.15). This status quo is recognisable as “European and European-American aesthetics that favour heterogendered casting, long lines, narrow frames, lean bodies, white skin, and ‘pulling up’” (Young, 2018, p. 15). These perceptions about ballet and the presence of hegemony may further contribute to hierarchy between the dance genres being offered within dance studios.

As a result, Eurocentric ideologies are maintained, where ‘other’ or ‘non-Western’ dance forms may be considered insignificant, or are decontextualised. This hierarchical perspective has also been challenged by many scholars. When viewed in a certain way, Joann Keali’inohomoku (1983) argues that ballet can be considered an ethnic and transnational dance. Additionally, Thomas (2019) refers to Western dominance in relation to ethnic dance, stating “it is disparaging and very telling of the

dominant worldview to lump [together] such a large percentage of global dance” (p.101). Furthermore, McCarthy-Brown (2018) questions “why [...] Eurocentric dance forms [are] worth preserving and good for all students, but dance and heritage of the ‘other’ are not?” (p.128). Further, McCarthy-Brown (2018) argues that “decontextualizing a dance form is another way in which structures that maintain whiteness own and control dance. [...] Once taken out of its context of origin, the form is reshaped for mass consumption and profit” (p.481). Hip hop and jazz are common dance genres being taught in dance studios that have been decontextualised (Kerr-Berry, 2012; McCarthy-Brown, 2018). In the context of this research, there may be opportunities to consider how the dance studio teachers approach the delivery of hip hop, jazz, and other dance styles when responding to cultural difference in their classes. It may be that dance teachers deliver these dance genres from a Western lens, which decontextualizes the context of origin.

The literature expands on how dance genres such as hip hop and jazz are decontextualised or white washed within dance education contexts. McCarthy-Brown (2018) explains that decontextualised dances are “watered down” and “one cannot watch the popular culture television phenomenon, *So You Think You Can Dance*, without hearing the hip-hop and tap dancers told how wonderful they are but for their deficiencies in the all-legitimizing ‘technique’ (referring to ballet-informed, Western-based dance training)” (p.473). Kerr-Berry (2012) also discusses this, saying:

Diasporic dance forms, such as hip hop, continue to be a major part of American dance education, once appropriated and homogenized by the mainstream, white, private studio sector. [...] Far too often, hip hop classes are added to course offerings to build class numbers and not as an integral part of the dance curriculum, nor from a perspective that honours its authentic social and cultural roots. (p.51)

Here, Kerr-Berry (2012) highlights how dance forms with a non-Western history are decontextualised to fit within Western dance education practices, such as dance studio classes. Similarly, Alexis Weisbrod (2010) discusses the influence on hip hop and jazz in relation to the dominance of white culture and ballet technique, explaining the “commodification of jazz through its codification in dance studios and popularization on stage relied on appropriation of the practice from marginal bodies” (p.86). The decontextualisation and appropriation of dance forms within dance studio classes denigrates the history and socio-cultural aspects of these dance forms and perpetuates Eurocentric practices. As Thomas (2019) states, “Jazz dance in commercial performance spaces and in higher education has been significantly sterilized and whitewashed” (p.103). She further explains,

The sanitizing of jazz dance, colloquially known as whitewashing, is informed by conscious and subconscious notions of value. The subconscious playing out of an ideology that frames white cultural elements and value systems as superior (white supremacy) stifles jazz dance’s chance at full engagement. Even as parts of jazz dance have been recognized, its fullness, especially its most visibly African elements, is in a fight for recognition, acknowledgment, proper regard, and contextualization (p.100).

In addition to the decontextualising and appropriation of dance forms, Thomas (2019) further highlights that this may lead to elements of hierarchy and white supremacy within dance studio classes. These notions of decontextualising dance forms put forward by McCarthy-Brown (2018),

Kerry-Berry (2012) and Thomas (2019) may be significant when considering what and how the dance studio teachers in this study are teaching. When teaching a range of dance forms how might dance teachers be drawing on Eurocentric practices and ethnocentric bias through their pedagogical approaches?

McCarthy-Brown (2014, 2018) and Kerr-Berry (2010, 2012) both question the maintenance of ethnocentric bias and Eurocentrism, and challenge this form of dismantling within dance education. Referring to the hierarchy between Western and non-Western dance forms, McCarthy-Brown (2014) explains, "If we allow students to believe that only traditional Western dance forms are worthy of full study, we ultimately fail our students, and consciously or unconsciously, we reinforce the racist and classist ideologies that we claim to have overcome" (p.127). Kerr-Berry (2012) states that as dance educators "we can question our assumptions about the superiority of one dance over another and consider how whiteness factors into such self-investigation as dance educators" (p.49). She further poses the question, "What would dance programs in the future look like if they were no longer predominately centred on a modern-ballet paradigm? [...] The time has come for us to challenge the status quo in academic dance programs and our place in it" (Kerr-Berry, 2010, p. 5). Dominant Western and Eurocentric practices are present within dance studio contexts in Aotearoa, but dance studio teachers can challenge the status quo in their dance studio classes in order to work towards cultural inclusion and social integration. While this challenging of the status quo may occur through the dance genres being taught in dance studio contexts, it is important to also consider how dance is being taught. The ways dance is being taught in dance studio contexts (as discussed in the following section) can also be influenced by mainstream media and Eurocentric practices, which perhaps also need to be challenged and reflected on.

### ***2.2.2 How is dance being taught in dance studio contexts in Aotearoa?***

Building on the previous section, which explored what dance is being taught in dance studio classes in Aotearoa, this section of the literature review will further discuss the various ways the dance genres are being taught in dance studio contexts. The literature exploring pedagogical dance practices is significant for addressing the research question and investigating how the dance teachers interviewed for this study are responding to cultural difference within their dance studio classes. A common pedagogy used within dance studio contexts has been identified as authoritarian pedagogy. Authoritarian pedagogy in dance education, sometimes also referred to as traditional or command-style pedagogy, refers to the one-directional transfer of knowledge and technical skills from the teacher to the student (Burnidge, 2012; Dyer, 2009; Stinson, 2016). Here, the teacher holds power or authority while students follow demonstrations and corrections, often working towards an end product such as competitions, performances and examinations (Ashley, 2012; Dyer, 2009; Mosston & Ashworth, 2002; Shapiro, 1999; Stinson, 2016). In this case, as Susan Stinson (1998) states, "the teacher is the authority and the only recognized source of knowledge" (p. 27). The use of authoritarian pedagogy therefore constructs a power imbalance and hierarchy between the teacher and students (Smith, 1998).

This power is also transferred by the teacher to the students' bodies, as "very often the dance teacher focuses on specific corrections, placement of the body, proper technique, and efficient performance of particular dance movements" (Green, 1999, p. 81). Michel Foucault (1979) provides a theoretical lens for understanding the ways power exists within dance studio classes. Foucault (1979) critiques institutions and the ways control, surveillance and manipulation is created and executed by the dominant culture. Thus, Foucault (1979) views the body as a site for social and political manipulation and control. Jill Green (2003) draws on Michel Foucault (1979) to suggest that an authoritative teaching method sets up an "approach that gives power to the teacher to manipulate students' bodies" (p.99). This could connect to ideas I intend to explore in my study, as "in the conservatory-style system student dancers' bodies are docile bodies created to produce efficiency, not only of movement, but also, a normalization and standardization of behaviour in dance classes" (Green, 2003, p. 100). Foucault (1979) explains "a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (p.136). This can be seen in dance studio classes where authoritative pedagogy manipulates, shapes and trains dancers' bodies (Foucault, 1979; Green, 2003). Sherry Shapiro (1999) discusses this further:

The student is valued for her or his ability to follow directions, replicate set skills, show commitment by virtually eliminating most other relationships and social roles, and by presenting an image of the dancer's body as little more than an automaton... In this approach the dancer learns to treat the body as object, an object submitted to rigorous training for the purpose of creating an image of perfection, an object mechanized for movement, and an object to be relinquished to authority, whether teacher, choreographer, or dance system (p.129).

When dance is being taught in an authoritarian way, the students' bodies are subject to the power of the teacher, often losing their significance in the class, as universal understandings of all people and bodies as the same are directed towards the students. Becky Dyer (2009) argues against ideas of universalism within dance where movement is perceived as universally constructed and understood by students in the class. This can be problematic within dance studio classes as it may reflect in exclusive practices towards the students participating in the classes due to their differences not being recognised and included.

Discussions surrounding the impact of authoritarian pedagogy in relation to the dancer's body connect with perceived ideals of the body and aesthetics. Mainstream media, as discussed in the previous section, promote these Western-influenced ideals of the dancer's body, such as shown on television. Ralph Buck and Jeff Meiners (2017) articulate the influence of media from this perspective:

A pervasive televised global dance culture of expertise, talent and dance as spectacle with programs such as 'So you think you can dance' is framed by ever-expanding consumerist democracies across the world [...]. Such viewing can inspire but also alienate those who do not match up to the highly idealized female and male bodies presented (p.35).

These perspectives from the literature not only show how the 'ideal bodies' portrayed by media and Western practices can privilege those who fit the norm, they also make connections with authoritarian pedagogical approaches where the teachers may expect students to fit this the norm, or be excluded

or segregated if unable to. Within dance studio classes these expectations will often be framed by Western and Eurocentric ideals and practices. Expanding on this, Betsy Leaf and Bic Ngo (2017) describe how “in structuring dance classes steeped in hegemonic assumptions about “universality,” educators often construct communities that reflect the dominant culture. Students outside the dominant culture thus become marginalized or silenced” (p.66). It is the teacher who authorises who can participate and how within the dance studio class, potentially marginalising or segregating those who do not fit the ideal or dominant practice (Giguere, 2011; Green, 2007; Risner & Stinson, 2010).

Because authoritarian pedagogy is predominantly practiced and valued in Western dance education, this way of teaching is likely to be used within dance studio classes. In both urban and rural towns in Aotearoa, this can be seen through the use of skill-based dance syllabi used in studios (such as the Asia Pacific Dance Association (2016), New Zealand Association of Modern Dance (2015), and Royal Academy of Dance New Zealand (n.d.)), and various dance competitions and performances held throughout the year (for example: Alana Haines Australasian Awards, 2019; DanceBrandz, 2019; Performing Arts Competitions Association of New Zealand Inc, 2018). In her study of dance education in Aotearoa, Liahona Walus (2019) confirmed these Western approaches to teaching are present within dance classes, sharing that “to be a dancer in New Zealand is to meet the image of sensualized perfection, the image society has painted because of traditional values that are constantly being reinforced by media” (p.29). Walus (2019) problematises this further, explaining these ideal images and traditional values illustrate that “the current Western dance culture values the aesthetic above the intrinsic, and values dance that is skill based over any connection to self, community, or place; echoing market values of product over process” (p.29). Therefore, Western and traditional dance culture perpetuates skill mastery, teacher authority and expectations of who can participate in dance, while also limiting the potential to allow space for creative and inclusive dance pedagogies. These traditional dance values may promote universalism, foster disconnection to self and community, and create feelings of exclusion and alienation for young people in Aotearoa. This study seeks to investigate whether the dance studio teachers are also employing an authoritarian pedagogy in their dance studio classes, and how this could be contributing to exclusion of some young people.

When considering the ways dance can be taught in dance studio classes, a further potential issue lies with the pedagogical strategies and knowledge that the dance teachers rely on and use in their practice. As Green (2003) explains, “this traditional pedagogical approach is more closely associated with an unchanging way of teaching dance, an approach that has been handed down from generation to generation” (p.99-100). Walus (2019) further explains that “how a dancer is taught generally prescribes the way they live in their body, how they continue to dance, and how they teach dance” (p.28). This can be problematic given the changing demographic both globally and within Aotearoa (as discussed in Section 2.1.1). As McCarthy-Brown (2018) argues:

Many dance educators are implicitly taught how to maintain whiteness instead of creating a learning space that genuinely embraces inclusive diversity. Whiteness is maintained in the co-opting of dances created outside the whitestream, decontextualizing the ways in which

dances are taught and performed, and reinforcing the dance hierarchy that elevates Eurocentric dance aesthetics (p.485).

Therefore, if the dance studio teachers seek to teach in a particular way without reflecting or developing their pedagogical approaches, they too may be maintaining their whiteness and ethnocentric bias. While this study does not implicitly seek to investigate how the dance studio teachers construct their pedagogical approaches, or what informs their approaches, there may be space for reflection on the ways they do teach dance, and how this relates to the ways they recognise and respond to cultural difference. The teachers may also reflect on how they could seek to adapt their teaching practices in response to the changing demographic of rural towns in Aotearoa.

Despite the dominance of authoritarian pedagogy within dance studio classes, some alternative pedagogical approaches have been advocated, and may be in use within dance studio contexts. Dorothy Coe (2003) argues that the objectives and aims of dance studio classes and their participants vary and therefore a range of pedagogical approaches are required to meet these needs. Alternative pedagogical approaches may provide less focus on an aesthetic appeal or product, and instead value the meaning making, process, socialisation and inclusion within the dance class (Buck, 2004; Coe, 2003; Stinson, 2016). Despite the numerous pedagogical approaches within dance education, this section of the literature review focuses on creative pedagogy and humanising pedagogy. These two alternative pedagogical approaches have been chosen as the most relevant to the research query and findings within this study, as they allow for more inclusive teaching practices to emerge within the dance studio classes (Mayes, 2010).

It has been argued that authoritative or traditional pedagogy in dance may impede the creativity of dance students due to the focus on technique and performance (Shapiro, 1999; Stinson, 2016; Watson, Nordin-Bates, & Chappell, 2010). Therefore, some teachers may utilise creative pedagogy within their dance studio classes, particularly when focussing on creative movement exploration and choreography. Creative pedagogy “places more emphasis on offering more freedom for students, to display through movement, their own imaginative responses to given ideas” (Coe, 2003, p. 41). Through the use of facilitated exploration of movement and interpersonal skills for dance making, students in the dance studio class may “move beyond the oppression present within the mind–body dualism required in ballet’s traditional authoritarian training method to develop autonomous, creative, and empowered dancers” (Berg, 2015, p. 147). It has also been suggested that creative pedagogy emphasises enjoyment and fun as part of the learning experience (Buck, 2004; Connell, 2009; Stinson, 2005). If a creative pedagogical approach is used within a dance studio class, this may assist in reducing the power imbalance and hierarchical structures between the teachers and students. Dance studio classes may in turn become more inclusive through allowing space for students’ voices and ideas to be shared. The narratives collected in this study can be explored to learn if and how the dance teachers use a creative pedagogical approach within their dance studio classes, how they might respond to cultural difference when utilising this approach, and how it can enhance inclusion within the dance studio classes.

Another pedagogy discussed extensively within education and dance education literature is humanising pedagogy. The founder of humanising pedagogy theory was Paulo Freire, who discussed dehumanisation and banking or digestive methods in education (Freire, 1970, 1982; Salazar, 2013). Within dance education, the banking model is linked to authoritarian pedagogy, as discussed above, where “knowledge selected by the teacher is uncritically deposited into the learner” (Guo & Jamal, 2007, p. 31). Freire (1982) suggests that education should draw away from approaches that are skill-focussed, test centric and product oriented, as “the focus is placed on criteria and how to fit into the one available single size for all paradigms” (Ssebuuma & Martin, 2018, p. 22). In Freire’s (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he explains how these teaching methods can elicit dehumanising practices, which culminate in oppression and domination. The power and hierarchy evident in authoritative pedagogy can be seen at play here between teacher and student. As a result, students are restricted in their ability to think critically about the world they live in, and can be seen as empty vessels that need filling (Freire, 1970). Drawing on Freire’s theory, it has been suggested that “social interactions result in a virtual monologue with the dominant culture holding forth and those on the margins shut out or [...] unknowingly participating in their own suppression” (Freire, 1970; Risner & Constantino, 2007, p. 947). Therefore, rather than maintaining a teacher-student relationship that may present hierarchy and power issues, “co-intentional education” (Freire, 1970, p. 50) can allow the oppressed and the ‘leaders’ to be equal, and as a result assist in developing a new awareness of self for the oppressed. Here, humanising pedagogy is seen as a framework and approach to teaching, where:

Teachers who embrace a humanizing pedagogy recognize the sociohistorical and political context of their own lives and their students’ lives, including the influence of societal power, racial and ethnic identities, and cultural values (Bartolomé, 1994; Freire, 1987; Nieto & Rolón, 1997; Salazar & Fránquiz, 2008). These teachers believe that marginalized students (due to race, economic class, culture, or experience) differ in how they learn, but not in their ability to learn (Huerta, 2011, p. 39).

A humanising pedagogical approach is significant in terms of this study as rather than the banking or authoritative pedagogical approaches predominantly used within dance studio classes, students are ‘fully human’ and students’ agency and ownership of knowledge is encouraged (Freire, 1970). These understandings raise questions around the ways dance education is practised within dance studios, such as: How can teachers help students participating in a technique or competition focussed dance class be ‘fully human’? In what ways might the dance studio teachers interviewed in this study be contributing to the oppression or liberation of their students?

It is therefore important to consider humanising pedagogy in relation to inclusion and socialisation within dance studio classes. Unlike authoritative pedagogical approaches where students may be disconnected from their own and others’ social-cultural lives (Shapiro, 1999), through humanising pedagogy “the whole person develops and they do so as their relationships with others evolve and emerge” (Price & Osborne, 2000, p. 29). Buck and Meiners (2017) add to this, commenting:

At the heart of community, dance is a humanizing pedagogy (Salazar, 2013) that values respectful dialogic interaction between learner and teacher through processes of action and reflection. Salazar draws our attention to the imperative of recognizing the whole learner, that is, their lived experience and their socio/cultural context. When we 'see' the individual, we are more able to then 'see' the collectives that emerge. (p.41)

Buck and Meiners (2017) draw on Maria del Carmen Salazar's (2013) discussions of humanizing pedagogy in relation to both the individuals and groups or collectives within a community. In the context of education, they draw attention to students' backgrounds and sociocultural context, and the significance of recognising the whole learner to establishing an inclusive dance class. Therefore, applying humanising pedagogy within dance studio classes – particularly in rural towns in Aotearoa where Eurocentric practices and 'whiteness' are concentrated – may contribute to valuing diverse students for who they are, rather than just those who fit dominant Western aesthetics and practices. A concept closely related to these ideas is culturally responsive pedagogy, which will be discussed further in Section 2.3.3 of the literature review.

### **2.3 Cultural inclusion within dance studio classes**

This section of the literature review explores cultural inclusion within dance studio classes. The literature on fostering a sense of belonging and social connectedness will be discussed in relation to cultural inclusion within dance studio classes. Following this, social integration will be discussed in relation to dance studio classes as a place for social integration of culturally diverse students to occur, and the role of dance studio teachers as agents for social integration. Finally, culturally responsive dance pedagogy will be discussed as a means for promoting inclusion and social integration within the dance class. Considerations for culturally responsive dance pedagogy within dance studio contexts in rural towns in Aotearoa will also be addressed.

#### ***2.3.1 Fostering belonging and social connectedness within dance studio classes***

Fostering a sense of belonging and social connectedness has been researched and written about extensively in literature concerning education, dance and cultural difference. This area of literature is important as this study explores how dance teachers may or may not value inclusion and social connection within their dance studio classes. Accordingly, this section first discusses these ideas in relation to the concept of community, followed by an unpacking of sense of belonging and social connectedness – and how these might interconnect.

A key concept to explore in relation to sense of belonging and social connectedness is the idea of community. The exact meaning of community has been widely debated within various areas of literature, with many definitions offered. Tom Lumpkin, Sophie Bacq and Robert Pidduck (2018) recognise various types of community in their review paper, such as community as a social structure with collective sentiment (Clarke, 1973); community in relation to geographical location (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002); community as intertwined with cultural customs, belief structures and

institutions (Igoe, 2006); and community as groups of citizens participating in activities linked to political institutions (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995). Alternatively, Richard West and Gregory Williams (2017) discuss 'learning communities', which may refer to a whole school or a small classroom. West and Williams (2017) examined the boundaries of learning communities to find they were "often defined in terms of participants' sense that they share access, relationships, vision, or function" (p.1571). A key point in relation to this study is that "a learning community is identified by how close or connected the members feel to each other emotionally and whether they feel they can trust, depend on, share knowledge with, rely on, have fun with, and enjoy high quality relationships with each other (Kensler, Caskie, Barber, & White, 2009)" (West & Williams, 2017, p. 1573). This is significant to note as relationships and social engagement may be closely related to the dance studio teachers' responses to cultural difference and fostering of cultural inclusion and social integration.

Furthermore, it has been established that humans seek community and belonging (Clarke, 1973; Schaubert, 2002; West & Williams, 2017). David Clarke (1973) argues that humans seek community through a sense of solidarity and significance. Solidarity refers to a sense of belonging within a larger group, and significance recognises and values the uniqueness that everyone brings to a space. Buck and Meiners (2017) extend this concept by adding the dimension of security, whereby one feels safe to participate, contribute and be different. When considering the term community, and how one may come to feel a sense of belonging and social connectedness within the community, it is important to remember that communities can be understood as socially constructed. Thus, rather than a community being a fixed physical space or geographical location shared by people (Maclver & Page, 1961; Tonnies, 1955), communities can be understood as "an imagined and socially constructed union" (Rowe, 2015, p. 57). Taking this perspective, Benedict Anderson (1991) posits that communities are 'imagined', where "in the minds of each lives the image of communion" (p.6). It has also been suggested that people may find themselves belonging to more than one community, as stated by Rowe, Buck, and Martin (2014):

As a result of increasing global migration, social mobility and technological development, the boundaries of communities are increasingly amorphous and transient, and that individuals find themselves belonging to multiple, overlapping communities at different stages of their lives and at different times in their days (Bhabha, 1994; Foley, 1995). [...] To navigate their way through these different communities, individuals adapt their behaviour as they shift between communities, and inevitably shift the culture of the communities as they do so (Chang, 1997; Lugo, 1997) (p.187).

Rowe et al.'s (2014) discussion of overlapping communities and adaptive behaviours aligns with Bhabha's (1994) notions of hybridity, and Bennett's (1986) model of intercultural sensitivities, as discussed in Section 2.1 of the literature review. In relation to this study, this understanding shifts the idea of community from that existing within the walls of the studio, to the shared cultures and backgrounds, numerous potential communities, and social cohesion of the various groups of people dancing within it (Rowe, 2008). These imagined bonds among students may be perpetuated and strengthened through shared participation in dance classes (Buck & Barbour, 2007; Buck & Plummer, 2004). Thus, within this study community may be constructed through students' participation within

dance studio classes in towns in rural Aotearoa, as well as fostered through the dance teachers' pedagogical practices.

A sense of belonging may or may not be something the dance teachers interviewed for this study aim to foster within their dance studio classes, despite its importance when seeking to facilitate cultural inclusion and social integration. If solidarity, significance and security are to be established within the dance studio class, then the dance teacher needs to express inclusion through their class content and pedagogical strategies. This is significant when considering the Eurocentric influence and maintenance of ethnocentric bias (as discussed in Section 2.2) within many dance studio contexts and the dance teachers navigating them. A sense of belonging can be experienced through people, place, and identity, and is thus described as an emotive, embodied and relational experience (Crisp, 2010; Easthope, 2004; Taylor, 2009). Chris Weedon (2004) identifies a meaningful identity as most often linked to a sense of belonging, and for Ann Schaubert (2002), "the groups we belong to, such as family, school, church, work, community, and society, give us a sense of identity. Who we are is defined by the groups to which we belong" (p.145). These aspects of belonging mean a student's sense of belonging can be impacted by many factors within a dance studio class, raising questions about the dance studio teacher's role in constructing the dance studio class, and how they can contribute to fostering a sense of belonging for both majority and minority cultural groups within the dance class.

These issues are important to consider, as sense of belonging can be experienced in various ways. For example, drawing on Berry's (1997) theory of acculturation, sense of belonging may be related to the concepts of integration, assimilation, segregation and marginalisation. This is supported by Weedon (2004), who explains "a sense of belonging can be variously found in families, communities and groups united by oppression (real or imagined) or marginalization" (p.157). Petra Vergunst (2008) discusses the concept of the categorisation of identity when considering belonging, such as 'locals' versus 'migrants'. This is problematic as it can neglect the diversity within these groups, lead to exclusion through segregation, or diminish cultural difference (Berry, 1997; Findlay, Hoy, & Stockdale, 2004; Vergunst, 2008). This concept is further articulated by Beth Crisp (2010), who discusses how "people don't always feel they readily belong in the places or groups where one might imagine they fit, or they may feel they belong in situations in which they might readily be considered to be an outsider" (p.124). Therefore, belonging can create a situation of "insiders and outsiders" (Crisp, 2010, p. 124). This has relevance for the context of this study where both the dance studio classes, and the wider rural community may be made up of 'local residents' and 'migrants' – or dominant and non-dominant cultural groups. Considering the various ways belonging can be experienced raises questions around how culturally diverse young people might experience belonging within a dance studio class. Alternatively, in relation to this study's research question, how might the dance teachers perceive or expect their students to belong within their dance classes? Further, can ethnocentric bias and dominant Western practices lead to assimilative expectations, where students may 'belong' within the status quo?

Keeping in mind the study's focus on dance studio teachers' perceptions and expectations and drawing on Jacques Derrida's (1968, 1982, 1998) concepts of hospitality and difference, dance teachers may seek to foster belonging for students by making them feel welcomed and included. However, "according to Derrida, at the moment we welcome someone we have already insinuated that we belong here" (Langmann, 2010, p. 339). Welcoming or extending hospitality may establish the binary roles of 'host' and 'guest' based on the assumption that the "host is at home, either literally in his house or homeland or more broadly in his cultural or social identity [while] the guest is a stranger, an incomer, a possible trespasser" (Langmann, 2010, p. 339). Within a dance studio context this binary and hierarchy may be constructed between the teacher and students, as well as between minority and majority cultural groups. Thus, welcoming may imply "you are permitted to come and I shall thereby grant you some of my space and time, for I rightfully belong here" (Plant, 2003, p. 440). This aligns with Duane Crawford, Edgar Jackson and Geoffrey Godbey's (1991) findings on the presence of hierarchy within the "dance world", where "the hierarchy functions as a series of levels to which individuals must gain admittance [and] teachers and choreographers serve as gatekeepers, deciding who may enter" (p.19). In this sense, boundaries may be established at the entrance of the dance studio, where the dance teachers are the 'gate keepers' who welcome students into their classroom. As such, this study will investigate how this might be occurring among the dance teacher interviewees, as well as what factors, including ethnocentric bias, may be influencing the ways teachers 'welcome' students into their dance studio classes.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, another key aspect is social connectedness, which in this study applies to the relationships and interactions within the dance studio classes. A sense of belonging and social connectedness can contribute to cultural inclusion in various ways. Crisp (2010) studied both the significance and relatedness between sense of belonging and social connectedness, concluding that "whereas belonging is associated with subjective notions of identity (Furlong, 2003; Ward, 2009), connectedness relates more to participation in societal organisations or social networks" (p.124). It is also suggested that "the language of social connectedness recognises acceptance, opportunity, equity, justice, citizenship, expression and validation as the machinery of connectedness" (Taket et al., 2009, pp. 3-4). Therefore, fostering social connectedness within a dance studio class may help foster inclusion and social integration for diverse students. Within the context of this study, social connectedness may occur between the teacher and student, between individual students, and between a student and the larger group. Social connectedness can also relate to participation, the idea of settling in a community, or exist within a collective identity. Thus social connectedness is significant for this study as it may contribute to inclusion and social integration, both within the dance studio context and the wider rural community. This study will explore whether the dance studio teachers value social connectedness within their teaching practices, and how they might seek to foster social connectedness with and among their students.

Within the literature, writers discuss difficulties such as feelings of isolation and alienation experienced among non-dominant cultural groups within rural areas, particularly in relation to

interactions and social connectedness between dominant and non-dominant groups (Kneafsey, 2000). This is important to consider given the context of this study situated within rural towns. Alistair Ager and Alison Strang (2008) highlight the significance of the “fundamental role that social connection is seen to have played in driving the process of integration at a local level. Indeed, local respondents commonly identified social connection to be for them the defining feature of an integrated community” (p.177). Thus within rural towns where there is usually one strong dominant cultural group and many non-dominant cultural groups, social connectedness plays a significant role in social integration and cohesion. It is therefore possible that difficulties may be experienced by students of non-dominant cultural groups within the dance studio class due to the students lacking a sense of belonging and social connectedness. This investigation of the ways dance studio teachers navigate and construct the learning environment seeks to question how the dance studio teachers’ intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivities may contribute to students’ social connectedness and participation with the dance studio class.

With regard to understanding the concept of social connectedness, van Bel, Smolders, IJsselsteijn, and de Kort (2009) explain there are two measures – one at the individual level and one at an overall collective level. This can be likened to acculturation, which also occurs at the group and individual level. As discussed earlier in the literature review, “at the group level, [acculturation] involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person’s behavioural repertoire” (p.698-699). Also relevant in this context is Robert Putnam’s (2007) view of social capital as consisting of social bonds, social bridges, and social links. Ager and Strang (2008) differentiate between them, saying “while social bonds describe connections that link members of a group, and social bridges connections between such groups, social links refer to the connection between individuals and structures of the state, such as government services” (p.181). In particular, social bonds or bonding capital are relevant in the dance studio class where the individuals in the class may develop social connectedness, which in turn enhances social integration. Considering the relationships between sense of belonging and social connectedness, these may occur in various ways, which is important to recognise when exploring how dance teachers may try to foster belonging and connectedness within their dance classes. Crisp (2010) suggests at least four different associations between belonging and connectedness: “connectedness as a precursor to belonging, connectedness reinforcing belonging, connectedness but not belonging, and belonging without connectedness” (p.125).

Inclusion and exclusion have been written about extensively within theory and research studies. Derrida’s concept of differance offers a theoretical perspective. Lasse Thomassen (2018) draws on differance, stating inclusion and exclusion “are not simply opposed options, but stand in an undecidable relation, where the latter of each pair simultaneously makes possible and limits the former” (p.8). Within the literature, writers discuss the complexities around inclusion and exclusion within dance education, and question how inclusion is or is not being fostered. Rowe et al. (2018) suggest the need to critically reflect on how “diverse and well-meaning socio-political agendas in

existing 'inclusive' dance education practices may actually extend exclusion within the dance class" (p.100). Similarly, Green (2000) explores the roles of dance teachers and questions their power and authority, suggesting "we may need to look at the ways we are complicit in disempowering marginalised groups" (p.63). Amanda Waring and Carolynne Mason (2010) studied ways to promote social inclusion for young people in sports, pointing out that "it is not enough for us to simply open our doors and sit back and watch the local community come flooding in. You can't just include individuals by not excluding" (p.522). These ideas from theory and research highlight the complexities surrounding inclusion and exclusion within dance practices. It is important to recognise that inclusion and exclusion do not exist within a binary, and that perceptions and experiences of inclusion/exclusion can be understood and portrayed in a variety of ways.

Many see dance classes as a context for fostering belonging and social connections, in turn contributing to inclusive dance practices (Kaufmann, 2006; Zitomer, 2016). For example, Peter Brinson (1991) explains that dance can promote sensitivity in working with others, encourage collaborative learning and promote self-confidence and self-esteem. Barbara O'Connor (1997) suggests that through social interactions within the dance class, dance creates "instant communities" (p.156). Judith Hamera (2007) explains that dance connects people who may not have much in common, and Adam Benjamin (2008) speaks of opening channels of communication between strangers. When addressing diversity and students' cultural differences, it has been suggested that a sense of belonging and social connectedness can assist in accepting and integrating these differences (Ahmed, 2004; Alberta Education, 2011; Zitomer, 2016).

Pedagogical approaches such as creative pedagogy and humanising pedagogy (as mentioned in Section 2.2) can be used by dance teachers to foster a sense of belonging and social connectedness in the dance studio. These approaches may include various teaching methods that seek to increase inclusion and social integration. For example, collaborative teaching approaches allow students to "potentially understand more about one another's different cultures and perspectives, which is necessary for life beyond the dance studio space that embraces differences in the world" (Ssebuuma & Martin, 2018, p. 22). The dance teacher may actively attempt to break the hierarchies of the teacher-student relationship through a more relaxed, informal, and friendly approach in order to create a community setting where students feel connected and safe to contribute (Ssebuuma & Martin, 2018; Vandeyar, 2010). The use of circular formations also allows for a "shared power relationship" (Vandeyar, 2010), where all students are seen, connected, and valued (Bishop & Glynn, 2000; Rowe, 2003). Additionally, the ability to bring aspects of the students' individual lives in to the dance studio class may assist with an inclusive learning environment (Freire, 1982). The complexities of inclusion and exclusion and the ways dance teachers can use pedagogical strategies to navigate these suggests the dance teachers hold a significant role in relation to fostering inclusion and social integration within dance studio classes. This research seeks to investigate how dance teachers recognise this role, and how they may be contributing to inclusion and exclusion within dance studio classes through their responses to cultural difference.

### **2.3.2 Social integration and the dance studio teacher's role**

Following on from suggestions that dance teachers have the ability to foster belonging and social connectedness, it can be argued that when considering culturally diverse students within dance studio classes, dance teachers hold a significant role as “agents of integration” (Anttila et al., 2018). In the context of this study, social integration refers to the ways students are included within both the dance studio class and the wider community. This is particularly significant for minority cultural groups within rural towns where marginalisation and segregation may be emphasised. Social integration can be associated with equality and social justice within multicultural groups. Geneva Gay (1994) discusses how both multicultural education and cultural pluralism are grounded in principles of freedom, equality and justice, and further explains:

These are essentially moral imperatives, since democracy rather than being a political structure is more a philosophical ideal and social system in which all individuals are considered to be equal in significant ways. However, this does not mean that all people have the same abilities, interests, needs, or circumstances. They are equal in being human, mortal, possessed of body, mind, and spirit, and they are engaged in a continuing search for truth, right, and goodness. (p.33)

Therefore, seeking social integration involves recognising and including the similarities and differences of the students within the ‘social system’ present within dance studio classes. This approach is understood in a similar way by Vergunst (2008), who describes one perspective of “social integration in terms of crossing boundaries between ‘them’ and ‘us’” (p.918). As an agent of social integration, how then might dance teachers navigate and cross the boundaries between ‘them’ and ‘us’ in relation to the teacher-student dynamic, and minority-majority dynamic? This is perhaps critical when considering the Eurocentric dance teacher within multicultural education. As such, the study explores how the dance teacher interviewees utilise, or do not utilise, their roles as agents of social integration.

Alternatively, social integration can also be aligned with assimilation, where “there is the assumption that migrants should adapt to the ways of conduct” of the host community (Vergunst, 2009, p. 253). As Elefterakis Theodoros, Gogou Lela and Kalerante Evaggelia (2018) explain, “it is noteworthy that the ongoing migration to industrially developed countries, namely the U.S.A., has put the issue of social integration at the forefront in the sense of cultural assimilation by the domineering culture” (p.2). They note that this approach has been criticised as leading to discrimination and exclusion (Theodoros et al., 2018). Migrants to rural towns in Aotearoa may similarly be expected to fit in to their host communities (Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Aligning with Berry’s (1997) theory of acculturation and integration, the concept of a two-way process is relevant to social integration. Vergunst (2008) explains:

Whether social integration takes place is dependent on whether the migrant is willing to integrate, and whether the migrant him or herself feels part of the community-of-place. Importantly, it is also dependent on whether the community-of-place is willing to accept the migrant as one of them. This understanding even allows for the possibility that people born and raised in the locality do not perform in line with the local norms for social interaction, and hence are not perceived as fully belonging to the community-of-place. (p.255)

In this sense, the dance teacher's contribution to social integration may be heavily influenced by their ethnocentric bias, as well as the dance students' willingness to participate. This perhaps emphasises the need to foster a sense of belonging and social connectedness, in order to promote inclusive practices rather than exclusion.

Despite the growing tension and rise of discrimination in parts of the Western world (Rowe et al., 2018), multiculturalism and social integration are considered valuable within our communities. Given that social integration can lead to equity, social justice, and inclusion, it has many advocates among policy makers, writers and scholars. Social integration is considered key for migrants, particularly within government and community organisations (Immigration New Zealand, 2016; United Nations Development Programme, 2009). According to the Aotearoa Labour and Immigration Research Centre (2012), "given the fact that 1:4 New Zealanders were born overseas, one of the highest [migration] figures in the developed world, [...] we must do all we can to help migrants settle in and to stay for the longer term". In addition, Immigration New Zealand (2016) developed a Migration Settlement and Integration strategy, which aims to assist migrants in feeling comfortable to "make New Zealand their home, participate fully and contribute to all aspects of New Zealand life" (n.p). This highlights the value of, and intention toward a cohesive multicultural community within Aotearoa. Derek McGhee (2005) also describes how knowledge of, contact between, and respect for diverse cultures within our communities is significant for community cohesion. This vision is recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a global organisation that works to "help people live as global citizens free of hate and intolerance" (UNESCO, 2019, n.p). Buck and Meiners (2017) cite UNESCO's argument that "achieving a sustainable, peaceful developing world requires much more than political regulations and financial incentives. We need fundamental changes in the way people think and act" (p.40). As a result, as identified by Buck and Meiners (2017), arts and cultural education, including dance, have been advocated for within various UNESCO policies (UNESCO, 2005, 2006, 2011, 2012). In this approach, social integration means individuals of diverse socio-cultural backgrounds can actively participate in society with a sense of belonging, social connectedness, and feelings of being equal, valued and included. This is significant in terms of the argument that classrooms are "becoming more culturally and politically complex" (Anttila et al., 2018, p. 2). However, in line with the suggestion that policies alone are not enough to promote social integration, dance teachers may be able to initiate the 'fundamental changes' needed to foster inclusion. So how might social integration occur within the dance studio class, and what is the dance teacher's role?

Education in both formal and informal settings is a crucial context for social integration. John O'Niell (2001) argues that while government should lead, successful integration is heavily dependent on all sectors of society, including education. Ager and Strang (2008) state education is an "important place of contact with members of local host communities, playing an important role in establishing relationships supportive of integration" (p.172). UNESCO also recognises informal education "as a crucial means of addressing 21<sup>st</sup> century social, economic, and environmental challenges" (Rowe,

2016, p. 95), and school plays “a special role in social integration, particularly where children of foreign origin [are] concerned” (European Court of Human Rights, 2017, p. 1). Clearly, young people’s participation in education, such as dance studio classes, is significant for fostering social integration and inclusion. Theodoros et al. (2018) state that schools shape future citizens “paving the way towards a citizens’ society in which social differences will be eliminated” (p.2). Buck and Meiners (2017) suggest that dance is an agent for reflection, change and transformation, and sense that “increasingly young people are seeking ways to engage with change and with diverse communities” (p.39). Similarly, Antonio Ssebuuma and Rose Martin (2018) write about how they have “observed young people feeling disengaged and disconnected to the community and culture they are within”, yet, at the same time, “as teaching practitioners we have seen moments when experiential dance encounters have enabled young people to simultaneously explore and embrace diversity and belonging” (p.19). Therefore, dance can be a powerful means for fostering an inclusive and socially integrated community, and dance teachers have a driving role in facilitating dance experiences for young people.

Buck and Meiners (2017) emphasise the significance of the dance teacher’s role within our diversifying communities:

Achieving a sustainable humanistic society requires educators to advocate for a vision of a society that values diversity, compassion, tolerance, critical thinking, safety and inclusivity. What role do we as dance educators have in working toward such a humanistic society? As our cities grow, our communities become increasingly culturally diverse. The environmental challenges are ever increasing with shifting health concerns. Expectations of education, skill development and careers are also changing. How will we as dance educators respond to these changes? How do we engage in the debates that shape our times and contribute to the sustainable development of future societies? (Buck & Meiners, 2017, p. 40)

Buck and Meiners (2017) recognise that more culturally diverse communities and changing expectations of education mean dance educators cannot continue teaching as they traditionally have if seeking to work towards inclusion and social integration. The ‘debates that shape our times’ include those surrounding exclusion, discrimination, whiteness and Eurocentrism. These debates are emphasised as significant to a sustainable humanistic society where equity, justice and inclusion are practised not only within the wider community, but also specifically within dance studio contexts. The questions raised by Buck and Meiners (2017) are explored within this study to provide some insight into educators’ responses within a dance studio context.

This recognition of dance teachers’ roles as agents of social integration highlights the Eurocentric and Western dominance of dance studio classes, and ways pedagogical practices are influenced by ethnocentric bias. Doug Risner and Susan Stinson (2010) reflect on this challenge, suggesting:

Pierre Bourdieu (1986) reminds us that every child enters the classroom with plentiful cultural capital including languages, symbols, knowledges, aesthetic preferences, and other cultural assets (Fowler, 1997). However, “classrooms often do not value, acknowledge, or use the cultural capital of some groups of students” (Brooks & Thompson, 2005, p. 49) (p.14).

As discussed within the paradigm of humanising pedagogy, acknowledging the social and cultural backgrounds of students allows them to be 'fully human'. However, if classrooms remain Eurocentric, this will likely deny some students the opportunity to fully participate within the dance class. It has been commonly assumed "that different cultures are working along the same social and cultural values as Eurocentric dance education" (Mabingo, 2015, p. 135), so current education practices and pedagogies will work for all students. However, there are calls for such assumptions to be re-examined within dance studio classes and the pedagogical practices of dance teachers (Ashley, 2014; Mabingo, 2015). As Shibao Guo and Zenobia Jamal (2007) explain, these assumptions are problematic when they "become the basis from which to interact with minority cultural groups" (p.34). These ideas around ethnocentric bias and assumptions are further explored in Anttila et al.'s (2018) study with physical education teachers in Finland. The researchers identified that "physical education teachers often belong to the majority culture and thus, need to be aware of their privileged position, as well as cultural and social practices that may maintain unequal participation in physical education" (Anttila et al., 2018, p. 2).

It is important to note that holding the role as agents of social integration may be challenging for dance teachers. As Elizabeth Melchior (2011) notes, "responding to the diverse needs and interests of students in the classroom is increasingly challenging for teachers" (p.119). Similarly, Saloshna Vandeyar (2010) identifies that "the greater challenge ahead goes beyond accommodating cultures in terms of the celebratory approach" (p.356). Vandeyar (2010) highlights the potential to move beyond assimilative perspectives of social integration in teaching, which may require a shift in perspective or worldviews held by dance teachers. This can be considered in relation to the development of intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivities (Bennett, 2013). From a dance teacher's perspective, "the development of intercultural competence may be seen as a transformative learning process, involving changes in habits of minds and consequently, adjustments in actual pedagogical practice" (Anttila et al., 2018, p. 619). However, Jack Mezirow (2009) notes that "having a positive experience with one of these groups may change an ethnocentric point of view but not necessarily change one's ethnocentric habit of mind regarding other groups" (p.93). Thus, reflection becomes a significant aspect of the dance teacher's role to ensure they consider potential ethnocentric bias and employ appropriate pedagogical approaches. Buck and Meiners (2017) pose the question, "Can we as dance educators let go of who we have been and embrace new and diverse roles for dance in our rapidly changing communities?" (p.40). Alternative pedagogies such as humanising pedagogy may provide the opportunity for dance teachers to 'let go' of the way they were taught, with its authoritative pedagogical approaches and ethnocentric practices, and 'embrace new and diverse roles' as agents of social integration.

### ***2.3.3 Culturally responsive dance pedagogy within Aotearoa dance studio classes***

Building on the notion of dance studio teachers as agents of social integration, the pedagogical approaches they utilise could be significant in fulfilling this role. In Section 2.2.2, humanising pedagogy was identified as an alternative pedagogy for use in dance education. Within a multicultural

context, arts and dance education are acknowledged for both their benefits and challenges. The Ministry of Education (2014) in Aotearoa advocates for the arts within the school system saying they are “powerful forms of expression that recognise, value, and contribute to the unique bicultural and multicultural character of Aotearoa New Zealand, enriching the lives of all New Zealanders” (p.20). Furthermore, Alfdaniels Mabingo (2019) argues that a multicultural dance class “can allow students and teachers to value the abundance of knowledge, insights, and perspectives that are inherent to the dance forms” (p.49). It is also suggested in the literature that multiculturalism presents a goal of both celebrating differences as well as emphasising people’s commonalities (Burn, 2005; Shapiro, 2015). Jeff Meiners and Robyne Garrett (2015) further suggest that “participation in dance may counter the production of inequalities driven by poverty, racism and cultural and physical difference” (p.11).

Engaging in multicultural dance education may therefore assist in fostering cultural inclusion and social integration as people are connected through their similarities and differences. However, despite the potential benefits and positives of multiculturalism and multicultural dance education, there may be challenges when approaching what and how dance is taught. Risner and Stinson (2010) highlight the potentially daunting and overwhelming task of teaching a multicultural dance class, where “it often ends up leaving teachers, including ourselves, feeling overwhelmed by what sometimes seems more like a collection of different needs than a community of learners” (p.2). Yet as mentioned, it has been suggested that dance teachers have a role in addressing students’ differences to promote an integrated and socially just classroom (Anttila et al., 2018; Mabingo, 2019; Risner & Stinson, 2010). To address this, dance teachers need to consider how to teach dance in contextually and culturally relevant or responsive ways – with an awareness of internationalised worldviews (Ashley, 2014; Kerr-Berry, 2004; Mabingo, 2019; Risner & Stinson, 2010).

Culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy, terms often used interchangeably within literature, draw on humanising theories and may provide an appropriate strategy to foster inclusion and social integration. Following Freire (1970), culturally responsive pedagogy seeks to create a more humane “pedagogy of the oppressed” for minority groups of marginalised students (Salazar, 2013, p. 140). As Mabingo (2019) explains, “culturally relevant teaching and culturally responsive teaching were developed to address the needs of underprivileged students who were not achieving on the same scale as children who identified with the dominant culture” (p.17). Similarly, James Banks (1974) argues that educators should respect the cultural characteristics of minority youth and reflect this within the classroom, as “minority students should not be taught contempt for their cultures” (p.165). This is in line with previous arguments outlined within the literature review that dance teachers should consider what and how they are teaching, and which further emphasise consideration for who they are teaching within their dance studio classes. Elaborating on this, Freire (1970) stresses:

What I have been proposing is a profound respect for the cultural identity of students—a cultural identity that implies respect for the language of the other, the colour of the other, the gender of the other, the class of the other, the sexual orientation of the other, the intellectual

capacity of the other; that implies the ability to stimulate the creativity of the other. But these things take place in a social and historical context and not in pure air. (p. 307–308)

Freire's description of cultural identity emphasises understanding of the socio-cultural history and contexts of students' lives as significant to humanising pedagogy (as discussed in Section 2.2.2). Geneva Gay (2010) and Timothy Baldwin (2015) have also discussed how culturally responsive pedagogy maintains that all cultures hold value, and can both offer knowledge and learn from other cultures. Therefore, culturally responsive pedagogy represents a "transformational and revolutionary" (Salazar, 2013, p. 141) approach to multicultural dance education which has the potential to "heal the wounds of colonization" (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008, p.12) and may promote inclusion and social integration. Culturally responsive pedagogy "intentionally foregrounds important questions about culture so that the relationship between culture, pedagogy, and learning becomes visible" (Baldwin, 2015, p. 106). This 'important questioning' about culture is explored throughout this critical study of the dance studio context within rural towns in Aotearoa, which explores how culturally responsive pedagogy might be utilised within dance studio classes to foster social integration and inclusion.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is seen as a significant approach to dance education. As Mabingo (2015) describes, the approach is "necessary in a globalized and demographically diverse dance education environment, since how pedagogies are applied in teaching dances influences the strategies, abilities, and viewpoints from which students draw interpretations from their learning experience" (p.135). Many scholars have addressed the role that educators have when engaging with students of diverse social-cultural backgrounds. Rainy Demerson (2013) suggests that a "culturally responsive classroom requires the teacher to acknowledge that his/her perspective of acceptable behaviour and methods of participation are not universal" (p.6), and that the teachers should "consider multiple models of intervention to welcome all students and still establish a system of discipline in which everyone can cooperate" (p.6). It is also suggested that "teachers need to be non-judgmental and inclusive of the cultural backgrounds of their students in order to be effective facilitators of learning in the classroom" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 64).

Building on this, a culturally responsive pedagogy may also allow for shifts in power and greater social cohesion within the dance class, as Mabingo (2019) further explains:

Within this structure of culturally responsive teaching, students can be affirmed in their culture and learn how to affirm others in theirs. Dance educators, as teachers in the arts, have an opportunity to make a significant impact if we value the artistic and cultural expression of students—and utilize their cultural knowledge as a conduit for learning. (p.18)

From this quote we can understand that allowing students to be affirmed in their cultures and learn how to affirm others allows for shared relationships and power structures as each person and their culture are considered significant. With regard to the hierarchical division between the teacher and student, Rowe (2008) suggests an anti-hegemonic approach may allow for multiple pedagogues to be fostered within the dance class. In this sense, "rather than depending on an individual decision-maker to guide this process, such an approach might reflect the anti-hegemonic goal of maintaining

community cohesion through collective input on cultural actions” (Rowe, 2008, p. 16). From a humanising perspective, attempts to understand and collectively integrate students’ differences may present the opportunity to draw on the students’ “funds of knowledge” (Salazar, 2013, p. 134) through recognising the students’ sociocultural backgrounds and valuing the knowledge and experience they bring to the class (Freire, 1970). Within the dance studio class, the teacher should acknowledge the diverse backgrounds to “reintroduce and give value to knowledge represented from the non-European world” (Vandeyar, 2010, p. 355) and promote cultural hybridity. Culturally responsive pedagogy is a key paradigm for this study as the research question asks how the dance teachers are responding to cultural difference within their dance studio classes. This raises the issues of how the dance teachers might be utilising culturally responsive pedagogy, or other approaches, within their teaching practices, and how might their teaching practices contribute to the inclusion and social integration of the dance students.

## **2.4 Summary**

This chapter explored the literature relevant to this doctoral research. Key ideas were presented and critically examined, and issues and questions raised that will be explored further throughout the discussion chapters of this thesis.

First, key theories and concepts surrounding cultural inclusion were investigated. Multiculturalism was discussed both globally and in relation to rural Aotearoa. The concepts hybridity and cultural integration were presented as a rationale for cultural inclusion. Multiculturalism and multicultural education were discussed in relation to social justice and how cultural diversity is perceived and managed. Acculturation was presented as a useful framework for understanding social encounters, and tensions identified around the ways dance teachers may interact with culturally diverse people and potentially expect assimilation, which may work against integration. Intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivities were then introduced, with Bennett’s (1986) developmental model of intercultural sensitivities (DMIS) identified as a key guiding theoretical framework for this thesis.

Second, dance education in a studio context was considered both globally and within Aotearoa. This section of the review explored what dance is being taught in this context, and how the dance is being taught. The review identified the dominance of Western practices, and how Eurocentrism and whiteness are maintained within dance studio classes globally and in Aotearoa. Mainstream media such as television dance shows were highlighted as having a strong influence on the genres of dance being taught, the expectations of who can participate, and how dance is taught in this context. Additionally, authoritative pedagogical approaches were highlighted as the dominant teaching practice within dance studio contexts, where power and control are exerted over students. Here, the influence of mainstream media as well as ethnocentric bias and unchanged practices were identified. Alternative pedagogies were presented such as creative pedagogy and humanising pedagogy, where power imbalances may be shifted, and students’ similarities and differences are valued within dance studio classes.

Finally, the third section of the literature review sought to explore cultural inclusion within dance studio classes in relation to fostering a sense of belonging and social connectedness, dance teachers' roles as agents of social integration, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Concepts of sense of belonging and social connectedness were discussed, and both were recognised as integral aspects of fostering inclusion and social integration. It was then identified that dance studio teachers have an important role as agents of social integration, through advocating for equity, social justice and inclusion. Lastly, culturally responsive pedagogy was discussed as a key pedagogical approach for fostering inclusion and social integration within a multicultural context.

The review of the literature has allowed me to identify key theories and questions, which provide a theoretical foundation for this research, and will assist with reflection and analysis of the interview narratives throughout the discussion chapters of this thesis.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter outlines and discusses the theories and methods used in this study. I discuss my research aims and theory in the first section, where the qualitative research approach is introduced alongside post-positivist and constructivist paradigms. The second section presents ethnography as the primary research method. The next sections then provide a discussion of the research design based on a literature review and interviews as the modes of data collection, and the process of analysis is reviewed. My position as researcher in the study is then analysed, with an exploration of insider and outsider perspectives. Lastly, ethical issues and limitations are presented and discussed.

#### **3.1 Research aims and theory**

This study addresses the research question: How are dance studio teachers responding to cultural difference within their dance studio classes in rural towns in Aotearoa? Through this study I aim to investigate the perspectives, experiences and understandings of dance studio teachers in rural towns in Aotearoa. Through the use of interviews, and with the support of a literature review, I seek to present multiple meanings through narratives that explore how dance studio teachers are recognising cultural difference within a dance studio context, how they reflect on their practice, and how they respond to cultural difference within their dance studio classes. To investigate my research question, this study utilises a qualitative method incorporating post-positivist and constructivist paradigms. These will be discussed further in the following sections.

##### ***3.1.1 Qualitative research***

A qualitative approach was selected for this study as I was seeking to explore and give value to the understandings and experiences of individuals (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Ryan, 2006). Qualitative research is a form of interpretive inquiry where I as the researcher can interpret the shared narratives of the dance studio teachers who were involved in the study. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2005) write that “qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (p.3). They further state that from these practices, researchers attempt to make sense of or interpret the meanings people hold (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Extending on this idea, “one of the main distinctive features of qualitative research is that the approach allows you to “identify issues from the perspective of your study participants” (Hennick, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011, p. 9). As a qualitative research method aims to explore the meanings and experiences of individuals – rather than provide statistical facts or test hypotheses (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2007) – this method embraced the different realities shared through participant narratives. Thus, the ideas and issues explored throughout the study represent multiple perspectives and realities, rather than generalisable ideas or one single truth (Creswell, 2007). Utilising a qualitative method assisted in developing narratives and allowed for a deep and meaningful investigation of my research question.

Qualitative researchers are often trying to develop a holistic study. Exploring multiple perspectives can assist in developing a holistic view, as well as identifying various factors involved, considering the larger picture, and understanding contextual influences on the research issues (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Hennick et al., 2011). The context is particularly significant. “Qualitative researchers go to the particular setting under study because they are concerned with context. They feel that action can best be understood when it is observed in the setting in which it occurs” (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2007, p. 5). Through being situated in the research context, information may be gathered up close through talking with and observing people (Creswell, 2007). Within education contexts in particular, qualitative researchers’ conversations often consist of what they are experiencing, how they are interpreting these experiences, and how these experiences are structuring the social world surrounding them (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2007; Psathas, 1973).

Qualitative research also allows the use of multiple kinds of data collection and analysis, as well as the inclusion of diverse theoretical frameworks (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013). As such, a carefully considered selection of methods for data collection, analysis techniques and frameworks within the qualitative paradigm (discussed further throughout this chapter) assisted in directing my research towards developing relevant and important information to work towards an understanding of the research question and fulfilment of the research aims.

### **3.1.2 Post-positivist**

A post-positivist paradigm was utilised for this study. Rather than trying to claim a single truth that may hold an objective perspective, a post-positivist approach was utilised to allow for the development of meaningful understandings of subjective experiences (Green & Stinson, 1999). A post-positivist paradigm recognises the potential to uncover multiple meanings and perspectives, with an emphasis on creating new knowledge (Green & Stinson, 1999; Ryan, 2006). It is this ‘new knowledge’ I sought to develop throughout the research – to bring new understandings of the ways dance studio teachers are responding to cultural difference within their dance studio classes.

It is also important to recognise that within post-positivist research, reality is believed to be socially constructed, in “that we construct reality according to how we are positioned in the world, and that how we see reality and truth is related to the perspective from which we are looking” (Green & Stinson, 1999, p. 93). A post-positivist paradigm therefore supported the research investigating dance studio teachers’ perspectives within teaching and learning contexts. This paradigm encompasses the participants’ epistemology (how we know reality) and ontology (how we look at reality) (Green & Stinson, 1999) through their experiences within certain contexts. This supported the aims of the research and the development of contextually relevant information throughout the process of the research.

### **3.1.3 Constructivism**

In addition to post-positivism, a constructivist paradigm contributed to developing understandings throughout the research. Constructivism offers a philosophical and methodological approach that enables an examination of people's individual meaning making around their experiences. As summarised by John Savery and Thomas Duffy (1996), "constructivism is a philosophical view on how we come to understand or know" (p.135). In this study it was applied to the dance studio teachers' perceptions and understandings within the dance studio classes. Constructivism has been grounded in education theory as it recognises that learners have prior knowledge and experiences that have been constructed from their experiences and interactions (Seifert & Sutton, 2009). While people create meaning through their interactions, each individual brings meaning that is specific to them. Therefore, while the dance studio teachers interviewed in this study are teaching in similar contexts, their meanings and understandings vary (Savery & Duffy, 1996).

When considering the social context, Michael Crotty (1998) provides the following definition of constructivism:

It is the view that all human knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context (p.42).

As this study sought to develop multiple meanings from the narratives, there is significance in the acknowledgment that all humans have diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, and they will experience and make meaning in different ways. For individuals such as the dance studio teachers in this study, as Thomas Duffy and Donald Cunningham (1996) explain, "individuals literally construct themselves and their world by accommodating experiences" (p.10). Therefore, a constructivist paradigm assisted in considering the individual and social influences reflected in the participants' narratives. This is further emphasised by Robert Bogdan and Sari Knopp Biklen (2007), who argue "the meaning that people give to their experience and their process of interpretation are essential and constitutive, not accidental or secondary to what the experience is" (p.7). For the process of analysis and developing meanings from the narratives, I also considered three aspects offered by Elliot Eisner (1998):

The first is the need for a cultivation of perception. The second is to understand the variety of ways in which the world can be described. The third is to acquire the ability to use theory so that it can explain what perception has provided (p.239).

These three aspects were significant to utilising a constructivist approach for analysing the data, as it allowed space for the integration of perceptions and theory when developing meanings and understandings from the narratives. Meaning making can occur with participants throughout the data collection and analysis. Furthermore, constructivism presents the opportunity to understand and reflect on each participant's narratives and meaning making within the context of their sociocultural backgrounds and current practices (Crotty, 1998).

### **3.2 Ethnography**

This study utilised an ethnographic research method to assist with developing an understanding of issues raised by the research question and sub-questions. Ethnographic research methods focus on “the meanings of individuals’ actions and explanations” (O’Reilly, 2005, p. 2) and assist in learning about peoples’ experiences from their own perspectives. Ethnographic methodologies focus on a certain cultural group. This study uses contemporary paradigms of ethnography, which suggest studies may take place on a smaller and broader scale – for example with a small group of teachers or students (Creswell, 2007). As Bogdan and Knopp Biklen (2007) share, “it is the framework of culture, whatever the specific definitions, as the principal organizational or conceptual tool used to interpret data that characterizes ethnography” (p.32). Ethnography was therefore selected as a suitable research methodology for this study, as I was seeking to explore and make meaning of dance studio teachers’ experiences when teaching dance studio classes in a rural context.

A crucial element of ethnographic research is the suggestion that we “learn about peoples’ lives” (O’Reilly, 2005, p. 84) through their lived experiences within a particular context. Ethnographic paradigms allow studies to focus on a certain aspect of a society or culture (Madden, 2010). Therefore, using an ethnographic method enabled this study to focus on issues of migration and cultural difference within rural towns in Aotearoa, and more specifically on responses to cultural difference as the key aspect. It also assisted in understanding the lived experiences and perspectives of the participants in this study.

Furthermore, the relationship between people and place is considered a crucial element of ethnographic study, as it is suggested “many human stories are framed by the theme of connection, or lack of connection, to place” (Madden, 2010, p. 37). Raymond Madden (2010) continues, describing the “constant ‘dialogue’ between humans and the places they inhabit” (p.38). Ethnographic research aims to present and explain people’s experiences and perspectives from the context they are located in, as well as acknowledging historical influences on the environment. As this research sought to investigate dance studio teachers’ experiences within dance studio classes, ethnography allowed for consideration of the dialogue between humans and place in a teaching and learning space. This in turn assisted and informed understanding of the multiple meanings and experiences of the participants engaging with culturally diverse students in rural towns.

The multiple meanings and experiences developed in the research also present the possibility of catalytic validity emerging through the study (Lather, 1993). Within an ethnographic research method, catalytic validity “points to the degree to which research moves those it studies to understand the world and the way it is shaped in order for them to transform it” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p.324). Therefore, catalytic validity in the research provides potential for activating change in the practices of the dance studio teachers based upon their reflections shared throughout the thesis.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The two methods of data collection used for the research were a literature review and interviews. Both methods assisted in developing material which was analysed and interpreted in order to develop a deep and meaningful investigation (Madden, 2010; O'Reilly, 2005; Weiss, 1994). The decision to use these methods of data collection over other methods such as observations and action research was based on what I hoped to explore within the research. Although observations and action-research are valid methods for generating knowledge, they were not deemed the most suitable methods for understanding the perspectives, reflections and responses of the participants in this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Weinburg, 2002). The rationale for using a literature review and interviews as the methods of data collection for this study will be discussed further in the following sections.

#### ***3.3.1 Interviews***

Interviews were the primary mode of data collection for this study. It is through interviews that new meanings can be developed in shared narratives. Initially it was my intention that the research be based on interviews carried out with a variety of people residing in rural towns, primarily people contributing to the delivery of and participation in dance teaching activities – such as dance teachers, facilitators and practitioners, as well as members of local district councils, school and community group staff members, and event organisers. Through conducting interviews, I aimed to explore a range of experiences among those engaging in dance with culturally diverse students in rural towns, and to develop new meanings and understandings in relation to the research question (Weiss, 1994).

Interviews were carried out with a range of participants including dance teachers, primarily dance studio teachers, as well as people involved in local governance from district council and other organisations, people engaging with young people through recreational activities, local migrants, and the dance students themselves. When initially carrying out my fieldwork I also interviewed six students and viewed three dance studio teachers' classes. This data collection was not used in the research as interviews with youth were limited, and only a small number of dance classes were informally viewed. Furthermore, the process of analysis, which will be discussed in Section 3.4 of this chapter, refined which interviews and narratives were used in order to refine the focus of the research. As a result, the findings of the research are drawn from interviews with seven dance studio teachers in rural towns in Aotearoa.

The seven dance teachers whose voices are included in this research range in ages from 21 to 60 years, and have been teaching dance in studio settings for a range of 3 to 45 years. Most of the dance teachers have only lived in their rural town, whereas a few have variously spent time living in a larger city and then returned or moved to a rural town. Three of the dance studio teachers have studied dance or performing arts at a tertiary level, while others may have pursued professional development opportunities through dance syllabus organisations.

Participants were recruited via formal and informal networks and snowball recruitment (Hennick et al., 2011). It was originally intended that advertisements be shared via local newspapers, databases and organisations such as Dance Aotearoa New Zealand (DANZ). However, this was not required due to the ease of recruiting participants via both formal and informal networks such as local council, schools, and studios. Snowball recruitment also took place at times after the first interviews had taken place, when interviewees were able to recommend other people in rural towns suitable to be interviewed for the study.

It was anticipated there would be a low number of research participants. Having a small number of participants allows for quality of interviews rather than focussing on quantity (O'Reilly, 2009). As mentioned previously, my study did not intend to and may not provide generalisable truths, but instead sought to develop deep and meaningful understandings for my research question.

I planned to carry out one 40-minute interview with each research participant. From the interviews carried out, I chose to retain only the data from seven dance studio teachers who presented rich and contrasting perspectives. For each of the seven dance studio teachers whose narratives form the basis of the interview component of this study, I then sought to carry out a follow-up 40-minute interview. Holding a second interview with the participants allowed me to reflect on and come back to issues and themes arising within the first interviews. The interviews were held at locations chosen by the practitioners, such as local cafes or their workplaces. This allowed them to choose a comfortable space in which to discuss their experiences. Through the participants' sharing of their experiences and perspectives, I aimed to learn about the ways they were acknowledging, reflecting on and responding to cultural differences in a teaching and learning environment, and the wider community. As the participants shared their experiences and stories, these were used to develop narratives. This 'ethnographic talking' presented a way in which I could 'be' with people within the field I was researching (Madden, 2010).

As the interviewer my intention was to treat each interview as a social encounter and site for producing reportable knowledge (Och & Capps, 2002). Through this paradigm, I attempted to "activate the respondent's stock of knowledge" (Och & Capps, 2002, p. 121), prompting narratives and themes for discussion. Madden (2010) describes ethnographic interviews as "a complicated exchange that while obviously instrumental in character, still relies on many conversational norms and patterns to help it flow and be productive" (p.69). Furthermore, an ethnographic interview can give insight into how a participant analyses, perceives and understands their experiences within their worldview (Madden, 2010).

The interviews for this ethnographic study were semi-structured and conversational. Semi-structured interviews contain elements of structured and unstructured interviews, presenting both set questions, as well as some themes to explore more openly (O'Reilly, 2009). Where a structured or closed interview tends to impose the researcher's own framework of ideas, a semi-structured and more

conversational interview may bring up discussions and questions that the researcher may not anticipate (O'Reilly, 2009; Srivastava, 2004; Weiss, 1994). Within the ethnographic method of research, semi-structured interviews present the opportunity to “gain in the coherence, depth and density of the material each respondent provides” (Weiss, 1994, p. 33), thus working to develop a fuller understanding of the experiences of the research participants. To assist the semi-structured interviews, a topic guide with suggested topics for conversation and open-ended questions was utilised. This allowed for continuity between the interviews and kept the conversations on track in relation to the research aims. Through discussions with the dance teachers I sought to gather data which would provide an insight into their cultural worldviews and how these are utilized within their dance studio and teaching practices. This data could then be analysed to develop narratives which unpack the research questions guiding this study. Some of the questions used included: How do you perceive cultural diversity, and how might you recognise cultural diversity within your studio and the wider community?; How do you think the community are responding to and managing immigration?; What role do you believe dance has with young migrants?; What kinds of people do you encounter within your teaching practices?; and, What kinds of skills do you feel you need for encountering cultural diversity? Some of the topics used included: dance teaching activities in rural towns; migrant youth in rural towns; cultural diversity and interculturalism; pedagogy and dance.

Digital audio recorders were used to record the interviews with the participants. The recorded interviews were transcribed, and participants were given the opportunity to review the material collected. Using the transcripts, I was able to reflect on the material gained through the interviews and analyse key themes that may have emerged. O'Reilly (2005) points out that the process of recording and transcribing is not selective, as memory and note taking may be. She further explains that this process “enables the storage of themes you had not considered” (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 152), which is useful when analysing the data. While transcribing the interviews myself took much more time than paying for someone to provide this service, “the closeness to the data that you achieve during this process can jumpstart the other steps of the analysis process” (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018, p.808). For me, this aided in building a greater understanding of the data and the meanings being developed.

### **3.3.2 Literature Review**

A literature review was used to explore and analyse existing theories and research in areas relevant to my study. Literature reviews provide contextual background and theory that can assist with developing understandings throughout the interview process (Weinburg, 2002). It has also been noted that ethnographic research often begins in the library. The opportunity to investigate what studies had already been carried out helped in contextualising and situating my own research within the perspectives provided by the existing literature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Madden, 2010; O'Reilly, 2005). O'Reilly (2005) explains that a literature review “locates the topic within a wider context, demonstrating why the study you propose (or have done) is timely and important” (p.34). Thus, the literature review was utilised to draw on research from relevant areas to further enhance my understanding of key ideas, themes and theories relevant to the study, as well as identify gaps in the

existing literature. Writing and research in areas such as immigration, dance studio contexts and pedagogies, and multicultural and intercultural theory helped to develop my knowledge of the context in which I intended to carry out my own research.

The University of Auckland General Library and Music and Dance Library provided numerous databases, which assisted my literature review, and access to a large supply of books in all relevant areas. I also used the University of Auckland Database, which provides access to a diverse range of online journal articles. When searching for literature some of the key words and phrases used were: migration; multiculturalism; interculturalism; dance studio classes; rural contexts; Aotearoa; teaching and learning environments; difference; culture; diversity; inclusion/exclusion; integration; pedagogy; and dance studio teacher. These words (and variations of these words) were used in various combinations so that I could gather a wide range of literature relevant for my research.

### **3.4 Process of analysis**

The interviews and review of literature were the key points of reference when developing narratives and analysing the research. The research was analysed with a thematic approach where various themes were developed from the findings. O'Reilly (2009) shares that within ethnographic practice, the process of analysis can occur while the data is being gathered. Therefore, various themes were identified and developed through the occurrence of similar ideas and topics emerging from the first interviews and throughout the study (Green & Stinson, 1999). These themes were analysed and discussed, drawing on both the material gained from the interviews and the literature review.

Additionally, theoretical frameworks helped to guide my process of analysis as they provided a set of lenses through which to view the data. O'Reilly (2005) discusses how the use of theories "help us understand the phenomena in question" (p.199), suggesting that we "often need to adapt existing theories or adopt new theoretical ideas of our own to help us make sense of what is going on around us" (p.199). My process of analysis therefore involved looking at the collected data through various theoretical lenses (such as the theories of Milton Bennett (1986, 2013), John Berry (1997, 2005), Homi Bhabha (1990, 1994), Jaques Derrida (1982, 1998), Michel Foucault (1979) and Paulo Freire (1970, 1982), and applying these theories as appropriate to develop understandings of the data.

Within this qualitative study, the data was built inductively. This means the study is not investigated against a hypotheses, but instead constructs "a picture that takes place as you collect and examine the parts" (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2007, p. 6). This has also been described as building themes from the "bottom up" (Creswell, 2007, p. 39). Accordingly, I sought to work back and forth between the data and themes until a comprehensive set of themes was established (Creswell, 2007).

Overall the process of analysis was much more rigorous than I first envisaged, and involved a process of compiling, disassembling and reassembling the data. While the nature of the analysis was very time consuming, it added to the reliability and trustworthiness of the process for developing

insightful findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). The process of analysis began as the interviews and review of the literature were being carried out, and continued through the process of transcribing the interviews, and the reading and re-reading of these narratives (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). In familiarising myself with the data I was able to acquire a sense of the entirety of the data and research context as a whole (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Upon compiling the data, the narratives were then disassembled. I used a process of coding “by which raw data are gradually converted into usable data through the identification of themes, concepts, or ideas that have some connection with each other” (Austin & Sutton, 2014, p. 439). These codes were then “put into context with each other to create themes” (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018, p. 809), which showed a bigger picture of the meanings being developed.

To assist with the thematic analysis process, I created a variety of matrices and tables to map and sort the data based on various themes and lenses. The matrices and tables were constructed by arranging the various participants’ roles, themes and emerging concepts into rows and columns in numerous Excel worksheets to provide a broad visual representation of the data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Through constructing multiple matrices and tables, I was able to shift the themes and lens through which I was analysing the data. This was time consuming and involved disassembling and reassembling the data numerous times, but, as a result, led to a thorough analysis of the data. Interview data from the dance teachers, as well as local governance, students and wider community was initially sorted and analysed within these matrices and tables. Through this process of thematic analysis, the themes shifted and became more refined, leading to the use of only dance studio teachers’ narratives. The final reassembling of the data produced narratives from seven dance teachers that appropriately addressed the research question through clearly developed themes, primarily the theoretical lens provided by Bennett’s (1986, 1993) development model of intercultural sensitivities. I used this framework to guide the development of the themes in the discussion chapters, rather than fitting them directly into Bennett’s developmental stages (as discussed in the literature review, Section 2.1.3).

### **3.5 Position of researcher**

In my position as researcher, I was both insider and outsider as I grew up in a rural setting in Aotearoa, learning and teaching in local dance studio classes. I had been immersed in a range of dance studio classes first-hand, but now intended to explore the understandings and perspectives of others. Insider research refers to research with populations of which the researchers are also members, with shared identity and experiential bases (Asselin, 2003; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Kanuha, 2000). A crucial aspect of the research was attempting to gain an understanding of various people’s own individual experiences and perspectives. As a result, I sought to present an emic perspective within the research, one which “reflects the insiders’ or research participants’ point of view” (Madden, 2010, p. 19). My use of an insider’s view was important as it allowed me to access the research participants’ perspectives and meanings throughout the interviews, perspectives I would not be able to present if holding a strictly etic perspective (Madden, 2010; O’Reilly, 2005).

Reflexivity within research was also an essential part of “managing the influence of ‘me’ on the research and the representations of ‘them’” (Madden, 2010, p. 23) as I carried out the research, and analysed and presented the findings. I recognised that throughout the research, my position incorporated both insider and outsider researcher roles. An outsider perspective relies on the researcher’s ability to detach themselves from the prejudices of the group being studied (Kusow, 2003), allowing the researcher to at times step back and see what is going on (O’Reilly, 2005). This was significant when attempting to critically analyse the narratives without being influenced by my subjective bias. It is suggested that in order to obtain “proper ethnographic reflexivity [...] we must not forget that we will always maintain some sense of the ‘outsider’” (Madden, 2010, p. 20). Madden (2010) also further suggests that we must not lose sight of the outsider’s perspective and the questions that bring the researcher to the field in the first place.

It is important here to acknowledge my previous relationships and experiences within rural settings that contribute to my insider role. It has been suggested that researchers cannot be separated from their research due to their own previous experiences and subjective perspectives of the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Stanley & Wise, 1993), and as such the research may be “informed by my own upbringing, education and history” (Madden, 2010, p. 22). The relationships and experiences I have established in rural settings create a level of subjectivity that needs to be considered throughout my research process, as well as by those reading my completed research. I want to make readers aware of my subjectivity and the elements of my insider role, and suggest they keep this awareness when considering my research. Several researchers have commended researchers’ acknowledgement of their subjectivity, as it is seen to present a more honest and trustworthy perspective throughout the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Green & Stinson, 1999; O’Reilly, 2005).

### **3.6 Ethical issues and considerations**

Ethics approval for this study was gained from the University of Auckland’s Human Participants Ethics Committee. The main consideration was obtaining the informed consent of the research participants, and treating them ethically in terms of protecting their identity and presenting the option to withdraw from the research. All community members who participated in interviews in the rural towns were asked to give informed consent. Prior to their engagement in the study, each participant was given a Participation Information Sheet, Consent Form, and a Topic Guide. These documents helped to ensure the participants were fully informed about the research purpose, the methods being used, and what would be required from them during the research process (Scott & Garner, 2013). This also allowed the participants the opportunity to approach me with any queries they may have had. Additionally, the research presented no risk of harm to the participants. Initially my intention was to use the names of participants, organisations and town names throughout the study. However, during the analysis process, it was decided that due to the nature of rural towns, the research context would be kept anonymous and pseudonyms would be used to allow myself as the researcher freedom to critically unpack and develop meanings from the narratives (Scott & Garner, 2013). The dance

teacher interviewees in this thesis are named Bella, David, Evie, Faye, Kylie, Rachel, and Taylor. Lastly, all participants had the right to withdraw from the study should they request this.

### **3.7 Challenges and limitations**

A few limitations and challenges, which were anticipated, arose during the research project. The first limitation was the size of the rural towns where the research was being carried out. As rural towns are small, only a few people with various roles in delivering dance teaching activities were involved in the data collection component. With very little dance education happening in rural schools and afterschool dance studios, the number of research participants was refined to seven dance studio teachers from rural towns in Aotearoa. As previously mentioned, this means the research does not present any generalisable truths, and it was not the intention of the study to do so. Instead, it presents multiple perspectives and understandings that may be transferrable to a variety of other communities and areas of research.

The second challenge I encountered was logistical, as I was residing in Auckland throughout this study despite my research context being rural towns. This made the data collection more challenging to carry out and increased the cost of the research project due to travel costs. Generally, flights to and from small rural towns in Aotearoa are more expensive due to the small number of flights available each day. I travelled to the rural towns for three periods of fieldwork, ranging from one to three weeks, and attempted to hold all interviews during these times. Maintaining contact with interviewees and planning in advance assisted in overcoming this challenge by ensuring interviews were organised and flights were booked before prices increased. The University of Auckland Postgraduate Research Student Support (PReSS) funds, which can be used to cover direct research costs, also assisted in managing the costs of travel. I also ensured my ethics documents such as the interview questions and topic guides were prepared in advance to maximise the time I had for interviews when travelling for fieldwork.

Lastly, a lack of statistical data and literature on migration and dance education in rural towns in Aotearoa is identified as a potential limitation and challenge of this study. As rural towns are small, there has not been much specific research or writing to provide contextual information for this study. This challenge was addressed by exploring literature related to similar contexts that is applicable to rural towns. This limitation also represents a possibility in terms of this study filling a gap in the literature.

### **3.8 Summary**

Within this methodology chapter I have discussed the research aims and theoretical framework I employed in this study, which draws on qualitative, post-positivist and social constructivist paradigms. I then discussed the research method employed, which was ethnography. Subsequently, I outlined the methods of data collection, namely semi-structured interviews and a literature review. From here,

the data analysis was discussed within a reflection on the rigorous thematic analysis carried out. Finally, I outlined my position as an insider-outsider researcher, and discussed the limitations and challenges of the research.

## **Chapter 4: How might dance studio classes be considered relevant to inclusion and socialisation?**

*Growing up in a rural town I remember two distinct experiences in dance – the typical dance studio classes and the dance classes in a community hall. In the typical dance studio setting I was learning jazz. Each week I put on my leotard and jazz shoes and rehearsed dance moves in front of a mirror for my dance exams. The teacher would treat me the same as all of the other students, and would focus on my posture and how well I pointed my toes. In the community hall, we did have some focus on what the dances looked like, but we also played games, trained to be ‘leaders’, and joined in ‘freestyle dance circles’. Here, the teacher treated me as unique and encouraged my development as an individual. In the typical dance setting we performed in front of an examiner who graded our dance technique. In the community hall we had opportunities to go out into the community and perform in front of a truck on the grass at school galas and local festivals. The biggest difference that I remember is in the typical dance setting I was just another student, whereas in the community hall I felt significant. The community hall is where I found my confidence, where I felt I belonged, and where I made lifelong friends. Thinking about it now, it wasn’t the type of classroom that I was learning dance in which made an impact, it was the teacher – what they valued, what they taught, and how they taught dance.*

My narrative above illustrates how my dance experiences as a young person variously contributed to my experiences of inclusion and socialisation within the rural town where I grew up. The various teachers who taught me dance all held differing values when teaching, and made me feel included, and sometimes excluded, in different ways. Similarly, the seven dance studio teachers who shared their narratives for this research expressed varied attitudes towards their roles as teachers within a dance studio context. Two common themes emerged from the interviews around the dance studio teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion and socialisation. This chapter seeks to identify the various ways the dance studio teachers recognise dance studio classes as a place where students can feel included and connected to others. First, their attitudes towards valuing inclusion within dance studio classes are explored in relation to recognising difference, welcoming students, and fostering a sense of belonging. Second, the dance teachers’ attitudes towards social connectedness within dance classes are explored in relation to the ways dance studio classes may foster social bonds and social bridges for the young people participating.

### **4.1 Valuing the role of dance in fostering inclusion**

A key theme that emerged from the narratives is the idea that the dance teachers value fostering inclusion within their dance studio classes. Various ideas were shared around the ways the dance teachers value and seek to include difference, welcome students, and foster a sense of belonging for their students. First, the ways the teachers recognised various differences in their students and the need to accommodate this within their dance studio classes will be discussed. Secondly, welcoming students of diverse cultures emerged as a way to include students, particularly through understanding cultural differences and utilising various pedagogies. Lastly, fostering a sense of belonging for students was considered important for fostering inclusion and will be discussed further.

### **4.1.1 Recognising difference**

When considering what inclusion within dance studio classes meant to the interviewees, the first theme explored is their attitude towards including the various perceived differences among their students. From the narratives gathered in this study, it can be understood that some of the dance teachers recognised various forms of differences amongst their students. The differences identified from the narratives include financial background, dance ability, and socio-cultural differences (Risner & Stinson, 2010; Sööt & Viskus, 2014). Upon acknowledging these differences, some of the dance teachers suggested they seek to make their dance classes accessible to accommodate the various differences, and thus promote inclusion. The following narratives illustrate the ways differences – such as financial barriers and the cost of dance classes, dance students' technical abilities, and students' socio-cultural differences – might be perceived by the interviewees as existing within the dance studio context.

Financial difficulties among students and their families was acknowledged by the dance studio teachers. Faye shared her concerns regarding the cost of dance classes, saying, “I think money is a huge thing. I don't think people have the money to pay \$125 a term.” She added that for families who have several children, “there is no way that they can afford to send them to dance”. In the following narrative Evie recognises financial differences, among others such as diverse socio-cultural backgrounds and dance abilities of students:

My main focus I guess for my dance studio is providing an environment where everybody can be involved in dance. So I really focus on making dance accessible to everybody, no matter their background, their experience, or their financial position. We try and have something for everyone and try to change it up depending on who you are [...] That's definitely a big thing I try to incorporate into the lessons. Just making it something for everyone.

Here, Evie speaks about how she wants to be inclusive, as she recognises various differences among her students that she wants to accommodate. For Evie, in order to make dance classes accessible and therefore promote inclusion, she suggests here that she does not want the provision of dance to be driven by an economic imperative. Instead, she appears to value the idea that dance should not only be for the financial elite, and seeks to find ways to accommodate financial disparities and make dance accessible. This value of making dance financially accessible is one I too try to hold within my own practice as a dance teacher. In my experience, dance studios in particular have relatively large fees per school term, making participation in dance impossible for some families.

The existing literature also suggests that dance education can be an expensive activity for participants, which means not everybody is able to afford it (see for example: Risner & Stinson, 2010; Schupp, 2018b). For some dance teachers, the fees set for providing dance are tied to meeting the demands of the market, and covering expenses (Creative Scotland, 2012; Posey, 2002; Sebire et al., 2013). In this sense, the mainstream influence on dance studios (as discussed in Section 2.2) may contribute to high prices where the cost of participating is linked to the “perceived value and commitment” to dance classes (Sebire et al., 2013, p. 113). Therefore, some dance teachers may

choose to place a higher cost on their dance classes to increase attendance at their classes. As mentioned in the literature review (see Section 2.2.1), the cost of dance perpetuates the hierarchy of Western practices within dance education, which may be problematic when seeking to include students from diverse backgrounds.

Expensive dance classes can therefore establish a financial barrier, particularly for low-income families (Waring & Mason, 2010; Withall, Jago, & Fox, 2011). Creative Scotland (2012) shares this perspective, stating “financial constraints remain a significant barrier for young people wishing to develop their talent for dance” (p.19-20). Sebire et al. (2013) considered the cost of dance programmes in their study, concluding that having to pay for dance classes may “result in recruitment bias” (p.113), as only those who can afford them will participate. Therefore, the cost of dance classes has the potential to exclude some people, and this should perhaps be considered by dance teachers who express inclusive intentions. Upon recognising these differences, some of the dance teachers, such as Evie, suggested they seek to be inclusive by “trying to have a dance class for everybody”. Some of the dance teachers thus provide a range of classes at different prices in order to make dance classes at their studios affordable. For example, Evie’s “recreational” classes are offered at a lower price than the “examination” classes. While the intention in having a lower-cost class is to be inclusive, this may reflect the earlier suggestion that a higher price is associated with value and commitment to dance. Differentiating the classes in this way may instead express exclusion and segregation towards some students, and perhaps assumes that the technique classes are for the elite (Posey, 2002). However, while recognising the challenges and rationales surrounding expensive dance classes, how might the costs of dance classes both support the efficient running of a dance studio and foster social inclusion?

In addition to financial differences, the dance teachers also recognised varying levels of dance abilities and technique or skill among students. Dance ability was often mentioned by the dance teachers within their interviews in relation to dance technique. For example, Faye shared how she would “definitely focus on technique”, and Bella wanted her students to “learn good technique”. However, both Faye and Bella also paired dance technique with wanting the students to “focus on giving it their all” (Faye) and to enjoy dance. Faye further elaborated that beyond the dance technique she tries to “give lots of encouragement and praise for the amount of effort kids put in, more so than being the best dancer”. This aligns with some of my experiences as a dance student where I was able to gain a sense of achievement through trying my best with dance technique and being equally supported among my peers in dance studio classes. These suggestions may sit in contrast with the argument that technique focussed classes are for the elite.

Picking up on these ideas of varying dance abilities among students, in the narrative below, Kylie illustrates her recognition of students’ differences, including financial differences, dance abilities and socio-cultural differences:

The kind of vision that we have is movement for everyone, so I try to be really open to everyone no matter where you come from, who you are, you can come and dance with us. Whether it's your ability, whether you're really awesome, you've been doing competitions for years and years, or whether you have done no dancing before – you can still come. Also not just your ability, but where you come from. So whether you come from a poorer background or a richer background, then you know anybody can come here, it's not kind of no go away to anyone.

Here, Kylie shares how she values inclusivity within her dance studio classes and recognises a range of differences. Her recognition of diverse student abilities is illustrated by her statement, “Whether you're really awesome, you've been doing competitions for years and years, or whether you have done no dancing before – you can still come”. The literature suggests some dance educators seek to be open to students of all abilities, which may provide an inclusive approach. According to Buck (2004), an inclusive dance class of this sort may shift focus from dance as a performative product, to dance as a participatory process, which “places emphasis upon participation, inclusion, diversity, ownership and creativity” (p.28). Stinson (1993) provides further support, suggesting a dance pedagogy where “everyone can dance”, and which is “about education rather than training” (p.136). The narratives shared by the dance teachers interviewed for the study appear to be aligned with these inclusive approaches to accommodating various dance abilities. Many of the dance teachers expressed they would like their dance classes to be accessible to people of all abilities and experience. This perspective is also illustrated in Kylie's previous narrative, where she expressed being open for anyone to “come and dance with us”. This sentiment suggests there is an embedded understanding of participating in dance together regardless of differences. Here she is valuing dancers at entry level, rather than only students with a particular skill level.

As discussed in the literature review (see Section 2.2), dance studio classes are often heavily subject to Western and Eurocentric influences, where mainstream media such as television shows perpetuate expectations of how dance should be within dance studio classes (Buck & Meiners, 2017; McCarthy-Brown, 2018). In contrast to Kylie's inclusiveness as encapsulated in the phrase “dance with us”, the literature suggests that some dance teachers may seek students of a particular skill level and body ideal (Buck, 2004; Oreck, 2007). Some dance studios use evaluations to determine who can participate in dance studio classes, such as auditions, examinations or competitions “based on criteria set by the instructors or institution” (Oreck, 2007, p. 343). As Stinson (1993) argues, evaluations and grades may be “one more way to facilitate separation and competition” (p.140). Therefore, many students who do not fit the dance studio teacher's expectations, often those within non-dominant cultural groups, may be segregated or marginalised. When reflecting further on Kylie's narrative, it appears she may also be establishing a hierarchy based on the idea that some students are better than others – for example, students with experience in competitions compared to those with no experience.

It can also be understood that dance competitions in particular are a means for identifying a ‘good’ dancer from a ‘bad’ dancer (Schupp, 2018a; Weisbrod, 2010). This may be problematic, particularly for those students who seek to be included in dance but do not wish to participate in dance

competitions. As a result, these students may come in at the bottom of the hierarchy based on dance ability, and are not being valued for who they are. This in turn leads one to question whether when Kylie says “dance with us”, she is implying a community aspect, or whether she instead means “dance for us”. While she may intend to be inclusive, the hierarchy may set up a scaffold within which the student is expected to operate in order to really be included. This seems to reflect the hierarchy within dance contexts as described by Crawford et al. (1991), where the dance studio teachers are ‘gate keepers’ and decide who enters the dance studio classes (see literature review, Section 2.3.1). If a dance teacher values those with a higher ability, this could in turn promote exclusion rather than inclusion. While Kylie seems to contradict this by suggesting students do not need to have dance ability or experience, her comments regarding competition suggest those with ability and desire may sit higher in the hierarchy. Therefore, the question can be asked: When accommodating diverse dance abilities, in what ways might hierarchy be present within the dance class, and how might this contribute to exclusion rather than inclusion?

Alternatively, and significantly for this research in particular, the dance teachers’ narratives demonstrate how they consider the students’ different backgrounds. Evie shared that she tries to provide opportunities for students “no matter their background”. Kylie also said she tries to be “really open to everyone no matter where you come from, who you are”, by which she may be referring to the students’ diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. The dance teachers perhaps imply they do not intend to use socio-cultural background as an assessment criterion to determine whether someone may or may not participate in their dance classes, and rather they seek to include students from all socio-cultural backgrounds. As discussed throughout the literature review, cultural inclusion within dance studio classes is a key theme when addressing the research question for this study. Many writers discuss the diverse socio-cultural backgrounds students carry with them, and in turn the various responses from dance teachers experienced globally (see literature review, Section 2.3.3).

The literature shares the perspectives of dance teachers who have recognised and attempted to accommodate socio-cultural differences. For example, it is suggested teachers should recognise and value the cultural backgrounds of all students to foster an open culture within the classroom (Baskerville, 2009; Sööt & Viskus, 2014). Similarly, Anu Sööt and Ele Viskus (2014) suggest the dance teacher should be “accepting and supporting the student’s cultural roots” (p.296). The idea that students’ socio-cultural differences should be accommodated is further promoted by Russell Bishop and Ted Glynn (1999), who describe the classroom as a place where “students safely bring who they are and what they know into the learning relationship, and where what students know, and who they are, forms the foundations of interaction patterns in the classroom – in short, where culture counts” (p.165-166). Additionally, Suparna Banerjee (2013) reflects on multicultural education, suggesting that classroom differences such as socio-cultural diversity may inform both teaching strategies and the way a dance teacher can “value, accommodate and apply his/her knowledge” (p.34). These perspectives all seem relevant to the dance teachers such as Evie and Kylie, who seek to include students regardless of their socio-cultural backgrounds.

Alternatively, it has been reported within the literature that socio-cultural backgrounds may be ignored and not accommodated by some dance teachers. In her discussion of cultural issues within education, Shapiro (1998) explains that “dance educators have been woefully negligent, either largely ignoring this critically important area or being superficial in their approach by making a symbolic effort only” (p.77). In addition, Atencio and Wright (2009) suggest that educators need to critically reflect on the ways hegemonic practices and power differences are produced and re-produced, which “only serve[s] to support particular types of bodies and subjects whilst devaluing those constituted as ‘Other’” (Atencio & Wright, 2009, p. 45). Therefore, through superficial and hegemonic practices, dance teachers who are oblivious or unresponsive to socio-cultural backgrounds may foster exclusion rather than inclusion within their dance studio classes. It is worth questioning how a dance studio teacher might consider students’ diverse socio-cultural backgrounds in order to foster inclusion rather than exclusion. Further exploration of this question and the attitudes towards cultural difference of all seven dance teachers interviewed for the study will be presented in chapters six and seven.

In summary, the dance studio teachers’ acknowledgement of diverse aspects of difference shows an intention to make the dance studio classes inclusive spaces in which finance, dance ability, and socio-cultural backgrounds are not barriers to participation. It appears the dance teachers recognise various forms of difference and are aware of the complexities of the students they may engage with in their dance studio classes. In particular, inclusion of cultural differences will be a key aspect drawn on throughout this thesis. While financial barriers, the cost of dance classes, and students’ dance abilities provide interesting points, these may be important avenues for future research to unpack in seeking to overcome exclusive dance education practices in rural settings. However, recognition and inclusion of difference is just one aspect of why dance studio classes are considered relevant to inclusion. The following sections will extend on inclusion of cultural difference through the themes of welcoming students and fostering a sense of belonging for students.

#### ***4.1.2 Welcoming students***

When returning to considerations of the meaning of inclusion within dance studio classes for the interviewees, the second emerging theme refers to the dance teachers’ attitudes towards welcoming students. This theme extends upon the teachers’ recognition of diverse student differences, as discussed in the previous section, and suggests that the dance teachers seek to welcome students from diverse cultural backgrounds within their dance classes to further promote inclusion. While the dance teachers’ perceptions of cultural difference and their responses will be explored further in the following chapters, I seek to first understand what welcoming may mean to the interviewees when valuing inclusion of culturally diverse students in their dance studio classes. The dance teachers’ narratives illustrate their intention to welcome students by understanding and learning about their cultural differences and utilising various teaching strategies. However, despite their inclusive intentions, the dance teachers’ own personal biases need to be considered, as binaries of host/guest or us/them may be established.

Dance educators write about welcoming in a variety of ways in the literature. The concept of welcoming diverse students is often closely aligned with fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment. Susan Koff, Charlotte Neilsen, Ann Brown and Jeff Meiners (2016) explain that “dance creates a welcoming, safe environment to grow and learn as individuals as well as within a community” (n.p). Michelle Zitomer (2017) further suggests that an inclusive and welcoming environment allows participants to “feel invited, safe, accepted, respected, included, heard and understood” (p.25). It has also been suggested that being welcoming and promoting a welcoming environment are significant for overcoming barriers to participation in activities for young people (Croydon Youth Arts, 2016; Kirby, Levin, & Inchley, 2013). In relation to the idea of the role of dance teachers as agents for integration (see literature review, Section 2.3.2), Merlin Thompson (2018) suggests that teachers should consider their role as advocates, where “advocating is all about welcoming students into unconditional learning processes that respect students’ personality” (p.61). Therefore, it may be important for the dance teachers to consider their role in welcoming students as this may impact the ways inclusion or exclusion is experienced within the class.

Within the interviews for this study, many of the dance teachers suggested it was their intention to welcome students in order to promote inclusion. For example, Rachel shared that she tries to “welcome in all students”, and Bella said, “We always welcome anyone, we wouldn’t turn anyone down.” Evie also supported this perspective, explaining that she aims to be welcoming of students from various cultural backgrounds by being aware of their differences and responding appropriately:

I think you’ve got to just be welcoming to everybody and interested about where they come from, and just about different ways that you can include them. So if somebody’s having this issue, we just find a way to solve the problem, rather than just having ‘this is exactly what we’re going to offer, join us or don’t’.

Evie’s narrative illustrates that she recognises her students come from different backgrounds and values welcoming them into her classes. Her suggestion of being “interested about where they come from” seems to indicate she is open to welcoming students from various cultural backgrounds. Openness towards cultural difference is an attitude referred to by many of the dance teachers, and will be explored further in Section 5.2. Furthermore, Evie expressed an aspiration toward finding “different” ways that you can include diverse students. This may mean that as a dance teacher, she intends to consider the cultural differences of students and then respond in a way that makes them feel welcome and included in dance studio classes.

The literature explores the significance of understanding cultural differences within the class in order to be welcoming and inclusive. For example, as Monique White (2014) explains, “creating a welcoming and inclusive community also means recognising the entire range of diverse individuals who contribute to it” (p.10). Dawn Joseph (2013) supports this, saying, “Understanding the cultural make up of your classroom is essential to creating a welcoming environment for all students.” She continues, “As an educator, one should seize opportunities to learn about their students” (p.32). Further, Heraldo Richards, Ayanna Brown and Timothy Forde (2007) add to this argument, sharing

that “teachers must create a classroom culture where all students, regardless of their culture and linguistic background, are welcomed and supported and provided with the best opportunity to learn” (p.64). This resonates with my own experiences, where I have witnessed the ability of teachers to construct and shift the learning environment in a way that creates a welcoming space. These suggestions from both the literature and my own experiences reflect the aspirations of dance teachers to welcome students, and highlight the significance of recognising and understanding cultural difference within a learning context such as dance studio classes. It is therefore important to question how the dance studio teachers interviewed for this study recognise and understand their students’ cultural differences, and how might this contribute to inclusion and social integration for their students. These key themes will be explored further throughout the discussion chapters.

With regard to Evie’s suggestion that she tries to find “different ways that you can include them”, this suggests her intention is to make culturally diverse students feel welcome by utilising different teaching strategies and methods in response to the students in her classes. This can be considered a culturally responsive approach to teaching (as discussed in the literature review, see Section 2.3.3). Zitomer (2017) explored dance teachers’ experiences, quoting one teacher for whom “inclusion meant that she could not expect one strategy to work the same way in every situation. She had to continuously engage, observe, and be ready to quickly find a new strategy” (p.434). This is also relevant to Demerson’s (2013) suggestion to employ multiple modes of teaching strategies to be culturally responsive. A culturally responsive pedagogical approach may therefore assist in welcoming students of diverse cultures and contribute to the inclusive environment.

Alternatively, Evie’s previous narrative may also illustrate a perceived binary of host and guest (Derrida, 1998). This is particularly evident when she refers to the “ways you can include them”, as well as her comment – “join us or don’t”. She is perhaps assuming that she is the host and the students joining are guests in her dance studio. It may also allude to ideas of “other” (Bhabha, 1994) in terms of who she is tolerating within the dance class, therefore constructing a boundary the students are permitted to cross. Furthermore, Evie also mentioned “issues” or “problems” she may face when welcoming culturally diverse students. This seems to illustrate her assumption that cultural diversity will cause problems within the dance class which she has to face, perhaps emulating Huntington’s (2004) perspectives on assimilation (see Section 2.1.2). Here, Bennett’s (1986) paradigms of ethnocentric intercultural sensitivities are relevant, as although the dance teacher intends to be inclusive, this attitude may instead express exclusion towards culturally diverse students.

It is important to recognise here that within the dance studio teacher’s role of welcoming students, as well as attempting to understand their students’ cultures, awareness and understanding may be needed about their own ethnocentric bias (Baskerville, 2009; Melchior, 2011). Joseph (2013) acknowledges bias as an arts educator, sharing: “I bring to my classes my culture, bias and often my ‘Western’ training; likewise, students enter our classrooms with their own culture, language and bias”

(p.129). Vandeyar (2010) provides one example, explaining how teachers may intend to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment by decorating a classroom with students' work, yet the teachers' choices of work to display reflects "remnants of the former schooling era that serviced students of a particular race group" (Vandeyar, 2010, p. 348). In her study, the classrooms were "clearly representative of the hegemonic culture of the school and [...] conducive to promoting an assimilatory approach to education" (Vandeyar, 2010, p. 348). Hegemonic practices in the classroom can be problematic as the dance teachers' pedagogical approaches may be "influenced by insidious hegemony", which has "not been critically assessed but simply emulated" (Rowe, 2008, p. 15). From an ethnographic perspective, it is important to consider what this insidious hegemony may look like within the bicultural and multicultural context of rural towns in Aotearoa. An important question to consider is how might the dance studio teachers' ethnocentric biases affect their inclusive aspirations? Nevertheless, in Evie's earlier narrative she suggested that her intention is to avoid a "join us or don't" approach, and instead she seeks to solve problems within the classroom through "finding different ways". This approach may assist with navigating her personal bias in order to welcome students and foster inclusion. Evie's intention to solve problems through different ways may suggest she is moving beyond hegemonic practices. However, the form these "different ways" take could be explored, including whether they might still be situated within an ethnocentric perspective.

Taylor also highlighted her intention to welcome students. When reflecting on her teaching practice Taylor recognised tensions between her students and acknowledged a need to make the students feel welcome. Taylor illustrates this in the following narrative:

I actually felt that there was a divide between the European and the Pacific students. So because there was more of the Pacific kids we actually had to say to them 'hey guys, you're really used to being in your environment because you go to church together, or you're related, or even though you're within the Pacific community and you guys know each other'. We actually needed to say 'hey, can you make the others feel welcome too?'. So it was really a teaching strategy, because we had to create the environment within the learning space so that everyone could feel welcome.

This narrative picks up on similar ideas in the prior narrative from Evie, particularly in relation to perceptions of students as other or outsiders, and intentions for inclusive teaching strategies. Taylor appears to identify two groups of students in her class, namely Pacific Island and European students. She recognises that within her teaching context the Pacific Island students make up the majority of the class, and the European students are the minority. Taylor elaborated further saying she had to remind the Pacific Island students that they "might be the minority at school but you're the majority here". Taylor added "then when a minority of say Europeans come in, they feel discriminated against, and it might not be intentional but it's pretty obvious". This binary of Pacific Island and European students is further emphasised by Taylor's comment about making the others feel welcome. As with Evie, this comment also seems to illustrate a perspective where Taylor considers the 'guests' or the minority group as 'other'.

Alternatively, Taylor's narrative also illustrates her intentions to use teaching strategies in order to welcome students and foster inclusivity within the dance class. This is illustrated where she says, "It was really a teaching strategy, because we had to create the environment within the learning space so that everyone could feel welcome." The teaching strategy Taylor is discussing seems to be aimed at navigating the social relationships and students' roles within the class. In the conclusions on her study, Zitomer (2017) reflects on difference and inclusion, saying "the combination of the teachers' increased awareness and respect for differences impacted their accommodation considerations and also contributed to teaching children to take responsibility to support one another" (p.432). Zitomer's (2017) suggestion that students hold responsibility within a class can be related to Taylor's request for her students to make others feel welcome. Corey Makoloski (2016) also discusses the importance of social aspects within a classroom, pointing out "the social constructs of the class [were] crucial to establishing a truly inclusive classroom, a place where students felt welcome and where all students collaborated with one another in a non-segregated way" (p.21-22). In summary, it is evident teaching strategies and social constructs may contribute to increasing feelings of being welcomed and included. The social aspects of dance classes and cultural difference within dance studio classes will be discussed further in Section 4.2 and the following chapters. However, while teachers hold a role in fostering inclusion and integration, it is also worth considering how students contribute to inclusion and exclusion within the dance class; in other words, how might cultural difference within a dance class inform and influence the social constructs? Just as teachers play an important role in inclusion and integration, perhaps the students have a significant role also. The focus of this study is teachers' roles and experiences, however future research could explore students' perspectives and experiences in dance studio classes.

Overall, attitudes towards welcoming students of cultural difference were expressed by some of the dance teachers, showing they perceived this as a way to foster inclusion within their teaching practices. While awareness and understanding of cultural difference were evident, binaries also seem to exist between both the teacher and students, and minority and majority cultural groups. Therefore, as has been suggested in the literature, teachers' awareness of their own biases may assist with navigating binaries and ethnocentric practices. This is an important consideration as the dance teacher can impact how a student may or may not feel included and welcomed in dance studio classes. Additionally, the dance teachers spoke about using various teaching strategies in order to be welcoming. Utilising a variety of strategies can be considered a culturally responsive approach to welcoming cultural differences, as well as considering and negotiating the social aspects of the classroom. The dance teachers face complex issues around inclusion and exclusion of cultural difference, and their teaching strategies may or may not contribute to this. These ideas form and contribute to many of the key themes of the discussion chapters and will be unpacked further in the following chapters.

### **4.1.3 Fostering sense of belonging**

A third theme emerging explores the dance studio teachers' attitudes towards inclusion through fostering a sense of belonging for their students. This theme again extends upon the ideas explored in the previous sections, suggesting that as well as recognising various differences and seeking to welcome cultural differences, the dance teachers further try to foster students' sense of belonging within the dance studio in order to promote inclusion. From the dance teachers' narratives, it can be understood they perceive dance studio classes as a place for students to feel a sense of belonging, and that this can be fostered through their teaching practices. This is significant as the dance studio teachers' perceptions around fostering a sense belonging within the class influence the ways they deliver dance content and engage with their students.

Some of the dance teachers described the dance class as a place for students to feel a sense of belonging. This is illustrated by Faye's narrative, where she says, "I think it is definitely a place where they can come into a positive environment and definitely belong." Additionally, Taylor's narrative illustrates her belief that students want to participate because they feel like they belong, and therefore fostering a sense of belonging is key to her teaching practice:

They don't always want to be there just because of the amazing dancing. It's because they feel like they belong. That is the main thing. So in creating that inclusive space, people feeling like they can belong, that they're significant, and part of that space, is really important in what we do.

In the narrative above, Taylor also highlights the aspect of feeling significant within a dance studio class. As mentioned in Section 2.3.1 of the literature review, a sense of significance comes from the teacher recognising students as individuals who each bring something unique to the class, and allows each student to feel as though they are valued and relevant (Clarke, 1973). This understanding also aligns with concepts of humanising pedagogy, where each student's unique background and funds of knowledge are valued within the learning environment (Salazar, 2013). Considering the "imagined and socially constructed" (Rowe, 2015, p. 57) aspect of communities (see Section 2.3.1), the ways a dance teacher may intentionally foster sense of belonging and significance within their practice are important for social integration. Taylor perhaps hints that she recognises her role as an agent of social integration as she reflects on her teaching practice:

Creating an inclusive space is really important in my personal pedagogy, especially because we're doing community dance. I think one thing that sets our programmes apart, in relation to your research is that it's particularly for a social outcome. That's probably the difference, why you find with studios there's maybe less of a concern, or even an interest, to have intercultural knowledge, because it's got a different focus and outcome – like 'I've got to put on a show and run a business'. Whereas for us that's part of it, but the objectives of our programme are to create a sense of belonging, get people to know more about their identity, and recognise that they are an important part of their family and their community.

Her acknowledgement that she is "doing community dance" suggests she is utilising values such as "process, shared ownership, equity of access, participation, negotiation and creation of shared experiences" (People Dancing, 2013), which may contribute to an inclusive classroom and sense of

belonging for the students. However, the question of whether her intentions do culminate in actions that foster social integration within her dance studio classes requires further exploration. What pedagogical strategies might she be utilising to foster an inclusive dance studio class? These queries will be explored throughout chapters six and seven.

Taylor's narrative also presents a contrasting perspective when she suggests that other dance studios in rural towns can have a focus around "I've got to put on a show and run a business". As identified in the literature review (see Section 2.2.1), a focus on dance performances is common within Western and Eurocentric dance studios. Taylor's narrative illustrates her recognition of performance and business focusses among the dance studios in her rural town. She points out that her own dance studio instead focusses on students' belonging, sense of identity, and sense of significance within their family and community. Does her focus on these aspects mean that her dance studio classes attempt to steer away from mainstream and Eurocentric practices? Further, how might Taylor endeavour to do this within a multicultural dance studio class?

Taylor's mention of identity is an additional idea that emerged within the narratives. David also discussed this, saying, "One thing I did struggle with was having these kids to find and discover their identity through the programme we run." As identified in the literature review (Section 2.3.1), a stronger sense of identity may strengthen one's sense of belonging and feelings of inclusion (Schauber, 2002; Weedon, 2004). Alternatively, when sense of identity is lacking, this may lead to feelings of isolation and exclusion. Aleksandra Galasin'ska and Dariusz Galasin'ski (2003) expand on this, explaining "identity is a discourse of (not) belonging, similarity and difference, which is continually negotiated and renegotiated within a given localised social context" (p.858). It follows that fostering a sense of belonging may be associated with subjective notions of identity (Furlong, 2003; Ward, 2009). How then might sense of identity be constructed within the confines of a Western and Eurocentric dance studio class? Additionally, how might the dance teachers' ethnocentric bias influence their own and their students' identities, and what pedagogical approaches are suitable for ensuring inclusion is fostered?

#### **4.2 Valuing the role of dance in fostering socialisation**

This section explores how the dance studio teachers interviewed for this study may value the role of fostering socialisation within their dance studio classes and teaching practices. As discussed in the literature review (see sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2), dance teachers hold a significant role in fostering socialisation for students in dance studio classes. Fostering socialisation can contribute to inclusion and integration for young people. The narratives shared in this section will discuss the ways the dance teachers intended to build social bonds through connections with individuals within the dance class, and to build social bridges through utilising dance to build connections with the wider community.

#### **4.2.1 Dance studio classes as a means for building social bonds**

Some of the dance studio teachers shared narratives that illustrate they value the role of dance in fostering social bonds between individuals within their dance studio classes. As discussed in the literature review (see Section 2.3.1), social bonds refer to the connections that link members of a group (Ager & Strang, 2008; Putnam, 2007). Taylor's suggestion that dance studio classes are "much more than just the dance stuff" show she recognises dance studio classes as a context involving not only learning and sharing dance movements, but also sharing connections and building relationships. Taylor further explained, "I want to get them to work with people they don't know, push their comfort zones, create new friendships and relationships that they can maintain outside of our programme." Social bonds are thus a key focus within Taylor's dance studio classes, particularly through facilitating students to engage with those who they may not normally work with. Actively building social bonds within the dance studio classes is important, because, as discussed in the literature review (see Section 2.2.2), authoritative pedagogical approaches may diminish social interactions (Shapiro, 1999). Taylor also referred to building relationships that students "can maintain outside of our programme". It seems she recognises the significance of social bonds within the dance class and how these may be carried into the community. From my own experience as both a student and teacher in a rural context, the socialisation within a dance studio class can significantly shift the ways both I and my students participate and engage within the classes. Within the literature, scholars also discuss the value in social bonds or peer relationships within a dance class. David Johnson and Roger Johnson (2009) explain that building relationships with peers can help to establish further social skills, such as communicating with, accepting and supporting other individuals within the dance class.

David also shared a similar perspective, where it seems he recognises the significance of fostering social bonds within the dance class, particularly when engaging with culturally diverse students. David suggests:

A lot of [the students] are just looking for acceptance, and they can definitely find it in class. One thing I find within performing arts, is it's a language that you're able to connect with people from different walks of life and what not.

When considering David's narrative above, points may be raised in relation to his comments, "acceptance", "it's a language" and "different walks of life". The first point to be made here is that he is suggesting young people are looking for acceptance within the wider community, which he says can be found within the dance class. However, what David means by acceptance can be questioned in terms of the perspectives of acculturation and intercultural sensitivities (Bennett, 1986; Berry, 1997). As discussed in Section 4.1.2, acceptance may mean the student is welcomed and integrated to various degrees, but this does not always lead to inclusion and social integration. However, it is suggested within literature that young people may be accepted and potentially find a sense of belonging within the dance class (Buck & Barbour, 2007; Buck & Meiners, 2017). Similarly, building relationships may also contribute to inclusion and social integration of young people within the dance class (as mentioned in the literature review, see Section 2.3.1).

It can also be argued, however, that David holds a 'universal' or monocultural perspective of dance when he describes performing arts or dance as "a language that you're able to connect with people from different walks of life". This comment can be linked to arguments surrounding dance as a universal language. This may be problematic as it could be seen as David utilising a 'one-size-fits-all' teaching approach, despite the differences among the students within the class. However, his comment "you're able to connect with people from different walks of life" seems to illustrate that he values and intends to foster inclusion and social bonds within his dance teaching practices for diverse students. Therefore, questions arise around teachers' responses to differences among students in their classes, and specifically how David may or may not be fostering social bonds within his classes.

Like Taylor and David, Evie also shared a perspective that suggests she values the role of dance in fostering social bonds:

For our recreational classes, part of that is the social aspect. We have a lot of children that will join maybe because they find it hard to make friends at school, or they're new to the area and they're looking for a way to connect with people. So while it's focussed on dance, we do also include a lot of social games and group activities where they can build bonds and have an inclusive environment. But then on the flip side of that, with our more focussed classes we have a little bit of that, but it's more focussed on the dance side of things.

Evie's narrative shows that building social bonds and connections within dance studio classes is a significant aspect of her teaching practices, but that this is dependent on the focus of the dance class. Evie's narrative perhaps illustrates that she perceives the "social aspect" as predominantly existing within recreational or process focussed classes. When considering the teaching pedagogies utilised in a recreational and process orientated dance class, pedagogies such as creative and humanising pedagogies (as mentioned in the literature review, see Section 2.2.2) may assist in fostering social bonds and inclusivity. Above, Evie describes using a lot of "social games and group activities where they can build bonds and have an inclusive environment". It has been suggested that cooperative and student-centred teaching methods may be useful when fostering social bonds and relationships within dance studio classes (Fry, Ketteridge, & Marshall, 2008; Johnson, 2003). David Johnson (2003) suggests these learning methods can be used in a variety of contexts, and can promote positive relationships and social integration.

However, it appears from Evie's narrative that she does not see social aspects and fostering social bonds as a significant part of her technique focussed classes. This is in line with discussions reported in Section 2.2 of the literature review, where it was identified that many dance studio classes that are influenced by Western and mainstream media have a primary focus on competitions, dance technique and product over process. This influence may also be prominent in classes run by Evie that focus on dance technique. This seems problematic when considering the ways difference is perceived and delivered in dance studios, as those who do not 'fit' the ideal image and dance ability required for the technique or product focussed classes are required to participate in the social or process focussed class. This may establish a hierarchy between the two types of dance classes, as well as extending exclusion and segregation towards some students. Thus, while social bonds may be significant for

fostering inclusion and social integration, is there an assumption this can only occur when there is a process or recreational focus? How then might the dance studio teachers as agents of social integration develop social bonds for students in technique or performance focussed classes?

#### **4.2.2 Dance studio classes as a means for building social bridges**

In addition to fostering social bonds, the dance studio teachers' narratives also suggest that some teachers value dance studio classes as a means for building social bridges and relationships. As discussed in the literature review (see Section 2.3.1), social bridges refer to links between groups (Ager & Strang, 2008; Putnam, 2007). It can be understood that the dance teachers intend to use dance classes as a way to help students feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to the wider community within rural towns. Bella reflects this where she shared, "Coming to dance class you're meeting people and having a laugh, and it's a great way to get involved and get settled in". Similarly, Rachel commented:

You're helping kids that move here. It is another way that they make new relationships with people in their new homes. I think that for young people coming in and moving here from away, that must be their main focus, to make new friends. Sometimes dance can be the catalyst for that - where if they've come from away and they're a dancer, then dance can be the thing where they meet likeminded kids and can make the connection.

Rachel's narrative illustrates that she recognises participation in dance studio classes can help young people to establish connections, particularly for those who may have moved to a rural town. As ethnographic research emphasises connection to context, this perspective on social bridges is important to acknowledge as it highlights the role of dance teachers as agents of social integration. Evie also discussed dance as a way to build social bridges for young people in a rural town:

I have a lot of people that maybe moved to (our town) with their children, and they've done dance before so they kind of want to continue that on as a way for their children to kind of acclimatise to the move. I think dance definitely can build those relationships. I think for anybody when you move somewhere new you might feel a bit lonely and everything's a bit different. So I think the thing that would help them settle in the best would be to make social connections.

Like Bella and Rachel, Evie also recognises the potential for dance studio classes to foster social bridges and social connectedness. However, two issues are evident in these narratives. The first is that Bella, Rachel and Evie all seem to be alluding to assimilative perspectives within their narratives. When they discuss the social bridges that can be established, there is an inference that this occurs through non-dominant cultural groups adopting the host town's culture and diminishing their own. As discussed in the literature review (see Section 2.1.2), this may be problematic as the dance students may not feel fully included and integrated despite social bridges being established. The other issue arising is that both Bella and Evie mention students moving to rural towns who may have participated in dance prior to moving. This perhaps assumes previous experience as a prerequisite for participation in the dance classes, and then in turn feeling part of the wider community. Again, this is problematic, as it may exclude those who do not have dance experience.

### **4.3 Summary**

In summary, this chapter discussed the ways the dance studio teachers expressed various attitudes towards inclusion and socialisation within dance studio classes. It was seen that the dance studio teachers value the role of fostering inclusion within their dance studio classes. Various ideas were shared around the ways the dance teachers recognise and seek to include difference, welcome students, and foster sense of belonging for their students.

Various differences were identified among students within dance studio classes, such as financial background, dance ability and socio-cultural differences. It was found that some of the dance teachers sought to be inclusive of students with limited financial resources by providing dance classes at a lower price, specifically recreational, process or creativity focussed classes. Dance students' skills or abilities were also identified as an area of difference, with some teachers aspiring to focus on being inclusive of all levels. It was noted that both ideas may establish a hierarchy between recreational and technique focussed classes, and thereby create segregation for those not able to participate in the expensive technique classes or fit the ideal expectations. Both aspects are influenced by mainstream media and Eurocentric practices. Importantly for this study, the dance teachers also recognised the diverse socio-cultural backgrounds of students within their dance studio classes, and sought to include these differences. It was suggested that while intentions to include cultural difference may be well meaning, the literature not only demonstrates the potential for both open and inclusive approaches, but also hegemonic and superficial approaches. These possibilities will be explored further throughout the following chapters.

The dance teachers also sought to foster inclusion by welcoming students with various cultural differences, and finding different ways to include diverse students. In this sense it was seen that while some of the dance teachers were trying to be welcoming, their perceptions of two cultural groups were 'othering' the minority group. This demonstrated maintenance of ethnocentric bias where a binary of host and guest may be established. It was suggested that culturally responsive pedagogies may assist in shifting ethnocentric bias. Some of the teachers acknowledged their role in being inclusive through welcoming students, but questions were also raised around the students' perspectives and role. Students' perspectives and experiences are not within the scope of this study, but could be an avenue for future research.

It was also discussed that the dance teachers recognised the studio as a place to belong for students. Some of the dance teachers discussed recognising their role in fostering a sense of belonging, and considered their teaching strategies a way to foster this.

This section also explored how the dance studio teachers value the role of fostering socialisation within their dance studio classes and teaching practices. The narratives illustrated the ways the dance teachers intended to build social bonds through connections with individuals within the dance class. In doing this the dance teachers sought to enhance social connectedness and acceptance. However, as

discussed, these aspirations may come from a universal perspective that may instead minimise difference and segregate students. The dance studio teachers' narratives also highlighted that building social bonds may primarily occur within recreational classes, rather than technique or skill focussed classes. This raised questions around how social bonds may or may not be valued by the dance teachers in technique focussed dance classes.

The narratives also illustrated the dance studio teachers' intentions to build social bridges through utilising dance to build connections with the wider community. It was discussed that while this may contribute to social integration, the narratives allude to ideas of settling or assimilating into rural towns. It was also suggested that building social bridges may be established through prior participation in dance, which may reflect an assumption that dance experience is a prerequisite for participation.

## **Chapter 5: How might dance studio classes be relevant to cultural difference for dance studio teachers?**

*As a teenager, I remember being in a dance class where we were asked to introduce ourselves through a creative movement activity. It was the first class of the term and we were standing in a circle. The teacher had explained that we needed to create one movement per syllable of our name. When it came to one of the students in the class who was Chinese, the teacher re-explained the task, but spoke in a very slow manner and over-pronounced the words, making large gestures with her hands. To me, it seemed that she thought the student didn't speak much English, and it seemed very obvious that although she may have been trying to be open and responsive to all students in the class, she was treating this student very differently. I wondered how this made the student feel, if this was the most appropriate way to talk to the student? Did the teacher make this assumption based on how she saw the student?*

This narrative reflects on an experience where one of my dance teachers seemed to perceive a Chinese student as different and unable to speak much English. I remember it happening in the first class of the term when the teacher had not met this student before, and I questioned how she perceived and understood not only Chinese students, but students of various cultures. Later, I wondered if this was a common perception within rural towns, and how this might influence inclusion and exclusion within dance studio classes. Building on these questions, the following sections explore how the dance studio teachers interviewed for this study understand cultural difference within their dance studio classes. In relation to how dance studio classes may be relevant to cultural difference, three key ideas emerged from the dance studio teachers' experiences of teaching in rural towns. The first is that the teachers hold diverse meanings of culture within a rural dance studio context. The second theme is the ways the dance teachers hold attitudes of openness towards cultural difference within their teaching practices. The third key theme explores the dance teachers' attitudes towards seeking an understanding of cultural difference. These meanings and attitudes were expressed in various ways by the interviewees, raising further questions around how this might or might not be carried through in their teaching practices to foster inclusion and social integration for their students. Questions about their teaching practices relating to inclusion and social integration will then be further explored throughout the following discussion chapters of this thesis.

### **5.1 What does culture mean for the dance studio teachers in a rural context?**

This section seeks to explore the diverse meanings of culture held by the dance studio teachers that emerged from their narratives. As mentioned in Section 1.3.3, discussions around culture by various theorists and researchers provide a wide array of definitions and understandings of how culture may be understood (Giddens & Sutton, 2012; Keali'inohomoku, 1983). Culture is closely tied to ethnicity, values, beliefs, traditions, identity and behaviours, however it can also be considered in flux, as it is socially constructed and constantly shifting (Hall, 2006; O'Shea, 2006). Additionally, as discussed in Section 1.3.4, in a rural context, people in minority cultural groups may often be perceived as 'other', highly visible, and vulnerable (De Lima, 2001; Forrest & Dunn, 2013; Vergunst, 2009). Therefore, understanding what culture means to the dance studio teachers interviewed for this study helps to situate their perceptions, understandings and experiences of cultural difference within dance studio classes in rural towns. It has been suggested that education and culture are inextricably linked,

meaning that teachers' perceptions and worldviews will likely influence their teaching practices (Guo & Jamal, 2007; Risner & Stinson, 2010). Within our daily encounters with cultural diversity, a lack of knowledge and ways of approaching cultural difference can be problematic as it may lead to challenges emerging such as colour blindness and difference as deficit perspectives (Guo & Jamal, 2007). This may be particularly relevant to dance studio teachers in rural contexts where engagement with cultural difference may be limited (Agyeman & Spooner, 1997; Forrest & Dunn, 2013). The meanings of culture explored in this section help in unpacking the dance teachers' perspectives of culture and cultural difference, and how these meanings may express inclusion or exclusion within dance studio classes. The various meanings of culture as discussed by the dance teachers are explored with relevance to three areas – recognition of ethnic groups, nationalities, and diverse behaviours.

Firstly, several of the dance teachers referred to culture as recognising different ethnic groups. Evie illustrates this in her narrative where she explains, "I guess I just see people that look different as they go around, or maybe I talk to people and they tell me about how they used to live somewhere different or they had grown up different to the way that I have." Here it can be understood that Evie considers culture to be something in people that is different to her, such as a different appearance or upbringing. Evie's comments about people "looking different" can be conceptualised as surface-level (gender, race, age, etc.) and deep-level differences (values, beliefs, etc.) (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998). Surface-level differences may assist individuals in assessing those who are similar and dissimilar to themselves, where as deep-level differences may only be gathered through extended and more intensive interactions (Harrison et al., 1998). However, referring to the earlier discussions around culture and intercultural sensitivities (see literature review, Section 2.1.3), surface-level differences such as ethnicity or race, while often portrayed as fixed groups or categories (Bennett, 1986), may also be considered fluid socio-culturally constructed categories based on many factors (Giddens & Sutton, 2012; Simon, 2014). Sociologists Anthony Giddens and Philip Sutton (2012) explain this further, stating "ethnicity refers to the cultural practices and outlooks of a community, which identifies them as a distinctive social group. Ethnicity is a social phenomenon, which has no basis in human biology" (p.1). Therefore, it is worth considering how the dance class contributes to the flux and shift of culture in this social context for both the teachers and students.

Within the dance studio context, the dance teachers may initially draw on surface-level differences when teaching and interacting with their students. Alternatively, deep-level differences may assist in developing a greater understanding of who the students are, which may only be established through more in-depth or ongoing interactions (Harrison et al., 1998). If the dance studio teachers understand culture through only surface-level differences based on what they see, their understanding may be informed by global, and perhaps stereotypical views of culture (Bennett, 2017; Erikson, 1990; Hoffman, 1996). It is possible that such fixed stereotypical views of culture can perpetuate power relations between "the 'colonized' and the 'colonizer'" (Jeyasingh, 1998, p.46). This is problematic as stereotyping may lead to minimisation and exclusion being fostered by the dance teachers within the

dance classes. With this in mind, the ways dance teachers might navigate surface- and deep-level understandings of culture in the dance class within their role as agents of social integration warrants further exploration.

Similarly, to Evie, Bella also referred to culture in terms of ethnic groups. Reflecting on her experiences of cultural diversity in her rural town, Bella shared, “To be honest, in [this town] we don't really get many other cultures. I don't really know why. It kind of has always been like that I think.” Her suggestion that the rural town she lives in “has always been like that” sits in contrast to suggestions that the demographic of Aotearoa is changing, with cultural diversity increasing through immigration (see Sections 1.3.4 and 2.1.1). As such, Bella’s narrative perhaps reflects “perspectives and practices of ‘whiteness as the norm’ and ‘colour blindness’” (Guo & Jamal, 2007, p. 32), where the ‘normal’ is the dominance of European culture and practices, and an attitude of ‘colour blindness’ may be portrayed. However, Bella’s next statement appears to contradict this colour blindness when she adds, “I guess like seasonal workers and stuff, there's lots when it gets into the vineyard time. Then there's heaps of different cultures that come over.” This narrative may illustrate an understanding of cultural difference in terms of those who are recognised as seasonal workers or migrants being perceived as the minority group within her rural town. As discussed in the literature review (see Section 2.1.3), migrants may be perceived in various ways by the dance teachers, including as foreigners or strangers (Bartram et al., 2014; Brettell & Hollifield, 2015). Bella seems to perceive New Zealand European residents as the norm, and seasonal migrants as foreigners.

Bella’s perception may represent a ‘difference as deficit’ perspective towards cultural difference, which ignores or minimises cultural diversity, thus potentially causing those in the minority group to feel excluded and alienated (Cummins, 2003; Ghosh & Abdi, 2004). Within a dance class, it is possible that seeing everyone as the same –from a colour blind perspective – can foster some level of inclusion, however ignorance or minimisation of cultural difference may lead to feelings of isolation (Berry, 1997). These perspectives can seem to be inclusive and value individuals at a superficial level, however it can instead be argued this “negates the histories, backgrounds, and experiences of diverse cultural groups and ignores the ways in which these affect their experiences in the learning environment” (Guo & Jamal, 2007, p. 32). Whiteness as the norm, colour blindness and difference as deficit are perspectives that can be problematic, as rather than fostering inclusion and social integration, the dance teachers may instead perpetuate segregation and marginalisation of some students. This will be explored further in chapters six and seven in relation to how these perspectives are carried through into dance classes, and whether they manifest as inclusive or exclusive responses to cultural difference.

Faye is another dance studio teacher who suggested she perceives culture in relation to ethnic groups, saying, “To be honest I don't really experience it. My partner is [non-European], so I've just embraced that side, I love other different cultures”. Faye thus shares a similar perspective to Evie and Bella in that she feels she does not experience cultural difference, despite her partner being [non-

European]. For Faye, the meaning of culture seems connected to ethnicity, and possibly visual differences (Harrison et al., 1998). She shared that she “loves other different cultures”, perhaps alluding to an assumption that cultural difference separates her from the other ethnic groups. The perspective of ‘loving other cultures’ may also be understood as a superficial and universal idea that is embedded in Western or American worldviews (Hoffman, 1996). Faye’s comment resonates with a discussion by Diane Hoffman (1996), who argues that assertions such as “‘I am friends with all cultures’ [...] are embedded in an American value frame” (p.553). This can also lead to minimisation of cultural difference where other cultures may be romanticised, and racial or ethnic appreciation overestimated (Bennett, 2013). While this perspective appears to be a friendly and inclusive approach when considering dance studio classes, it may be problematic in the sense it steers dance teachers away from culturally responsive and interculturally competent teaching practices.

A similarity in the narratives shared by Evie, Bella and Faye is where they seem to allude to cultural difference as people other than or different to themselves and the dominant European culture within rural towns. This can be seen in Evie’s comments about living “somewhere different” and growing up different, Bella’s linking of culture to the seasonal migrant workers, and Faye’s statement about loving “other cultures”. This identification of ‘otherness’ can be understood in terms of the concepts denial and defense (Bennett, 1986, 2017). Denial is demonstrated when cultural difference is perceived according to the broad categories of “foreigners” or “minority” cultural groups. Alternatively, defense may be shown through establishing binary groups of “us” vs “them”, and superior or inferior groups. Furthermore, the tendency to view the non-Western as “stable and tradition-bound” (Perry, 1992, p. 52) can emphasise a view of others as distinctly different to oneself. This understanding resonates with my own experiences of living in a rural town, where overseas workers visiting for seasonal work would often be perceived as foreigners or outsiders by some local residents. If these perceptions are held by dance studio teachers, they may perpetuate the perceived binaries of European and non-European groups and potentially maintain the Eurocentric and homogenous nature of Western dance studios through their understandings and responses to cultural difference. This may lead to exclusive teaching practices in spite of the dance studio teachers’ roles as agents of social integration (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Rowe, 2008).

Building on the idea of culture and cultural difference as referring to ethnicity, an alternative idea identified in relation to the meaning of culture for the dance studio teachers was people’s nationalities – where people came from, as well as their traditions and values. This is illustrated in Rachel’s narrative where she says, “I guess culture is the whole feeling within a group, or an ethnic group and what their traditions are. A lot of it is tied up with artistic things, like music and dance.” Similarly to the previous narratives, Rachel mentions culture in terms of an “ethnic group”. However, she also suggests it can be related to a group’s feeling and traditions. The recognition of various traditions among cultures is often understood as an ethnorelative perspective, however the extent to which Rachel and the other dance teachers understand these traditions raises other questions. How are knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural traditions necessary within their dance teaching

practices, and how might this inform their teaching? Such questions will be explored further in Section 5.3 where the dance teachers' attitudes towards understanding cultural difference are discussed.

Bella seems to view culture in relation to people's nationalities. The following narrative illustrates what culture and cultural difference mean to Bella in the context of rural towns:

I guess it's just obviously different nationalities and stuff, and their different beliefs and that kind of thing, and like what they do, what their hobbies are – that kind of originates from that. Yeah so, I guess different cultures, for some of them dancing might not even be a part of their culture very much, or not in a big way anyway. So then when they come here, they just don't even think about getting involved I guess.

Like Rachel, Bella's narrative suggests she perceives culture as closely linked to the country people come from and the traditions and values associated with their nationality. However, her narrative also reflects an understanding that a person's culture may determine their involvement in hobbies or activities within the community, such as dance classes. She is perhaps assuming here that some people may not participate in dance studio classes in rural towns because dance is not part of their culture. As a teacher of ballet, does Bella's understanding of culture suggest she believes young people will not participate in ballet classes if it is not part of their 'culture'? As discussed in the literature review (see Section 2.2.2), researchers argue that ballet and similar forms of institutionalised dance spaces can construct racial and classed hierarchies (Atencio & Wright, 2009). Bella's narrative can be understood as reflecting unconscious perceptions of whiteness as the norm and a racial hierarchy, where white people or bodies are recognised as dominant within sites of dance, and people of colour are deemed inferior (Kerr-Berry, 2017). This may also be relevant to discussions in the literature that consider assumptions around Western dance genres being 'superior' (Shapiro, 2008). However, as mentioned in the literature review (see Section 2.2.1) when viewed in a certain way ballet can be considered an ethnic and transnational dance (Keali'inohomoku, 1983). There are parallels in a discussion by Kerr-Berry (2017) problematising views of ballet as White, and dance educators drawing on their assumptions about a student's culture when leading dance classes of certain genres. If dance teachers assume that young people will not participate in dance if it is not key within their nationality or culture, this may lead to segregation and expressions of exclusion towards young people in rural towns.

Kylie's following narrative also illustrates an understanding of culture as linked to nationality, but differing slightly from Rachel and Bella, she describes this as subjective:

I think culture to me is where you come from, and what that means to you. For example, if I come from New Zealand, which I do, then that's what I think New Zealand means to me, not what New Zealand is to someone else. So I think culture is you, where you come from, and what you believe it feels like and it is.

Like Rachel and Bella, Kylie shares an understanding of culture being about where you come from. However, rather than talking about culture as 'other', she appears to relate it to herself, presenting it in more personal and subjective terms. This builds on ideas of culture as a social construct that may also be considered subjective to individual people. Bennett (2001) offers a subjective understanding

of culture as “the pattern of beliefs, behaviours, and values maintained by groups of interacting people” (p.3). He highlights that a subjective understanding of culture is significant as it allows more direct insight into the various worldviews of different people. Kylie’s narrative presents a critical reflection on her culture and the way she understands it when she describes culture as “what I think New Zealand means to me, not what New Zealand is to someone else”. She is suggesting that it is her experiences and background that construct her culture. Her subjective understanding of culture may assist her in maintaining ethnorelative intercultural sensitivity within the dance class. This may in turn ensure her teaching practices are culturally responsive and promote an inclusive environment (McCarthy-Brown, 2014).

David builds on the idea of culture relating to nationality:

I would say culture is, like I think for me, it’s the values and beliefs, and the lifestyle of a certain person and what makes them. So it kind of builds their character in a sense, but it can be a lot of things. I mean there is culture within their nationality, but I think to me that’s more tradition, whereas culture kind of looks at the lifestyle that they are allowing into their core belief that makes them who they are and the way they think and do things.

David’s narrative highlights his reflections around what culture means to him. Like Kylie, it seems he sees it as subjective and personal to individual people. David mentions several aspects, pairing nationality with tradition, and then referring to lifestyle and beliefs separately as other aspects of culture. This perhaps suggests that while nationality and traditions may be part of culture, it is actually far more complex and can be different for various people depending on their socio-cultural context and daily interactions. For example, Guo and Jamal (2007) define culture as a “dynamic system of values, beliefs, and behaviours that influence how people experience and respond to the world around them” (p.29). This aligns with David’s comment that it is “the lifestyle that they are allowing into their core belief that makes them who they are”, and is also relevant to ideas of culture and cultural identity as in flux and constantly shifting (Elliot & Du Gay, 2009; Hall, 2006). How then might these understandings of culture be transferred into the dance teachers’ pedagogies and practices within their dance studio classes? This question will be unpacked further throughout chapters six and seven of the thesis.

Building on these ideas of culture and cultural difference as relating to ethnicity and nationality, this section now moves on to discuss how dance teachers’ understandings of culture are linked to their perceptions of students’ behaviour. This is illustrated by Evie’s statement, “I guess culture is the different ways that people relate to something - that could be from their ethnic background, or that could just be from the way they were brought up, or the things they like to do”. Evie’s narrative reflects her recognition of how culture may affect the ways people relate to individuals and groups (Guo & Jamal, 2007). In the following narrative David, shares a similar perspective to Evie:

I’d have to say I think for me it’s just recognising how they carry themselves, like in terms of confidence and all that – like the Tongans they carry themselves around [the town] a certain way, which has to do with the culture, compared to the Samoans and how they carry themselves. But it’s the same thing with the Vanuatians and all of them, and even just the Europeans as well, how they carry themselves around. That’s how I recognise it, is

through just the way they carry themselves around and walk around, and you know the body language, and just even talking to them as well, the way they speak.

In David's narrative, he provides an example of how he recognises cultural difference, which suggests that for him, culture is related to various behavioural attributes such as body language and the way someone speaks. While David recognises differences between cultural groups, he also appears to assume that behaviour will be the same for all people from one cultural group. While an understanding of culture that recognises differences in behaviour may be useful when teaching dance, his narrative perhaps demonstrates 'ethnic lumping', where people of one culture or ethnic group are considered the same (Hereniko, 1999). This may be problematic as "within each cultural group, there are differences that affect the way individual members in the group relate to one another and to the group as a whole" (Guo & Jamal, 2007, p. 29). Therefore, ethnocentric intercultural sensitivity can result from such ethnic lumping, establishing stereotypes for the students within a dance class. However, an alternative perspective within David's narrative may rather be ethnorelative, as he does recognise different behavioural attributes among his students. Further exploration in chapters six and seven will consider how David responds to culturally diverse students, and whether he illustrates ethnocentric or ethnorelative teaching practices.

Taylor also discussed what culture means to her, and linked culture to behaviour:

I think cultural diversity is maybe not difference but unique. That's one thing we've had to work with is thinking, okay they said things that way because they are from that culture, they've had their upbringing and that way of life, which makes them who they are, but it also makes them act in a certain way.

Taylor's comment "not difference but unique" could suggest that the way in she seeks to understand cultural difference is to avoid an 'othering' perspective. She seems to be suggesting that each person is unique – both through their similarities and differences. Taylor also seems to connect this to "who they are" and how they act, which may be in reference to cultural identity. Cultural identity has been described as "a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'" (Hall, 2006, p. 435). As "people's source of meaning and experience" (Castles, 2011, p. 6), identity can also be tied to many other aspects beyond culture. Anttila et al. (2019) draw on Bhabha (1994) to explain that understandings of culture can lie with the "conceptualization of the notion of identity as a phenomenon not resting upon categories grounded within similarities and/or differences, and rather, re-imagining identity as something that is less positional and more fluid" (p.213). This relates to Bhabha's (1994) explanation that othering "emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously 'between ourselves'" (p.4). Therefore, in light of Taylor's view of culture as referring to cultural identity, it could be interesting to explore how Taylor negotiates the various cultural identities of the students within her dance class. This may also provide a starting point for future research exploring both the dance teachers' and their students' cultural identities within the context of dance classes in rural towns.

One aspect of Taylor's narrative that is explored throughout the remaining discussion chapters is her acknowledgement that the various actions of students within a dance class can be informed by their culture. This perhaps expands her interpretation of culture beyond physical differences and assumptions around traditions, values and beliefs, as even the ways students learn seem to differ due to the influence of aspects of their culture. Bella also related students' culture to their behaviour and learning in one narrative when she suggested, "Maybe even learning, how they learn, and stuff can be quite different for different cultures." Bella and Taylor's narratives both appear to acknowledge that students of diverse cultures may learn in different ways. This is significant as within their teaching practices they may perceive the importance of responding "to each student based on his/her identified strengths and weaknesses, and not on preconceived notions about the student's group affiliation" (Richards et al., 2007, p. 66). This can then be considered a culturally responsive approach to dance teaching, which recognises that each student's learning needs will be different (Gay, 2010; Guo & Jamal, 2007; Richards et al., 2007). Therefore, there are questions around how dance teachers' attitudes toward cultural difference may assist in understanding these differences, and how the dance teachers may or may not acknowledge and respond to learning differences influenced by culture in their dance classes. These questions will be explored further throughout the discussion chapters (see for example Section 7.2).

## **5.2 How do the dance studio teachers express attitudes of openness towards cultural difference within their dance studio classes?**

When considering ways in which dance studio classes are relevant to cultural difference, the dance studio teachers discussed the attitudes they hold. One aspect that emerged several times throughout the interviews was the idea of having an open mind, or being open to diverse cultures. As discussed in the literature review (see Section 2.1.3), openness to cultural diversity is closely aligned with terms that have positive connotations, such as diverse, open, fluid, and hybrid. These sit in contrast to opposing terms such as unitary, homogenous, and closed, which may hold negative connotations (Ollivier, 2008). Additionally, holding an attitude of openness towards cultural difference may lead to an inclusive and socially integrated learning environment within dance classes. Some of the dance studio teachers discussed the significance of having an attitude of openness towards cultural difference in relation to promoting inclusion and social integration. This section seeks to unpack the dance studio teachers' narratives and investigate the ways their attitudes may or may not contribute to inclusion and exclusion within their dance studio classes.

The following narrative from Rachel suggests that within the context of her dance studio classes, there is a need for having an open mind towards culturally diverse students:

I guess you just need to have an open mind to embrace them, and be prepared to give people a chance to share their different knowledge. That is such a win-win situation for everyone if you can do that, having that attitude. I don't know that we've really terribly had much opportunity to do that, you know other than a few isolated cases.

Rachel's narrative suggests she values the ability to share and embrace different cultures within her dance classes. It can be understood that Rachel believes having an open mind will assist in expressing inclusion towards culturally diverse students within the dance class. However, further consideration of her narrative raises questions about how both inclusion and exclusion may or may not be promoted. Her narrative appears to present an undertone of two groups when she suggests embracing "them" and describes a "win-win situation". This can perhaps be linked to ideas of host/guest and other as discussed in Section 2.3.1, where students of diverse cultures may be considered guests and different to the 'norm' (Langmann, 2010; Plant, 2003). Rachel also mentioned that she has not had many opportunities to engage with students of different cultures. As discussed in Sections 1.3.4 and 2.1.1, a lack of experience or exposure to multiculturalism is common in rural towns in Aotearoa where cultural diversity is limited (De Lima, 2001; Henderson & Kaur, 1990; Vergunst, 2009). This also appears to be a common challenge for dance teachers who may have little experience with facilitating dance in a multicultural class. This lack of opportunities and experience could be problematic, requiring further investigation into how dance teachers' attitudes towards openness to cultural difference manifest in their responses to culturally diverse students. In particular, how might a binary and othering perspective be shaped by a lack of engagement with cultural diversity? Further, how might this limit one's aspirations and attempts to be open to cultural difference within dance studio classes? This discussion will unfold further in chapters six and seven.

Alternatively, Rachel's narrative may also suggest an intention to foster inclusion through an open attitude that embraces culturally diverse students. This perspective is potentially problematic if based in a superficial or universal worldview of cultural difference (Hoffman, 1996). What might 'embracing' cultural diversity in a dance studio class look like? On the educator's side, embracing needs to be more than just recognising and acknowledging cultural diversity, but rather "affirming it as an asset" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 74). This can also relate to culturally responsive dance pedagogies (see literature review, Section 2.3.3), which involve "an ongoing process of learning about your students and learning how to relate course content to their lives" (McCarthy-Brown, 2014, p. 37). As McCarthy-Brown (2014) suggests, "If you approach students with transparency, 'I want to learn more about you so that I can help you learn', you will find many students eager to share with you and excited to teach you something" (p.37). At times as a teacher I have found the approach to culturally responsive pedagogy outlined by McCarthy-Brown (2014) can allow space for students to feel more able to share their own perspectives and experiences. Utilising the perspective suggested by McCarthy-Brown (2014) may assist in diminishing any superior/inferior perspectives, and work towards fostering an integrated teaching approach within a dance studio class.

Like Rachel, Bella also made the point that being open minded is important. However, she explained, "just being quite open minded, probably more so than New Zealand kids" which seems to suggest she would predominantly utilise an open attitude with cultures outside the dominant culture. Her narrative perhaps adds to the earlier argument about culturally diverse people being perceived as different, and may present a difference as deficit perspective. This perspective perhaps assumes that having an

open mind is a skill which dance teachers only require during intercultural interactions. However, while an open mind is considered key within frameworks for intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006), it is also identified as key for a range of teaching situations (Krajewski, 2011; Ollivier, 2008). Therefore, the suggestion of “probably more so than New Zealand kids” may be problematic as it could mean Bella responds differently to students from cultures other than New Zealand European, potentially highlighting their difference and thus fostering feelings of exclusion and alienation (Kerr-Berry, 2017). Instead, how might an open-minded attitude to all students be utilised by dance studio teachers within the dance class, regardless of their cultural differences? The ways an open attitude may be carried through into dance classes will be explored further in chapters six and seven.

Another teacher who also discussed her attitude of openness towards cultural difference was Kylie. As did Bella in the previous narrative, Kylie also highlights “New Zealander” as she reflects on students’ nationalities within her dance studio classes from a potentially inclusive perspective:

In our studio we are very open to all cultures. We are not like you have to be a New Zealander to come here and not accept anyone else. So we definitely recognise it and the fact that we let everyone in.

Here, it is important to highlight that, as with some of the previous dance teachers, Kylie seems to identify two groups of people – ‘New Zealanders’ and ‘other’. This is potentially further reflected in the way Kylie suggests she accepts and lets people into her dance studio classes. Despite the suggestions of having an open mind, like Rachel, Kylie seems to see the teacher as host and the students as guests. This may prevent the students from being fully included and integrated. Furthermore, Kylie’s aspirations to accept the students as guests may lead to assimilation, where the students are accepted and included to some extent. However, this can be detrimental for students due to the way their ethnic and cultural identity may be minimised, potentially fostering feelings of isolation and exclusion (Bartram et al., 2014; Berry, 1997; Portes & Zhou, 1993). Conversely, the notion of ‘accepting’ as discussed in literature is often included within concepts of inclusion, integration and multiculturalism (Bennett, 1986; Berry & Sam, 2013). It is suggested that dance teachers should place some attention on accepting differences in order to avoid exclusion and marginalisation (Salazar, 2013). Therefore, when considering Kylie’s narrative from this perspective, it can be understood her intention is to foster an inclusive environment for students of diverse cultures. These various understandings raise questions as to how ‘accepting’ might be fostered by the dance teachers in order to promote inclusion and social integration rather than exclusion and isolation.

An inclusive perspective through openness towards cultural difference is also apparent within another narrative from Kylie, as she elaborates:

I think you need to have a mind-set that isn't 'I'm better than everyone else, or where I come from is better than the rest'. You need to have a very open mind I guess – an open-minded ability to work with anyone, no matter where they come from, what they look like – you just need to be able to work with that, because that's the situation. They can't change it, so you have to go with that.

In this narrative, it could be understood that Kylie is suggesting an attitude towards openness to cultural difference is needed that considers all cultures as equal. Such an attitude may remove hierarchical dynamics and power relations between people regardless of ethnicity and nationality. However, Kylie's narrative also presents her possible rationale for utilising an open attitude towards cultural difference, when she says "that's the situation" and "they can't change it, so you have to go with that". Two meanings could be taken from this. First, by alluding to some of the students as "they" in terms of being culturally different to the New Zealand European culture, Kylie establishes aspects of other and superiority. Alternatively, it could be understood the students of different cultures are perhaps burdened with difference, and this burden is being placed on the dance teacher who has to accommodate these differences within their dance class (Cummins, 2003). As such, if an intercultural sensitivity approach of 'defense' is held, a sense of superiority may be established between the dance teacher and students within the dance class, with the dance studio teacher superior, and the students and their perceived burdens inferior (Bennett, 1986).

Alternatively, if the dance teachers are able to establish a sense of equality within the classroom, this can contribute to a more inclusive space and feelings of community within the dance class. This is considered a key aspect of culturally responsive and culturally relevant dance pedagogies, where "teachers need to be non-judgmental and inclusive of the cultural backgrounds of their students in order to be effective facilitators of learning in the classroom" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 64). Therefore, if the dance teachers can employ an attitude of openness towards cultural difference and reduce hierarchical and power relations, they may then be able to employ adaptive thinking in perceiving and responding to cultural differences (Black, 1990; Caligiuri, Jacobs, & Farr, 2000; Cheeseman, 2017). However, given the various meanings that can be taken from the dance teachers' narratives, their attitudes will be investigated further throughout the discussion chapters to explore how they may or may not bring an attitude of openness towards cultural difference into their dance studio classes.

### **5.3 How do the dance studio teachers express attitudes of understanding cultural difference within their dance studio classes?**

Returning to consideration of how dance studio classes are relevant to cultural difference, an additional attitude towards cultural difference emerged from the dance teachers' narratives. Several of the dance studio teachers interviewed for this study discussed holding an attitude towards understanding cultural difference within their dance studio teaching practices. This was discussed in relation to understanding diverse cultural values and beliefs, the way culture may inform how students are treated within a dance studio class, and understanding the differences between cultural groups and individuals. Understanding cultural difference within dance classes is considered significant within education as it may help dance teacher engagement with cultural differences and can assist with fostering an inclusive and integrated learning environment (McCarthy-Brown, 2017).

The idea of having some knowledge or understanding of diverse cultures can be seen in the following narrative from Bella:

I guess it's quite good to have a little bit of background knowledge on that culture, because that will affect how they learn and how they pick up things from you as a teacher. Yeah so knowing a bit about that, and even maybe meeting their parents and stuff as well.

In this narrative it appears that Bella considers it important to have some understanding of students' cultures within the dance class through "background knowledge" of the culture. She highlights this as significant due to the perceived relationship between culture and how people learn (as discussed in Section 5.1). However, Bella's mention of "background knowledge" may mean she is only considering existing and fixed understandings of the students' cultures, raising questions about what this background knowledge consists of from Bella's perspective, how she intends to gain an understanding of it, and what other knowledge or understandings she might seek within her dance studio classes. These questions will be explored further in chapters six and seven.

Another point to note from Bella's narrative is her suggestion of meeting the students' parents. In Bella's interviews, this was her only mention of engagement with students' parents, which perhaps suggests that although Bella may consider this a possible way for developing understandings of cultural difference, she may not utilise it often given she feels she does not encounter cultural difference within her studio. However, building relationships with students' parents is a key theme that will be explored further in Section 7.3, as throughout the interviews some of the dance teachers discussed the significance of these relationships in relation to practical responses to cultural difference.

Building on the idea of gaining an understanding of cultures within dance studio classes, this attitude was also discussed in relation to understanding how students from diverse cultures may like to be treated within dance studio classes. Faye mentioned this briefly, saying "with different cultures sometimes you can maybe be just a little bit more aware of how they like to be treated or whatever". It is evident that Faye recognises students hold differing cultural values and beliefs that may inform their experiences within the dance class. I too try to acknowledge cultural difference and how this might influence my students' learning experiences. Both my own experiences and Faye's narrative suggest that by aiming to have some understanding of cultural difference, teachers can then respond in appropriate ways.

Kylie also reflects on similar ideas and discusses having some understanding of cultural values and beliefs, but refers to this to as "basic knowledge":

I think when you are interacting with different students, you kind of just need to have basic social skills obviously. So if you're working with kids you need to know, when a kid does this you're going to deal with it like this. I don't think that's necessarily related to their culture, unless it links back to things that are definitely seen within their culture as something that you need to do. [...] I think there are some things that you can be aware of, but that's quite basic knowledge. Also it's usually something that is globally kind of recognised, it's not really something that is particular to this person, and if it is they will usually let us know.

Both Faye and Kylie's narratives are similar in the way they consider how they might approach and treat their students, as they recognise that some students may need to be treated differently. While Faye's narrative suggests she understands this as being influenced by cultural values and beliefs, Kylie seems to contradict this by suggesting it is "basic knowledge". Kylie further elaborates on this perspective, suggesting that approaches to cultural difference are "basic social skills" and "globally recognised". This attitude may be problematic, as it is possible that what Kylie perceives as basic knowledge and globally recognised differences are derived from universal and stereotypical ideas of culture and various cultural groups. In turn, these are often based on groups of people, such as nations or countries, rather than the individual who may show "similar, neutral or opposite tendencies in comparison with the 'group' he comes from" (Medkova, 2015, p. 22). This is known as minimisation, and could lead to culturally insensitive responses towards students. An alternative suggestion could be to establish tentative hypotheses by drawing on these universal understandings, but paired with an open mind to developing further ethnorelative understandings of cultural difference (Bennett, 2001). When considering how to treat and engage with students, this would allow the dance teachers to respond to cultural difference with a deeper understanding of their students and a culturally responsive approach, then in turn foster integration and inclusion within their dance classes.

Similarly to Faye and Kylie, the following narrative from Rachel also illustrates an attitude towards understanding cultural difference and the ways students may like to be treated within dance studio classes:

I think it's helpful that understanding, that sometimes there's considerations as a dance teacher if you're touching dance students and anything like that. So you need to know how that fits into their culture. That's still quite important with even just New Zealand kids that come with those things. I definitely think it's helpful to know if there's any cultural values that are significantly different that you need to be aware of. Some parents are quite forth right in telling you that and others don't.

It can be seen that perhaps Rachel holds some understanding and knowledge of the cultural values that exist around touch and interactions with students of diverse cultures. Rachel links this consideration with culture, and suggests it is also important "with even just New Zealand kids". Here it can be understood that Rachel holds an ethnorelative perspective where she recognises that diverse values and beliefs are held within all cultures, including her own (Bennett, 2013). However, Rachel also highlights that her attitude towards understanding cultural difference may only be for "significant" differences. This raises questions around what cultural differences she may perceive as significant. She does not specify what these significant differences might be. It can thus be questioned whether she seeks understandings of culture that may not be readily apparent upon initial interactions. Referring back to the earlier discussion of surface-level and deep-level differences (see Section 5.1), there can be cultural differences that are not explicitly obvious – whether significant or not so significant for the student (Harrison et al., 1998). It could therefore be worth considering from whose perspective cultural differences are considered "significant", as there may be values or beliefs which are significant for the student but may not be perceived in the same way from the teacher's perspective. Rather than an ethnorelative perspective of cultural difference, this may illustrate an

ethnocentric intercultural sensitivity based on minimisation, which may limit how Rachel perceives the cultural differences of her students in her dance classes. Lastly, she also mentions that some parents will indicate any cultural differences or considerations, and others will not. As mentioned earlier in this section, interactions and engagements with parents will be explored in Section 7.3. However, I question here how dance teachers might approach their attitudes towards understanding cultural difference when the parent does not indicate these differences to the teacher? Also, in what ways do the dance teachers seek to develop their understandings of cultural difference? These questions will be discussed throughout chapters six and seven.

Taylor is another dance studio teacher who emphasised the significance of holding an attitude towards understanding cultural difference within her dance studio classes. While Rachel discussed 'significant' cultural differences, Taylor illustrates a similar attitude using the word 'important':

I think if I didn't have that understanding of the culture, I would probably just be very offensive to the culture. That doesn't mean knowing everything, but I guess it means being able to want to know what's important to that culture, and then how that looks.

From Taylor's narrative, it can be understood that she perceives understanding students' cultures as key to her dance studio teaching practices in order to be interculturally sensitive and not cause offence to any of her students. One distinction that can be made between Rachel and Taylor's narratives is Taylor's use of the word 'important'. She seems to be indicating she is interested in what is important to the student's culture, as well as considering what the student and various cultural differences may look like within a dance class. While questions may arise around who and what determines the 'important' aspects of culture (as discussed previously with regards to 'significant' differences), she places emphasis on the student and their culture. This can be considered an ethnorelative approach to intercultural sensitivities as she reflects on the students' cultures when considering how to negotiate and respond to diverse cultural differences within her dance studio classes. Another important point that emerged from her narrative is how she seems to acknowledge she may not know everything about a student's culture. However, it is unclear whether she is referring to the culture as whole, and perhaps grouping specific cultures together, or whether she recognises the differences among cultural groups. It seems more likely to be the latter due to her view of culture as being associated with students' identities and uniqueness (as discussed in Section 5.1). Here she further appears to acknowledge that as a teacher, she can develop her understandings of cultural difference. She also reflects an ethnorelative perspective in an additional narrative where she shared, "without understanding you don't know who you're working with, or what to do. Just even learning how there may be different diversities within their culture and all that". This again reflects an attitude towards understanding cultural differences among individual students, which may help in recognising students as 'fully human' and assist in fostering inclusion within dance studio classes.

Within his narrative, David also seems to reflect a perspective that indicates an attitude towards understanding cultural difference for each individual student:

For me, if you don't have understanding nothing works. I would have to say that the best thing is understanding them, or understanding the person. It's the way that I interpret or even perceive the knowledge that I'm receiving. It's not knowing a lot, it's understanding with all the information and knowledge that I have.

David's narrative is similar to Taylor's in two ways. First, within David's attitude towards understanding cultural differences, he also suggests this attitude is not about how much knowledge you have of cultures. Rather he seems to suggest that it is about how he develops understandings of cultural difference from the knowledge he has about the culture and the student. He also links this to his own interpretation and perceptions of his knowledge about culture, which may reflect an ethnorelative understanding of cultural difference, where "the experience of one's own beliefs and behaviours [are] just one organisation of reality among many viable possibilities" (Bennett, 2013, p.86). This is a significant point to consider, as acknowledging the many possible worldviews held by those in a dance studio class may allow dance studio teachers to move beyond hegemonic Eurocentric practices. The second similarity between Taylor and David's narratives is that David's understanding of cultural difference seems to move beyond just the culture to encompass the individual students. When transferred to the dance studio teachers' practices within the dance class, this may be considered a culturally responsive approach to teaching, which therefore assists in facilitating inclusion and social integration.

#### **5.4 Summary**

This chapter explored how the dance studio teachers interviewed for this study understand cultural difference within their dance studio classes. First, how the dance studio teachers hold diverse meanings of culture within a dance studio context was discussed. Some of the dance teachers understood culture in relation to ethnicity and those who look different. This was discussed in relation to surface-level and deep-level differences, and how surface level-differences may result in colour blindness or difference as deficit perspectives. Some dance teachers also spoke of culture in relation to seasonal migrants or foreigners, and others spoke of how they 'love' other cultures. Both of these perspectives may be exclusive, as they seem to understand non-Western cultures as 'other'. Some teachers connected culture to meanings around nationality, suggesting culture is where people come from. One teacher connected dance to this meaning, suggesting some people may not participate in dance if dance is not part of their culture. Additionally, some dance teachers acknowledged the subjective aspect of culture, recognising that people may have diverse beliefs, values, experiences, and different ways of behaving. Also discussed, was the question of whether this was being suggested from a perspective that lumped different cultural groups together.

The second section in this chapter discussed the different ways the dance studio teachers held attitudes of openness towards cultural difference. From the narratives, it could be understood that some of the dance teachers aspired to be open to cultural difference in order to foster inclusion and social integration. Several issues were discussed in relation to binary and superficial perceptions, alienating students by treating them differently and expecting assimilation, and suggestions that

cultural difference is a burden that needs to be accommodated. The question of how a lack of experience and engagement with cultural difference might limit their attempts at being open towards cultural difference was addressed.

The third section of this chapter discussed the dance studio teachers' attitudes toward seeking an understanding of cultural difference in order to be inclusive. Some of the dance studio teachers perceived understanding cultural difference as valuable within their dance studio teaching practices. However, suggestions by the dance teachers indicated they variously seek to understand basic, significant or important aspects of culture, leading to questions around from whose perspective these aspects are considered 'important'. It was noted this could also result in stereotypical understandings that minimise cultural differences. It was also suggested that improved understanding of cultural difference may come from dance students' parents, with questions raised about how this could instead be developed by the teachers themselves. The dance studio teachers' responses to cultural difference in relation to inclusion and social integration will be further explored throughout the following discussion chapters of this thesis.

## **Chapter 6: How might dance studio teachers maintain ethnocentric bias in their dance studio classes?**

*I'll always remember several years ago when I was in a University dance class, and we were divided into two groups. The teacher said to our group, "I want you to choreograph a Sasa", referring to the traditional Samoan Sasa dance. We looked at each other in our group. Most of us were New Zealand European, and none of us were Samoan or had been to Samoa. We began making up movements which we thought were 'Sasa movements', but I couldn't help but think how this would work. We were excited to be able to perform a Sasa and have it included in our class, which was normally always contemporary dance. But how were we supposed to choreograph a dance that we have no cultural knowledge about? "You can use inspiration of the ocean and trees for movements" the teacher suggested. I questioned, why the ocean and trees? Is this what she assumes movements in a Sasa would be about? Reflecting on this experience, perhaps the teacher's request came from a place of ethnocentric bias, where it was assumed by the teacher that no cultural knowledge or experience was needed to choreograph a cultural dance, and where stereotypical assumptions about Samoan culture may have been used as stimuli for the dance.*

The ethnocentric bias evidenced by the narrative above is problematic as it denigrates cultural difference. This chapter explores similar ideas by investigating how the seven dance studio teachers interviewed for this study might be maintaining ethnocentric bias within their dance classes. Building on the narratives shared in chapters four and five, this chapter investigates how the dance teachers may demonstrate confusion in relation to their meanings and responses to cultural difference, thus maintaining ethnocentric bias despite their attitudes towards inclusion, social integration and cultural difference. Bennett's (2004) developmental model of intercultural sensitivities (DMIS) provides a starting point for making meaning from the narratives, particularly with regard to ethnocentric and ethnorelative viewpoints. However, the meanings and ideas developed within this chapter will draw on the concepts of the DMIS model, but without the emphasis on the chronological progression as discussed in the literature review (see Section 2.1.3). As suggested, although perceptions can appear to move in a continuum from ethnocentric to ethnorelative, people's lived experiences are complex and can rather be understood as a kaleidoscope (Kapitan, 2015; Zafar et al., 2013). The narratives shared in this chapter will illustrate the ways the dance studio teachers may express there is no cultural difference within their dance classes, the ways they denigrate cultural difference by perceiving it as not important, and the ways they minimise and diminish cultural difference within their dance classes. These aspects will be explored in relation to the dance studio teachers' pedagogical and practical approaches to their dance teaching practices.

### **6.1 "You share with them what you can teach, rather than actually the way around": Not recognising and responding to cultural difference within dance studio classes**

This section explores how the dance studio teachers may be maintaining ethnocentric bias by not recognising cultural difference within their dance classes. The narratives shared in this section will present some of the ways the dance teachers do not recognise cultural difference, as well as the ways they choose not to respond to cultural difference. The dance teachers may reflect ethnocentric bias in the ways they approach cultural difference within their dance class, which may contradict their suggested aspirations towards inclusion, social integration, and attitudes of an openness towards and understanding of cultural difference.

### **6.1.1 Not recognising cultural difference**

Some of the dance studio teachers shared narratives that seem to illustrate they do not recognise cultural difference within their dance studio classes. This in turn may be perpetuated by the maintenance of ethnocentric bias and denial of cultural difference, and is illustrated by both Evie and Rachel's narratives. In the following narrative from Rachel, she considers how cultural difference may or may not be present within the rural town she lives in and her dance studio classes:

I think if we were dealing with what's on in Auckland studios - dependent on the area that they're working in - then that would become a major factor and how you approach the teaching practices. Yeah but for us it isn't.

From Rachel's narrative it can be understood that she recognises cultural difference in larger cities within Aotearoa, like Auckland, but also that she perceives there to be little or no cultural diversity present in the rural town in which she teaches dance studio classes. Having lived in both Auckland and a rural town, I can agree with Rachel's suggestion there is a significant difference in the level of cultural diversity within the differing demographics of both places. However, Rachel highlights that within Auckland, dance teachers need to consider cultural differences because of the multiculturalism present, whereas in rural towns the dominance of the New Zealand European culture may lead to a lack of recognition towards people of different cultures, who may be considered the minority. Sue (2004) explains that "whether knowingly or not, colour blindness allows Whites to deny the experiential reality of minorities by minimizing the effects of racism and discrimination in their day-to-day lives" (p.763). As such it can be understood that by not recognising cultural differences, Rachel is evidencing ethnocentric bias through colour blindness and denial of cultural difference. As Sue (2004) further adds, "in essence, colour blindness is really a denial of differences. A denial of differences is really a denial of the unfair power imbalance that exists in society" (p.763). This is problematic because it may mean Rachel does not consider the diverse socio-cultural backgrounds of students within her dance studio classes. As mentioned in the literature review (see Section 2.3.3), this can lead to exclusion or isolation of students from diverse cultures.

If Rachel does in fact only teach New Zealand European students for the majority of her dance classes, she may have neither knowledge nor experience in culturally responsive dance teaching approaches. Here ethnocentric bias may then stem from teaching experiences that are largely Eurocentric. Drawing on philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1989), Krajewski (2011) explains "understanding will always depend on experience. As the German philosopher Gadamer summarised in 1960, we can only understand the world on the basis of our own experiences, and those experiences are our horizon" (p.149). This invites the question, how can dance teachers who are not exposed to cultural diversity gain awareness and understanding of how to engage with students from cultures other than New Zealand European? It is suggested that some form of intercultural and culturally responsive training or professional development is needed for dance teachers in rural towns who feel as though they do not experience cultural diversity. Referring back to chapters four and five, all of the dance teachers expressed intentions toward fostering inclusivity and socialisation within their

dance classes. However, despite such intentions, teachers may not see cultural difference, whether consciously or unconsciously, because they are trying not to appear biased. Therefore, perhaps some form of intercultural and cultural responsiveness training or personal development could be encouraged for some of the dance teachers. This may reduce ethnocentric bias and support a shift towards an ethnorelative perspective.

Like Rachel, Evie also shared an ethnocentric perspective of denial through not recognising cultural difference within her practice:

Personally for myself, I don't always notice culture specifically, I kind of just think of each dancer as an individual and what do they need - for their dance skills and also if they're coming for social reasons – rather than thinking okay then from this, if they're a migrant they might need this and this.

Here Evie explains she does not “always notice culture specifically”, which can be understood as denial of cultural difference. Rather than recognising cultural difference, she suggests she tries to think of students as “individuals”. This approach aligns with prior suggestions that perceiving students as individuals is a humanising approach, allowing space for their backgrounds, knowledge and experience to be utilised within dance studio classes. For example, Richards et al. (2007) also suggest “the key is to respond to each student based on his/her identified strengths and weaknesses, and not on preconceived notions about the student’s group affiliation” (p.66). However, this may also demonstrate ethnocentric bias if Evie perceives students through her own ethnocentric worldview, resulting in limited recognition or consideration of students’ cultures. A singular worldview can stem from colour blindness and may lead to marginalisation (Sue, 2004). Anderson (1982) argues that dance teachers need to be able to “recognize that their own view of the world is not universally shared, that this view has been, and continues to be, shaped by influences that often escape their conscious detection, and that others have views of the world that are profoundly different from their own” (p.169). Therefore, unconscious bias can be seen among the dance teachers in their rural towns, and perhaps a shift to an ethnorelative perspective of cultural difference is needed to help foster the inclusion and social integration aspired to by the dance studio teachers.

Denial of cultural difference is further illustrated by Rachel in the following narrative, where she considers the genres of dance she teaches and the teaching staff she hires:

I think when I was thinking of marketing ideas and how to bring in new students, I don't think that we've ever thought that we should go like for the Pasifika group. So we haven't really done anything like that. Maybe when we're introducing any new genres, we're thinking 'okay, we need a hip hop teacher', or 'okay now that acrobatics is really popular we need an acro teacher'. I don't think we've ever kind of thought of 'well why don't we do some Pasifika section'. But it's a thought. [...] Generally I think 'okay this is what we have to offer', and you market that, and then you welcome in all the students. You share with them what you can teach them, rather than actually the other way around.

The narrative from Rachel seems to reflect her perception of cultural difference existing in other places like Auckland, but not in the rural town she lives in. This perception may in turn influence the genres of dance she offers at her dance studio. Because she does not recognise cultural difference in

her town, she maintains an ethnocentric bias through offering only Western styles of dance. At an institutional level, such as schools and similar learning environments, ethnocentric bias may be maintained through the ways such institutions “fail to recognize how standard operating procedures serve to deny equal access and opportunities for some while providing advantages and benefits for others” (p.767). This may be a factor in dance studio classes in rural towns when considering how dance classes are run, and how dance is taught and assessed (McCarthy-Brown, 2014). For example, ethnocentric bias perpetuates nuanced instructional approaches where Western forms of dance continue to be affirmed as a base or starting point for participation and understanding ‘other’ forms of dance (Leaf, 2015). McCarthy-Brown (2014) has also investigated how institutions might express a commitment to diversity, yet they are “bound by curricular requirements to uphold traditional Eurocentric programming” (p.126). In response, the concepts of dance – particularly dance technique – can be challenged and revised to move beyond Western and Eurocentric practices (Foster, 2009; Kerr-Berry, 2012). This would help to address the problem of non-Western dance genres remaining on the periphery of most dance education contexts, or not being included at all. Rachel’s narrative illustrates the latter, as prior to the interviews held for this study, she had not considered cultural difference in relation to non-Western dance forms. An ethnographic lens can be used to consider how non-Western styles of dance may fit within Eurocentric dance studio contexts without becoming subject to appropriation, stereotyping and decontextualisation.

Rachel’s narrative also suggests she may be considering approaches for multicultural dance education at a surface or superficial level by only considering the cultural genres of dance. Jesse Goodman and Kate Melcher (1984) state that “ethnocentric attitudes make it difficult to foster an understanding of other cultures” (p.203). Rachel’s response seems to demonstrate an ethnocentric attitude that does not recognise cultural difference. Due to this ethnocentric bias, she may be assuming that providing a Pacific dance class will encourage Pacific Island students to participate in dance studio classes. Thus by denying cultural difference, she may be maintaining an ethnocentric bias that can be exclusive towards minority cultural groups (Bennett, 1986). While providing cultural dance classes is a potential response to cultural difference, how can Rachel be inclusive through the ways she approaches her teaching practices? A response to this question will be explored further throughout the discussion chapters.

Furthermore, Rachel’s comment “you share with them what you can teach rather than actually the other way around” raises another point for consideration. This highlights a potential challenge for dance teachers in providing multicultural and culturally responsive dance education, particularly if the dance teachers are only considering this at a superficial level. It follows that if a dance teacher cannot teach certain genres of dance, then they will not teach them all. Alternatively, if a dance teacher were to teach cultural genres of dance without the knowledge and skills, this may lead to cultural appropriation, tokenistic approaches to cultural dance, and perhaps culturally insensitive approaches to teaching cultural genres of dance (Kerr-Berry, 2004; Risner & Stinson, 2010). Kerr-Berry’s (2004) consideration of pedagogical approaches to multiculturalism in dance education emphasises that “the

white dance educator must immerse herself in the historical content in order to understand it before she disseminates it” (p.48). Accordingly, how might the ‘white dance educators’ interviewed in this study incorporate non-Western dance forms in the dance studio? Further, how might these dance genres fit within the context, and what support is needed for dance educators to implement these in a culturally responsive way?

### **6.1.2 Not responding to cultural difference**

In addition to not recognising cultural difference within dance studio classes, this theme also extends to the ways the dance teachers choose not to respond to cultural difference. Some of the dance teachers appear to be denying cultural difference through a lack of response to students of diverse cultures. Their stated intention to teach their own way or according to their own personality has the potential to maintain their ethnocentric biases. Faye’s narrative highlights that she does not consider whether or not her teaching style is enjoyed by her students:

I think it's a personal thing what your teacher is all about. I wouldn't want to try and please everybody in my class. I think they come to me for a reason, and they either enjoy it or they don't, and they might get something else off somebody else. I think you are the teacher, you are your own kind of personality, your own class.

Faye refers to her “own kind of personality”. From one perspective, having a clear personality within her teaching may mean she is relatable and extends inclusion towards some of her students. Alternatively, if her “own kind of personality” lies within an ethnocentric approach to teaching she may instead be exclusive due to a lack of cultural competence and intercultural sensitivity. In a sense, she may be relatable to students who share similar personalities, and isolate those who may be considered different. Stinson (1998) considers the role of teachers, in particular who is being taught, saying, “I cannot remember when I first heard the truism, ‘What we teach is who we are.’ Our shared sociocultural experiences and our unique personal experiences construct the selves that we become and we share in teaching” (p.24). Additionally, Sue (2004) argues that “many educators possess little awareness that they also bring their own Whiteness into the classroom and operate from a predominantly White ethnocentric perspective” (p.763). From this viewpoint, if Faye’s “own kind of personality” stems from a White ethnocentric perspective, then this may extend into her teaching practices within dance studio classes. Kerr-Berry (2012) also refers to Stinson’s point regarding “what we are”, adding “the ‘what we are’ includes whiteness—something to consider when we teach and make possible assumptions about our students. In the process, as the teachers, we enact whiteness of ‘self’, and our students become the ‘other’” (p.52). The ‘othering’ of students may contribute to hierarchies and exclusion within dance studio classes. Additionally, Glendola Mills (1997) posits that “many times we simply cue ourselves to perceive information that is consistent with what we expect, believe, or know (p.141). Therefore, in a context where rural towns are becoming more multicultural, it is important that Faye considers how her personality and bias contribute to her way of teaching. If she teaches from a White ethnocentric perspective or personality, and works within what she knows and expects, there may not be room for ethnorelative practices to emerge in response to growing cultural diversity in rural towns and dance studios.

From Faye's narrative it can be understood she has a set way of teaching, and therefore may not recognise or respond to cultural differences within the dance class (Baskerville, 2009; Green, 2000; Walus, 2019). She appears to understand that some students will enjoy her classes and some will not. Her narrative illustrates she does not adapt her teaching to try and include the students who do not enjoy her class. This could mean her dance classes are not very adaptable, and do not suit a wide array of students. This is problematic, as given the Western context of her dance studio classes there may be elements of power and hierarchy perpetuated through the ways she provides dance. Faye may thus be maintaining white ethnocentric bias through Eurocentric practices where the teacher is superior. Implications of colonialism could be evidenced here through Eurocentric practices which continue to hold a powerful influence on the dance teachers' practices (Rowe, et al., 2018). As mentioned in the literature review (see Section 2.2.2), these authoritative teaching practices put the teacher at the front of the class, sharing knowledge with individuals. Through a command-style of teaching, the learner is directed through demonstration and correction, where "knowledge selected by the teacher is uncritically deposited into the learner" (Guo & Jamal, 2007, p. 31). Therefore, Faye's authoritative approach that does not respond to cultural difference may perpetuate exclusion towards those who are othered and do not fit in to her dance studio classes. As suggested in the literature review (see Sections 2.1.3 and 2.3.3), intercultural sensitivities and culturally responsive dance pedagogies may assist in preventing exclusivity. If Faye were to develop her intercultural sensitivity, this may assist in deconstructing and negotiating ethnocentric bias and power structures within her classroom (Hickling-Hudson, 2003; van Hamburg, 2015). Further research enquiries could seek to address how dance teachers can be encouraged to critically reflect on and develop their dance studio teaching practices.

In considering how a teacher might shift their teaching practices within a multicultural class, Evie also reflected on whether she would recognise and respond to cultural differences in her dance classes:

I don't know if there is a need to make changes for different cultures. That's a really interesting question. I think definitely that's an area that I could expand on more. I haven't done anything specifically for that, so that could be something to think of in the future.

Here it can be understood that Evie is recognising cultural differences within her dance classes, as she reflects on whether she would adapt her teaching practices for students of diverse cultures. Alternatively, her narrative seems to reflect denial through choosing to not respond to cultural difference, when she suggests she has not "done anything specifically for that", and that she could think of it "in the future". Similar to Faye's set ways of teaching, Evie perhaps works within what she knows rather than exploring other possibilities in her dance studio teaching practices. Building on the discussions above, it can be suggested that Faye and Evie both need to be aware that their 'normal' or set ways of teaching may not suit all students. However, cultural conditioning and a Eurocentric worldview may make developing their teaching practices difficult, regardless of any aspirations to be inclusive of culturally diverse students. As Sue (2004) explains, "to challenge that worldview as being only partially accurate, to entertain the notion that it may represent a false illusion, and to realize that it may have resulted in injustice to others make seeing an alternative reality frightening and difficult"

(p.762). McCarthy-Brown (2017) provides a practical example, suggesting “although the instructor may feel comfortable in a modern warm-up where dancers walk around the room and explore space, it does not mean students experience that same comfort level with this exercise” (p.21). He further adds, “there must be an awareness that what is ordinary for the instructor may be out of the ordinary for students” (Mabingo, 2019, p. 21). Therefore, rather than not responding to cultural difference, if Faye and Evie taught with this awareness and understanding, this may contribute to reducing their ethnocentric bias, and perhaps assist in developing an ethnorelative approach to teaching dance.

## **6.2 “If you focussed mainly on the cultural stuff then you would lose the fact that is it dancing”: Denigrating cultural difference within dance studio classes**

This section explores how some of the dance teachers’ narratives illustrate ethnocentric attitudes and bias through denigration of cultural difference within dance studio classes. Some of the dance teachers denigrate difference through holding binary perceptions of ‘us versus them’, and suggest that their own culture is superior. Denigration of cultural difference is also apparent when cultural knowledge is viewed as unimportant within dance studio classes.

### ***6.2.1 Us versus them perspectives***

A key factor that seems to contribute to an ethnocentric bias is binary attitudes of ‘us versus them’ and belief in the superiority of one’s own culture. Faye appears to demonstrate this in the following narrative:

I think the biggest thing within any country, is that you go in and to be honest you'll be respectful of the way the country ticks – their way of life, their morals, how they live their life. Of course you hold your culture dear to you and you practice that at home and that kind of thing. But I don't believe that we should change the way we are to suit them, because they're coming into our country and that's the way I feel about it. [...] So yeah, I think definitely you hold your culture dear to you, but I do think you have to fit into the New Zealand culture.

This narrative perhaps illustrates a perspective that relates to contexts wider than a dance studio class, but it could also greatly inform the way Faye approaches and responds to cultural difference in her dance classes. Faye’s comment “I don’t believe that we should change the way we are to suit them” illustrates a clear attitude of ‘us versus them’ and two different groups – people of the New Zealand European culture and ‘other’. This may be carried through to her teaching as a form of denigration if she similarly expects her students to “fit into” the culture or environment of her class and the Western dance practices within it. This is problematic if Faye’s narrative does illustrate an expectation for non-Western students to assimilate within the class. As argued in the literature review (see Section 2.1.2), assimilation may require one to lose their own culture or identity in order to fit into an existing group or social structure (Berry, 1997). Shapiro (2015) reflects on this, saying “we like to believe ‘our way of doing things’ is the ‘right’ way. Our discomfort with ‘those’ who are different from ‘us’ provides a challenge to dance within the complexity of achieving diversity within unity” (p.71). Instead a multicultural approach in dance education may assist in navigating these power relations, where “the task is in finding ways which both accept the particular while, at the same time, managing to transcend the differences” (Shapiro, 2015, p. 71). Rather than denigrating cultural difference and

expecting students to fit in, it is suggested that educators should seek to establish balance within the dance class where equal importance is given to both the dominant group and those considered 'other'. This may "dismantle cultural hierarchy or ethnocentrism, be it real or perceived" (Wilson, 2014, p. 166).

Bella shares a similar perspective to Faye when she suggests cultural difference is not important within her dance teaching practices:

I think only because [this rural town] is so small, there's not a huge amount of cultural...well lots of different cultures, it's just probably something that doesn't need to happen so much here. So I think as much as it would be cool to do something, I don't think it's as important.

Bella's narrative illustrates an awareness of cultural difference, yet evidences an aspect of denigration when she states that responding to cultural difference is not "as important" within her dance studio classes. Similarly, Rachel also refers to the 'amount' of cultural difference she perceives in her town, and similarly highlights that there is not enough to warrant responding to it, or seeing it as important:

I think within the studio, we probably don't recognise it. We know it's there, but we don't have a lot. I probably in all honesty at the moment don't feel that we do have a need to change anything because we don't have enough.

From Bella and Rachel's narratives it can be understood that both dance teachers recognise the presence of cultural difference among the students in their dance classes. It is evident where Bella says, "lots of different cultures", and Rachel's remark, "we know it's there". Both dance teachers are similar in that despite their recognition of cultural difference, they do not think it is important to respond to the differences or adapt their teaching because there is "not a huge amount" (Bella), or they "don't have enough" (Rachel). These comments may be problematic as they suggest that only when there is a certain amount of cultural difference present in their classes, will Bella and Rachel respond. Yet, how 'much' cultural difference is enough to require a response? Reflecting on my own experiences as a dance teacher and student in a rural town, in order to facilitate an inclusive space I feel it is important to respond to cultural difference without an emphasis on 'how much' is present. If there is even one student who may be considered culturally 'different' to the dominant European group of students, is it not important for a dance teacher to approach that student with cultural competence and sensitivity? Alternatively, perhaps approaching all students as individuals with diverse socio-cultural backgrounds can be considered important.

Returning to the meanings of culture shared in the narratives presented in Section 5.1, Bella and Rachel both shared understandings of culture related to surface level differences. It may be these meanings that they draw on to determine 'how much' cultural difference is present in their studios, and whether they should adapt their teaching pedagogies and approaches to respond to cultural difference. For both dance teachers, this approach could be due to ethnocentric bias and denigration of cultural difference. Goodman and Melcher's (1984) discussion around cross-cultural education, suggests "teachers should examine their own prejudices and biases, asking themselves if they feel threatened by or superior to people with different cultural backgrounds. All of us have some

ethnocentric biases” (p.203). They further acknowledge that teachers are strong role models for children and suggest it is important that teachers are free of ethnocentric bias as much as possible (Goodman & Melcher, 1984). This is particularly important when considering dance teachers’ roles as agents of social integration as where ethnocentric bias and feelings of superiority are present, minority groups may experience oppression and exclusion within the dance class. Here, denigration may be perpetuated through perceptions of inferiority imposed upon minority groups. These perceptions can be “be translated into unequal access and opportunities in education” (Sue, 2004, p. 765).

Rachel shared an example where her intention was to be inclusive and provide equal access and opportunities within her dance studio classes for two exchange students from Korea and France:

I think at one point we did have an exchange Korean student here. She was really gifted in doing Korean national dances. We highlighted her and we did a group around her and then she was the soloist in the middle, which was really lovely. [The show] was a story, like a fairy tale story that we did. We had red poppies in it, and she had a traditional Korean costume. So she did a solo with red fans and did a fan dance, and the poppies were grouped behind her and they just did some movement behind her. Then the poppies danced and she did also, because that was her jazz class, so she did a bit of both and it was really spectacular. Then when we had the French girl, we did a French piece of music, but she was actually a ballet and jazz dancer, and so she had done that in France. But we highlighted her too and she did her own little choreography piece, but it wasn’t actually like French dancing.

While Rachel’s intention here was to be inclusive by embracing, celebrating and “highlighting” the exchange students, it may be understood that her efforts instead segregated the students. Although it appears Rachel wanted to avoid denigration and exclusive practices towards the cultural differences of the exchange students, by “highlighting” them she may instead have put emphasis on the binary of ‘us versus them’ – us being the dance teacher (Rachel) and the New Zealand European students, and them being the exchange students from outside of Aotearoa. Hoffman’s (1996) question may be relevant here when she asks, “How can we really celebrate diversity without drawing artificial boundaries or engaging in cultural simplification/reification?” (p.554). Risner and Stinson (2010) also note that “multicultural efforts that provide exposure and cultivate appreciation, though necessary and likely well intentioned, are insufficient. So much is left out: access, representation, historical and cultural context, and the systemic biases that lie beneath continued social inequity and injustice” (p.7). It can be considered positive that Rachel acknowledged the cultural differences of the exchange students. However her approach can be critiqued on the basis that her ethnocentric bias may have led to the assumption that asking culturally diverse students to make and perform dances about their culture represents an attempt to be culturally sensitive and responsive to their culture or ethnicity (Kerr-Berry, 2012). To avoid the maintenance of ethnocentric bias, denigration of difference and the perception of ‘us versus them’, dance teachers can seek to celebrate differences as well as emphasise the similarities of students (Shapiro, 2015). The question of how this goal might be achieved within dance classes in rural towns will be considered further throughout chapter seven.

### **6.2.2 Perceiving cultural knowledge as unimportant**

The dance studio teachers' perceptions of us versus them may also extend and relate to the ways dance teachers perceive cultural knowledge within their dance studio classes. Several of the dance studio teachers discussed cultural knowledge, saying they see no need for cultural knowledge within their dance classes, and that they perceive cultural knowledge as unimportant. These perceptions may be influenced by the dance teachers' ethnocentric biases, and could demonstrate denigration towards culture difference. Faye illustrated this when she said, "I think it comes down to your teaching rather than having knowledge of different cultures. For me I think that is how I would always do it, even if there was a lot of cultures in the class." From this we can understand Faye does not give value to cultural knowledge within dance studio classes and her teaching, therefore denigrating its significance. Bella also discussed her belief that she does not need cultural knowledge, saying:

Well pedagogic and content/style knowledge kind of just go hand in hand, like you need to know really well what you're teaching, and then how to do it. It's all very well just knowing stuff. I would say cultural knowledge last, just because it's not something I really have to deal with much, so it's not that important in my teaching. Yeah not to say it's not important.

Both Faye and Bella shared a similar perception of cultural knowledge as unimportant when teaching in their dance studio classes. This perception could be understood as denigrating cultural difference, as it appears they see significance in having strong knowledge of what and how they teach dance, but disregard any need for cultural knowledge. Faye further indicates this would be the case "even if there was a lot of cultures in the class". This may exemplify how ethnocentric bias is maintained through the dance teachers' worldviews and values, and students' own values and beliefs ignored as a result. As Brenda Townsend (2002) explains, "in effect, teachers try to create a cultural fit by forcing students to adopt teachers' cultural systems, while ignoring students' own sets of beliefs and entrenched values" (p.730). It seems that both Faye and Rachel may not give any consideration to the cultural differences of their students in their dance studio classes, which is problematic. As discussed in the literature review (see Section 2.3.3), it is important for dance teachers to consider the various cultural aspects students bring to the classroom to allow for equal and inclusive participation in dance studio classes (Bourdieu, 1986; Risner & Stinson, 2010). Jacqueline Brooks and Eustace Thompson (2005) highlight that "classrooms often do not value, acknowledge, or use the cultural capital of some groups of students" (p.49). Risner and Stinson (2010) draw on this to suggest that dance educators "may find quieter inspiration for opening our classrooms and studios to social justice when we grapple with the fact that some of our students have few or no acceptable ways to communicate and express their own cultural capital" (p.14). Therefore, as agents of social integration, dance teachers should perhaps not only recognise and respond to cultural difference, but also allow space in dance studio classes for students to communicate and express their cultural differences and similarities. For the dance studio teachers, having some cultural knowledge and also knowing how to deliver dance studio classes in a culturally responsive way may be significant in fostering inclusion and social integration.

Building on this, when considering the ways Faye and Bella are maintaining ethnocentric bias through denigration of cultural difference within dance studio classes, it can be suggested that the dance

teachers might benefit from questioning their assumptions around superiority of dance forms, and the way ethnocentric bias may be contributing to ways they teach. The Eurocentric teaching methods employed by the dance studio teachers, such as creating a hierarchical gap between teacher and learners, teaching in lines, and quantitative assessments could instead be replaced by methods such as knowledge co-construction, relational learning, and interactional support (Mabingo, 2015). This may shift potential ethnocentric bias and power relations within the classroom. If cultural knowledge and culturally responsive dance pedagogy are drawn upon, perhaps this would further promote a culturally sensitive learning environment that is inclusive towards diverse cultures.

Along with Faye and Bella, Kylie also considers cultural and intercultural knowledge in the context of her teaching practice and dance studio classes, coming to the conclusion that cultural and intercultural considerations are not needed in her dance classes:

I think I would consider cultural and intercultural knowledge the same, not necessarily because that it is something that we push out of the way, it's just as a dance studio our core things are dance. So we need to learn obviously how to do them first and then as we've got that then we can bring in the rest. However, if you focused mainly on the cultural stuff first then you would lose the fact that it is dancing and we still need to actually know how to dance, that's what we are here to teach and what we want to do.

Firstly, Kylie explains that she considers “cultural and intercultural knowledge the same”. While they have many interrelated aspects, there are some distinctions between the two types of knowledge. Cultural knowledge can refer to both culture-specific and deep cultural knowledge, whereas intercultural knowledge refers to knowledge that supports appropriate and responsive interaction between cultures (Deardorff, 2004; Krajewski, 2011). By disregarding the differences between the cultural knowledge and intercultural knowledge, Kylie is perhaps denigrating the significance of utilising these within her dance studio classes. Second is Kylie’s comment, “if you focussed mainly on the cultural stuff first then you would lose the fact that it is dancing, and we still need to actually know how to dance”. From this it can be understood she is denigrating cultural knowledge by stating that the ‘dance’ aspect is more important than the “cultural stuff”. This seems to reflect an assumption that the cultural aspects of teaching dance are separate to the what and how of teaching dance, and so are not needed in her teaching practice. Separating these aspects in this way perhaps illustrates an ethnocentric bias drawing on a singular worldview. Kylie’s attitude here appears to contradict the attitudes she shared in Chapter Five, where openness towards and understanding of cultural difference were valued. This may show that despite her aspirations, Kylie maintains ethnocentric bias, potentially contributing to exclusion within her dance classes. Krajewski (2011) explains that “the basis for cultural competence is constituted by what each participant brings to the intercultural encounter in terms of openness and curiosity, a feature that may need constant attention in order to remain active” (p.141). Perhaps in this context, constant attention and reflection are significant when seeking to foster inclusion and social integration. It has been suggested that knowledge of both self and other, and an awareness of cultural difference can be significant for developing intercultural sensitivities and intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006; Krajewski, 2011), as a result fostering inclusion and social integration within education contexts.

### **6.3 “That’s probably what their parents want, that they become a part of our culture”: Diminishing cultural difference through universal perspectives within dance studio classes**

Although the dance studio teachers suggest they aspire to hold attitudes towards openness and understanding cultural difference, it appears that some continue to maintain ethnocentric bias despite their inclusive intentions. The following sections discuss narratives that demonstrate the ways the dance teachers express perceptions of universalism by assuming that dance is a universal language and that all bodies are the same. Additionally, some dance teachers try to be inclusive by endeavouring to treat all their students as the same, despite their cultural differences. It is discussed that in doing this, they are perhaps unintentionally diminishing or minimising the students’ cultural differences, and continuing to maintain ethnocentric bias through Western ideals and standards, and stereotypical assumptions about cultures.

#### ***6.3.1 Universal perspectives***

Two of the dance teachers referred to ideas of universalism where dance is considered a “universal language” and where everyone’s bodies and movements are considered the same. Considering whether she should adapt her teaching practices in her dance studio classes, Bella shared:

I think I'd just be the same. I think everyone's there to dance, everyone is there for the same reasons. They all want to get the same out of it, and I want to give the same to each student. [...] Especially with dance, because everyone's got bodies, everyone can move, and everyone can express themselves with dance. So I think it's like a universal language almost.

This can be considered an ethnocentric approach to teaching dance, as Bella seems to be approaching the dance class from a singular worldview, and in turn minimising the differences among her students. As mentioned earlier, again it is important to acknowledge that one’s worldview is not universally shared (Anderson, 1982). Bella’s narratives illustrate a perception that dance may be considered a ‘universal language’ (as mentioned in Section 4.2.1), and whereby people are also universal. This connects with earlier discussions in Section 2.2 of the literature review about the universal standard established in Western dance practices (Kerr-Berry, 2012). The phrase ‘dance is a universal language’ is one I commonly hear within dance studio settings. From experience, I feel it is often used with an uplifting and inclusive intention, but perhaps requires critical reflection. If cultural differences are not recognised as diverse but rather as universal, the resulting minimisation of cultural difference could continue to exclude those considered ‘other’ (Guo, 2010; Sadjed, Sprung, & Kukovetz, 2015).

Rachel also extends on the idea of dance and people as universal. Her narrative illustrates this where she reflects on her experiences of teaching dance studio classes which had some culturally diverse students:

I think the only challenges are if there is a language barrier. I think it's universal. Children they love music, they love dance, and most children are very keen to please and all of those things. If there's any behaviour issues, or you know you get rowdy children, compliant

children, the one's that push the boundaries – you get them all cultures I think. So, I think that the only challenge with them that I have found is just if there are any language issues.

As with Bella's suggestion that dance and people are universal, Rachel also expresses "it's universal", referring to the teaching and learning of dance. In particular, her narrative highlights a perception of behaviour as universal and the same for all children. This contrasts with the attitudes shared in the narratives discussed in Section 5.1, which reflected understandings of cultural difference in relation to the diverse behaviours and actions of people. Their understanding that dance, people and behaviours are universal may show that Bella and Rachel are maintaining an ethnocentric bias within the dance class. This bias is articulated by Young (2018), who states "the Western ethnocentric bias in dance education that maintains a Eurocentric status quo constructed by the aesthetic, political, and sociocultural norms of a white, heteronormative majority remains a classic problem" (p.15). Ashley (2014) also argues that the assumption "that different cultures are working along the same social values as Eurocentric dance education requires re-examination from the twenty-first century, pluralist perspective" (p.256). Rather than holding universal perspectives, Townsend (2002) emphasises that teachers should acknowledge cultural difference to alter the perception and expectations of culturally diverse students. Townsend (2002) further adds that "since traditional teaching methods addressing dominant values and experiences may be inappropriate for all students, teachers must have sustained opportunities to effectively implement alternative practices to accommodate individual and cultural differences" (p.737).

Another key idea within Rachel's previous narrative is that the "only challenges are if there is a language barrier". This theme emerged several times throughout the interviews. In particular, Bella mentions language as a barrier, but also refers back to universal ideas when considering how she might respond:

Language, if that was a barrier that could be quite difficult explaining things in English. But generally, I guess you don't really need to talk too much as well. Like with dancing you can show a lot and pick up from that. I guess it's just making things really clear, like maybe being a bit more theatrical. I had a little girl start dance, I think she might be Japanese, and I don't think she knows much. Her Mum isn't super good with English, so I think I just find myself doing more like showing, body language, and physically showing stuff, or just talking really clearly.

Language as a barrier within dance teaching has been discussed variously within literature (Banerjee, 2013; Johnson, 2018; Richards & Gardner, 2019). It is identified as a challenge that dance teachers may face within multicultural education contexts and which may be responded to in a variety of ways. Bella's suggestion "you don't really need to talk too much" could suggest she is minimising the cultural differences by assuming that all students may understand body language in the same way because it is universal. Assumptions that movement is constructed and understood universally maintain ethnocentric bias, often through authoritative teaching practices (as mentioned in the literature review, see Section 2.2.1) where students lose their sense of significance and cultural difference is minimised. It could be interpreted that Bella is responding from within her own cultural knowledge and worldview, rather than considering cultural difference among her students.

### **6.3.2 Treating students the same**

The dance teachers' ethnocentric bias around universal ideas further extends into the ways they may respond to their students in their dance classes. Many of the dance teachers expressed trying to treat students the same in order to foster inclusion. While this may be in an effort to be inclusive, it is possible it leads to minimisation of cultural difference, so may instead be exclusive. Both Bella and Rachel expressed intentions of treating or teaching their students the same. Bella illustrates this by saying, "Knowing a little bit about their culture and background helps, but generally you want to treat everyone the same really, and not single anyone out." Here it can be understood that she recognises some significance in the cultural and background knowledge of the students, but whether or not this informs her teaching practice and response to cultural difference is another question. In the following narrative, Rachel also suggests she intends to treat everyone the same:

We probably tend to work more in just integrating them more into the class. I kind of think that the children that we work with, that that's probably what their parents' want, that they become a part of our culture. I don't know whether we should consider that maybe - and I'm sure they do at home - that they might want to preserve their own culture as well.

As Rachel explains, she works towards "integrating" her students into the class, however her narrative may instead allude to assimilation, when she suggests the students "become a part of our culture". This may align with the concept of assimilation, as students' can lose their cultural identity in order to fit into the host culture (Berry, 1997). In contrast, it does appear that she is reflecting on this approach when she questions if she should consider whether the students and their families seek to "preserve their own culture as well". Here, Rachel could be evidencing aspects of an ethnorelative perception through the recognition and reflection on cultural difference (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). However, it remains unclear whether any action is taken in response to this reflection, or if ethnocentric bias is maintained.

When reflecting on how she might respond to cultural difference within her dance studio classes, Faye also illustrates a perspective that diminishes cultural difference. When asked if she would treat students differently, she shared:

I don't think so. I think it would only come down to the way they were learning, like if they weren't picking something up. I mean they might have better rhythm than European kids, so you wouldn't actually need to help them with that. So probably not, I would just still focus on their ability in the class.

From this it can be understood that while she recognises cultural difference may be present in the dance class, she would still only focus on the students' dance abilities. This approach to teaching reflects the dominant Eurocentric influences of mainstream media and Western practice where the dancer's ability and technique is the teacher's focus. This may diminish students' cultural differences within the dance studio class and may be considered interculturally insensitive and ethnocentric. Additionally, Faye comments, "they might have better rhythm than European kids". This suggestion illustrates her perception of two groups, or 'us versus them' as discussed in Section 6.2.1. Further, her assumption that students from other cultures have better rhythm is perhaps stereotyping of

cultural groups. Faye's assumption that all students of a particular ethnic group have rhythm also contributes to ideas of universalism. Guo and Jamal (2007) unpack ideas of treating students the same, explaining "faculty members and students both come to the teaching environment with varied experiences and social and cultural backgrounds, and may carry with them unexamined assumptions about the characteristics of various cultural groups with whom they are unfamiliar" (p.34).

Alternatively, if the dance teachers were to develop their cultural competence they would then be potentially "devoid of stereotypes, allowing the practitioner to be fully objective in gaining a clear understanding of the individual" (Nichols, 2019, p. 14). This would assist in shifting ethnocentric bias and contribute to the recognition of cultural difference among students, in turn helping to foster inclusivity and social integration.

Considering her responses to cultural difference within her dance studio classes, Evie suggested she is sensitive to cultures. However, her narrative may instead provide an example of how ethnocentric bias is maintained and cultural difference diminished through a difference as deficit perspective. She explained:

I mean I think we're sensitive to cultures, but we don't maybe single out somebody specifically because of their culture. I guess when anybody signs up, no matter what their background is, we'll just ask them why are you interested in dance, what are you hoping to gain or what are you hoping your child will gain from doing these classes, and we'll try our best to kind of accommodate those needs. So I guess, yes and no, we're sensitive to their culture but we don't specifically think 'okay if you're from this culture or this place we're going to do this exact dance for you'.

In this narrative, it appears that Evie contradicts herself by suggesting she is sensitive to cultures within the dance class, but then ends with "but we don't specifically think 'okay if you're from this culture or this place we're going to do this exact dance for you'". She adds:

Um I don't specifically categorise the students by their culture, I guess is a way to put it. We have a little registration form and the parents will write down anything that might come into play when their kids are in dance. So that could be a physical illness, or a mental illness, or some people will write maybe they're new to New Zealand or new to [our town], 'my child has English as a second language', and so we kind of will obviously take that into account.

Evie's use of an enrolment form as a way of considering cultural difference and students' needs could be considered a Eurocentric or Western approach within an institution. The use of a form may be influenced by the monocultural nature of the dance studio and the ethnocentric bias maintained by Evie (Sue, 2004). Therefore, in this context where 'whiteness is the norm', a difference as deficit perspective may be established (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004; Guo & Jamal, 2007). Difference as deficit leads to cultural diversity being ignored and minimised through a colour blind perspective "which sees cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds as irrelevant, and assumes that treating all individuals the same will erase issues of inequity and injustice" (Guo & Jamal, 2007, p. 32). However, histories, backgrounds, and experiences are important as they can affect the ways students learn and engage within a dance class, meaning being treated one way will not be appropriate for all students. Guo and Jamal (2007) also suggest that "to deal with the complexity of people's identities, individuals often use an essentialist approach to understand members of a different group by using their experience (or

lack of it) with the group to ascribe to them a set of characteristics” (p.34). This essentialist approach and intention to treat all students the same can be seen through Evie’s use of an enrolment form to recognise cultural difference using what is a hegemonic approach. The use of an enrolment form to recognise cultural difference may be a way of trying to erase issues of inequality and injustice by minimising students’ sociocultural backgrounds. While enrolment forms may be useful for dance studio teachers to collate information about their students, this is perhaps not sufficient as a standalone means for responding to and accommodating cultural differences. How then might dance studio teachers use more advanced practices of integration to acknowledge and recognise the cultural differences within their dance studio classes?

#### **6.4 Summary**

This chapter explored how the seven dance studio teachers interviewed for this study may be maintaining an ethnocentric bias within their dance studio classes. The narratives shared in this chapter were discussed in relation to the ways some dance studio teachers may maintain there is no cultural difference within their dance classes, the ways they denigrate cultural difference by perceiving it as not important, and the ways they minimise and diminish cultural difference within their dance classes.

It was found that some of the dance teachers deny cultural difference, as they do not recognise cultural difference within their dance studio classes. This was evident where some dance teachers suggested cultural difference is present in larger towns, but not smaller rural towns where this research was situated, and in their suggested intentions to perceive students as individuals, but not in relation to culture. Some of the dance teachers also discussed their choice to hold on to their set ways of teaching. These ideas illustrated the maintenance of ethnocentric bias, and contrasted with the dance teachers’ suggested aspirations towards inclusion, social integration, and attitudes of openness towards and understanding of cultural difference.

Some of the dance teachers’ narratives also illustrated ethnocentric attitudes and bias through denigration of cultural difference within their dance studio classes. As discussed, some of the dance teachers appeared to denigrate cultural difference through holding binary perceptions of ‘us versus them’, and of their own culture as superior. The dance teachers’ expectations that ‘other’ cultures fit in, and the assumption among some that there is not ‘enough’ cultural difference to require a response, were also discussed. Denigration of cultural difference also seemed to be illustrated in a view of cultural knowledge as unimportant within dance studio classes. It was discussed how this perspective may lead to cultural difference being ignored, and the suggestion made that the dance teachers should instead reflect on their teaching practices and the ways they may be contributing to inclusion and/or exclusion.

Lastly, it was noted that although the dance studio teachers suggested they aspire to hold attitudes towards openness and understanding cultural difference, some revealed perceptions of universalism,

and some reported trying to be inclusive by treating their students as all the same despite their cultural differences. This led on to discussions around how the dominance of Western and Eurocentric practices perpetuates universal ideals and standards, and how stereotypical assumptions can be made. As discussed, this can lead to the diminishing or minimising of students' cultural differences, and maintain ethnocentric bias.

## **Chapter 7: How might the dance studio teachers allow space for ethnorelative practices to emerge in their dance studio classes?**

*During my fieldwork I sat inside a dance studio quietly on the side, watching as the teacher began the class. She had told me how she likes to try and make all of her students, no matter their cultural background, feel welcome and included in the class. It seemed like this is what she was trying to do when she began the class and asked the students about their day. All of the students excitedly put their hands up, eager to share. I thought about how this allowed them all to have a voice and I remembered the example the teacher gave to me - "like if they've been to the marae on the weekend then they can share that at the beginning of the class". I felt this example was perhaps a stereotypical assumption – that the 'Maori students' would share about going to the marae. However, I watched each student share a story about their weekend and it seemed like each student, regardless of their differences, were all included and significant in that moment. Perhaps this was the teacher's way of allowing students' differences and similarities to be shared. I was eager to see how this would continue throughout the dance studio class. After the final student shared their story, the teacher stood up and prompted "okay, into your lines" and counted down "5, 4, 3, 2, 1". The students quickly moved into the lines and stood facing the mirror, waiting for the next instruction. It was here that I realised her efforts to acknowledge and respond to cultural difference had diminished, and that (perhaps familiar) authoritative teaching approaches proceeded.*

This narrative highlights an issue that has emerged through this study, where dance studio teachers may hold ethnorelative aspirations and intend to be inclusive, open and understanding towards cultural difference, but their responses may or may not lead to inclusion and social integration within dance studio classes. Similarly, this chapter explores how the dance studio teachers interviewed for this study may allow space for ethnorelative attitudes and practices to emerge in their dance studio classes. Building on the dance teachers' narratives and ideas shared throughout the previous discussion chapters, this chapter further investigates how some of the dance studio teachers may hold aspirations for ethnorelative practices, which potentially foster inclusion and social integration. As in Chapter Six, Bennett's (2004) developmental model of intercultural sensitivities (DMIS) will provide a starting point for making meaning from the narratives. The chapter draws on the wider concepts of the model, without emphasis on its chronological progression (see the literature review chapter, Section 2.1.3). The narratives shared in the first section will illustrate the ways the dance teachers may be expressing they recognise and accept there are cultural differences within their dance studio classes, but do not seek to adapt to or integrate these differences. Next, the ways the dance studio teachers do seek to understand cultural difference and then respond appropriately through adapting their practices within dance studio classes are explored. Lastly, the third section of this chapter investigates how the dance studio teachers may aspire to draw on and integrate different worldviews by attempting to foster 'new' inclusive spaces, and build relationships with students and parents.

### **7.1 "We're not going to completely ignore it": Recognising students' cultural differences within dance studio classes**

This section explores how the dance teachers seek to allow space for ethnorelative attitudes and practices to emerge in their dance studio classes by being aware of students' cultural differences, but perhaps are not responding to the differences due to various rationales. Both Faye and Kylie discussed having an awareness of who is in their dance studio classes and the differences among

them, such as cultural difference. Faye discussed seeing students as individuals (similar to Evie's discussion of treating students as individuals in Section 6.1.1) and the different ways students may like to be treated in dance classes, which may or may not be due to culture:

With different cultures sometimes you can maybe be just a little bit more aware of how they like to be treated or whatever. I think you can kind of pick that up off a kid. I do still think it is individual. So definitely you're not going to go in and just be like the same to every single kid. You know that this little kid might need you to say it a little bit more positively than another little girl who can pick things up straight away, and you can be like 'make sure you're doing this', and you might realise 'okay I've got to go about it a different way with this child'. Whether it is cultures, whether they're just shy, it could be a number of different things.

Faye's narrative highlights she is aware that students may have different cultures, and recognising these differences is important in considering how to treat her students. She highlights that being aware of students' cultural differences (among other differences) may be an important aspect within her dance studio classes. This may be understood as acceptance and an ethnorelative attitude as she places some significance on accepting the cultural differences which are present (Bennett, 1993). Approaching a dance class with this ethnorelative attitude may be considered a culturally responsive approach to teaching, as discussed in the literature review (see Section 2.3.3). Faye's attitude may also reflect ideas of multiculturalism, namely tolerance and respecting difference as a reality (Sutiyono, 2015). However, within Faye's narrative, she also describes maintaining this awareness "whether it is cultures, whether they're just shy" or "a number of different things". Faye is therefore shifting the emphasis from recognising and accepting cultural differences to perhaps understanding generalised and universal differences, which may not be specific to culture. This perspective was discussed in Section 6.3, and its potential for diminishing cultural difference and fostering feelings of exclusion for some students. While students may participate and be accepted in dance classes (despite the dance teacher's perspective diminishing cultural difference), the depth of dance teachers' awareness and acceptance of cultural difference warrants further exploration. In this regard, how might Faye be recognising and accepting cultural difference within her own worldview, and how could this be developed to integrate various worldviews?

Like Faye, Kylie also acknowledged that cultural difference may be present in her classes, and suggested that being aware of who is in the class is important in her dance studio teaching practice. Kylie discussed this in relation to the dances she choreographs for her students:

I think when we are choreographing, we are not choreographing for ourselves. We would like to think about our class and who's in our classes. It's not necessarily their culture, but you know that in this class in particular, there are a few students who maybe take a little bit longer to get the moves, you might do some more easy moves – whether that's related to culture or not, it's not really something we think about. So we kind of just think about a student as a person, not about where they come from and all that kind of stuff. I'm here with these kids, they are all going to do the same thing, so you just have to make it work all together [...] because this is what the class is doing.

Kylie's narrative illustrates a similar stance to Faye in that she tries to be aware of the differences among her students, which to some extent include cultural difference. Both Kylie and Faye emphasise potential differences in students' abilities and the ways they learn. In Kylie's narrative, she mentions

“we kind of just think about a student as a person, not about where they come from and all that kind of stuff”. However as discussed, it can be argued that ‘where a student comes from’ may contribute greatly to who a student is ‘as a person’, as culture underpins individual identity and the ways they engage in learning contexts (Baskerville, 2009; Elliot & Du Gay, 2009; Hall, 2006). Therefore, despite Kylie accepting that cultural difference is present, there does not appear to be any attempt to respond to these cultural differences. This could be problematic because rather than fostering inclusion and social integration within the dance class, students may be generalised, and left feeling excluded and disconnected. In particular, Kylie’s narrative places a strong emphasis on how the students are participating in the dance class “all together”, and that “they are all going to do the same thing, so you just have to make it work all together”. It could be argued that despite the students all participating in the same dance content, accepting cultural difference may allow for some ethnorelative attitudes and practices to emerge through the collective dance participation. However, it is possible that ethnocentric bias may still be present in this hegemonic approach to dance pedagogy. Teaching in a hegemonic way that does not respond to cultural difference appears to be a common experience within Western influenced dance studio classes. I can recall being a student in classes where it was expected that all students would do the same dance routines or activities despite their various differences. The challenge perhaps lies in the ways dance routines and activities are delivered to groups of students in a Western dance studio class. How ethnorelative practices might emerge within dance studio classes as they participate “all together” could be further explored, as well as how this teaching approach might be developed to respond to and allow space for the students’ cultural differences.

Also referring to culture, Kylie added to her previous narrative, suggesting that:

We're not going to completely ignore it as well. So if someone has something cool to share, maybe they went to the marae on the weekend and they want to share that first, cool, we can talk about that and still acknowledge it.

This example perhaps demonstrates an ethnorelative perspective. It can be understood that Kylie accepts cultural difference and acknowledges that students may have diverse experiences, yet does not intend to adapt or integrate cultural differences beyond conversations held in the dance studio class. Evie builds on Kylie’s ideas of acknowledging cultural difference in the class, but with a point of difference where she seems to connect the way the students learn to their cultures:

I think definitely having people from different backgrounds in my class will maybe not change what I am teaching, but change the way that I might present certain things. I think it's always important just to be aware of who you've got in your class, not only in terms of their background but just in terms of who they are. So if we know that we have someone who doesn't speak English as their first language, we might go through things more slowly, or check in with them more than we normally would. But we don't kind of think 'right this person's from somewhere different so we're going to change our class to cater to them'. We just kind of do it case by case, the same way we would for someone who is from our town that maybe would have an issue as well when joining in.

As discussed in Section 5.1, Evie's narrative illustrates ideas around how the way students behave and learn can be linked to cultural difference. Evie also mentions background and "who they are", but unlike Kylie connects these together as aspects to be aware of within dance studio classes. She provides an example of responding to a student who "doesn't speak English as their first language". As language barriers were a common issue discussed by the dancer teachers (see Section 6.3), it may be worth considering how to respond and manage language differences in a culturally responsive and sensitive way. As expressed in her narrative, Evie suggests she may "go through things more slowly, or check in with them more than we normally would". Here, it can be understood that Evie is aware of and accepts the cultural difference, but perhaps responds from her own worldview (Bennett, 2013). While there are aspects of an ethnorelative approach, she further adds she would not "change our class to cater to them" and that it would be the same for "someone who is from our town". Accordingly it can be understood that ethnocentric bias continues to perpetuate her perception of two groups – the host community and the 'other'.

Rachel also reflected on students who may have English as a second language, and how she responds:

I think we do take into account the few, there's not many, but the few children that we have that have English as a second language. We are aware of the communication that is often more difficult and sometimes we're not quite aware of when you say things, they generally tend to just go yes because they often don't want to say, 'I don't understand'. So we do take that into account with those students and make sure we send things in writing so that they get a chance to work through it at home. And then also with those children, we are aware of making sure we repeat things and speak more slowly to them.

From this narrative it can be understood that Rachel is aware and accepting of students' cultural differences, such as different languages. Importantly, she highlights an issue surrounding confidence or self-esteem for students who may experience a language barrier. This may seem to indicate an ethnorelative attitude, as she is open to accepting these students within her dance class and attempts to accommodate these differences to foster inclusion. However, like Evie, Rachel's approaches seem to come from her own worldview. For example, her approach to recognising and accepting the cultural differences and addressing the language barrier is to "send things in writing so they get a chance to work through it at home". While her intentions to be inclusive may be well-meaning, this approach could be embedded in her worldview and essentialist Western practices (Guo & Jamal, 2007). Similar to Evie's approach of using enrolment forms to identify students' differences (as discussed in Section 6.3.2), ethnocentric bias may underlie the way Rachel responds to cultural differences within the dance studio. How might an alternative response to language differences emerge through the adaptation or integration of different worldviews?

## **7.2 "What am I coming up against with this culture thing; how flexible is it?": Seeking to understand and adapt to cultural difference within dance studio classes**

This section explores how the dance studio teachers allow for ethnorelative practices to emerge within their dance studio classes through the ways they seek to understand cultural difference and

then respond appropriately through adapting their practices. David and Taylor both expressed a perception that understanding cultural difference is significant to their practice and dance studio classes. Firstly, David shared:

I think as facilitators and teachers, we're there to teach, but I guess you wouldn't know what to teach specifically towards each individual if you don't know them and what they need to learn. So it's really the teacher's job to really go out of their way and get to know okay what are the weaknesses, what do they need, what am I coming up against with this culture thing, how strong is it, how flexible is it.

David's narrative illustrates he perceives it to be the teacher's role to seek an understanding of their students, including cultural difference, and how to respond within a dance class. Similarly, Taylor adds:

Knowing how to teach is based on how I understand that person, and that person within the space interacting with others. [...] I think the most important thing is pedagogic knowledge, but I would separate it. Because in understanding how to teach, that is so informed by cultural and intercultural knowledge, I would say.

Like David, Taylor's narrative suggests she seeks to understand her students and their cultures in order to support her teaching practices. She also highlights the interrelatedness between pedagogic knowledge, cultural knowledge and intercultural knowledge, suggesting that the cultural aspects of education and knowledge inform how dance may be taught. This idea is reflected in discussions of various pedagogies (see the literature review, Sections 2.2.2 and 2.3.3), such as humanising and culturally responsive pedagogies. Drawing on David's suggestion of considering "what am I coming up against with this culture thing, how strong is it, how flexible is it", it can be understood that David also acknowledges that cultural difference needs to be recognised, understood and responded to for his classes. This approach of seeking to understand cultural difference may allow for ethnorelative practices to emerge within the dance class, where through understanding their students, the dance studio teachers are able to acknowledge the students' worldviews and adapt their own (Bennett, 1993). Using such an approach within dance studio classes may assist in fostering both inclusion and social integration for the students, as this level of cultural competency helps to reduce stereotypical perspectives, allowing dance teachers to gain a clear understanding of each student (Nichols, 2019).

David and Taylor's attitudes of seeking to understand cultural differences may also allow for ethnorelative practices to emerge within their dance studio classes in relation to adapting various aspects - such as the use of costumes, negotiating language barriers, and the content being taught or facilitated. For example, David and Taylor reflected on an experience of managing costumes for some Pacific Island students, most of whom were of Tongan ethnicity. Firstly, Taylor shared:

We did have that time when they [the students] couldn't wear leggings - especially because some of them within their families and churches held these specific roles and a status, and they're related or part of a royal blood line. So, they have to carry themselves out in modesty and everything - long skirt, nothing short. [...] But how can we have something that everyone can wear? [...] The girls come to me and go 'oh this person's not allowed to wear that because she's a this in her church'. Even just for me understanding that, I have some understanding because I'm around these guys, but at the same time, it's working within that. It's not like you're deliberately trying to disrespect the culture or disregard it, but within this

context of the [rural town], like in the 21st century, how does that look? And it's not always easy, because we can find alternatives, like some of them weren't allowed to wear singlets, so we had to allow them to wear long sleeves.

Here, Taylor's narrative illustrates she is aware of, and to some degree understands the cultural aspects of what students may and may not wear in a dance studio context. She mentions finding "something that everyone can wear" and "alternatives", suggesting she aspires to adapting this practical aspect of dance studio classes (wearing costumes). It can be understood that Taylor has established a relationship with her students where they can approach her with concerns regarding costumes. Building relationships will be discussed further in Section 7.3. However, also significant to note here is that while Taylor is understanding of cultural differences and sensitivities, she seems to be reflecting ideas of adaptation through making changes and accommodating the students' needs – such as by allowing the students to wear long sleeves. This may be an example of re-examining whether Eurocentric dance education is appropriate for all cultures (Mabingo, 2015). In contrast, it can also be understood that her suggestion to "allow them" to wear alternative costumes perhaps alludes to aspects of hierarchy and power imbalances. In many of my experiences as a dance student in dance studio classes it was often the teacher who determined the clothing worn during classes, examinations, competitions and performances. It can thus be understood, both from my own experiences and Taylor's narrative, that as the teacher, Taylor is still holding authority over what the students wear, possibly reflecting a deficit approach (Cummins, 2003). If Taylor were to utilise a humanising or culturally responsive approach, perhaps these practical situations around costume or uniform could be navigated with shared authority and cultural worldviews.

Another example of the potential emergence of ethnorelative practices is shared by Kylie, who makes a suggestion about how she might adapt her worldview and teaching practices in order to include culturally diverse students within a dance class. She shared:

I think if we've got some new students that are coming from a different culture, it would be cool to do a dance where students can reflect on their life. So not necessarily making it about 'this is us and our Island, and we are swimming' or whatever. But thinking, 'okay I want everybody to imagine they're at their favourite place', and then maybe that might be somewhere from home, and we can be like okay he would like to share, and we can talk about it, and then we can do all sorts of moves sort of related around that. I think that could definitely help, because although it's a new environment, that brings it back to a safe place and makes it more comfortable, as well as still enjoying it through dancing and learning something.

The creative activity Kylie describes in her narrative is not something she has yet done in her dance classes, but an activity she had thought about and may implement. This reflection suggests she recognises that students may have diverse experiences and worldviews, and it can be understood she aspires to incorporate activities such as these. This may reflect an ethnorelative approach to dance and creative movement within a dance studio class, such as including activities that allow for lived experiences to become part of the dance content (McCarthy-Brown, 2017; Shapiro, 1999). However Kylie's intended approach can also be questioned because it does not fully engage in culturally responsive pedagogy in that she is only briefly integrating students' alternative worldviews

within a Eurocentric task. While she may have provided this suggestion as an example of how to adapt creative dance activities to include and socially integrate cultural difference among the students, she perhaps lacks the knowledge and skills to do this in a more in-depth and responsive way.

Alternatively, Evie shared an example of how she aspires to foster inclusion and social integration, as she reflected on how she responds to students who have English as a second language:

So often if we have somebody who doesn't speak much English, we might just ask them 'how do you say hello in your home language?' Then they can kind of teach other kids, so when we see them, we can say hello to them. It's just little things like that that help them feel more included. I think that's probably more in the social aspects of our classes, more so than the actual dance stuff. Sometimes we'll count in their home language as well, which could be kind of like a way to help them feel more at home and relaxed.

As mentioned in Section 7.1, language barriers were acknowledged by some of the dance teachers who were seeking to accept cultural difference. Evie's suggestion of including students' languages in the class may help to foster a sense of belonging and social connectedness. It appears she is acknowledging the diverse languages spoken by students and encourages their use in the classroom. However, whether this highlights the student as different or allows space for cultural diversity in the class is another question.

In another example, Taylor discussed her experiences of teaching dance classes with a combination of Pacific Island cultural dance, contemporary dance, and hip hop dance. She explained that her classes were made of mostly Pacific Island students, with a few New Zealand European students:

We did Pacific Contemporary dance and the Europeans actually found it quite hard, because it was not their natural style of moving necessarily. They could pick up a hip hop dance really easily or even like a contemporary technique warm up easily. But when it came to Pacific dance, and the fusion of Pacific and Contemporary they couldn't pick it up as easily, and then I guess the Pacific youth in the class, they were familiar to doing it. So I had to kind of adapt my teaching style, and vice versa – like when we were doing the contemporary warm ups that necessarily wasn't the Pacific youths' thing. Actually, some of them were really good at it, maybe the ones that had grown up here and had been doing sport, I don't know, maybe that had an influence as well. But that was really interesting, just the different styles of dance and how they responded to it.

From this narrative it can be understood that Taylor is aware of cultural differences, not only among her students, but also with regard to the various dance genres. It could be perceived that Taylor is generalising ethnic groups within the narrative, which may reflect earlier discussions of stereotyping and universalism. However, she also suggests she has to adapt her teaching style based on the students' responses to the dance genres being taught. Within the literature, it has been suggested that the ways students learn and experience dance studio classes can vary, possibly reflecting what Taylor is experiencing in her dance classes (see Section 2.2.1). It seems that she is responsive to the ways students are learning various genres of dance. In contrast, her ideas surrounding dance genres can be questioned, as "dance has always borrowed or taken from other cultures and expressive forms" (Shapiro, 2015, p. 73). Kerr-Berry (2010) adds that most "dancers are unaware that chances

are, every time they learn a new combination or try-on a new step, they are embodying movement from a multitude of cultural origins other than Western Europe” (p.5). Taylor’s recognition of learning differences and the need to adapt seems to reflect an ethnorelative approach to dance education and could be considered culturally responsive. However, questions remain about the influence on her pedagogical approaches of stereotyping and assumptions about both students’ cultures and dance genres, and further, how this might affect students’ experiences within her dance studio classes.

### **7.3 “It’s not different cultures turning on each other, but it’s finding a common ground”: Integrating worldviews through inclusivity and socialisation in dance studio classes**

This section explores how the dance teachers may aspire to holding ethnorelative attitudes, and allowing space for practices to emerge through integrating various worldviews and cultural differences. The dance studio teachers in the study are recognising cultural difference and seeking to understand the various worldviews among their students. However, how might, or might not, this aspiration culminate in integration within their dance studio classes? As previously mentioned throughout the discussion chapters, a key idea that emerged from the narratives was around inclusion and social integration within dance studio classes, and inclusivity towards cultural difference. Several of the dance studio teachers’ narratives within this section suggest they aspire to draw on different worldviews as they seek to establish an inclusive space. This can be seen in their intentions toward fostering a new or hybrid space, collaborative pedagogies, engaging students in cultural dance genres and activities, and building relationships with students’ families. However, it can also be understood from the narratives that despite these aspirations, the teachers’ integrative intentions are not quite realised.

Building on the narratives shared in Section 7.2, David and Taylor emphasised the significance of understanding cultural difference. Where their previous narratives may have suggested that David and Taylor reflect adaptation within their dance studio classes and teaching practices, the following narratives highlight they also aspire to draw on their own and others’ worldviews in an attempt to integrate aspects of both, and in turn foster inclusion within dance classes. In Section 4.1.2, Taylor mentioned that she recognises “a divide between the European and the Pacific students”, and discussed her intentions to “create the environment within the learning space so that everyone could feel welcome”. Building on this, below Taylor further shares:

It was really a teaching strategy, because we had to create the environment within the learning space so that everyone could feel welcome. We actually we had to work in terms of if we’re talking about migrant youth, kind of adapting our teaching strategies to be like ‘hey we actually live a diverse multicultural place’. It’s maybe not so multicultural in [this rural town], that’s probably why they’re used to that divide. But this was the key thing that actually created a more inclusive learning space – and I don’t think it was perfected actually.

Taylor’s narrative seems to illustrate her acknowledgement of a separation between two cultural groups, followed by her intention to negotiate these differences in order to foster inclusion. Her narrative suggests she wanted to create an integrated and inclusive space within the dance studio class through communicating with the students and adapting her teaching practices. In light of

Bhabha's (1994) notions of hybridity in relation to cultural integration, Taylor's acknowledgement and response to cultural difference suggests that a space may be fostered for social integration. From a post-colonial lens hybridity has been noted to reduce power of dominant cultural groups and increase cultural equivalence and inclusion (Bhabha, 1994; Rowe, 2008). However, Taylor herself appears to realise she has not "perfected" integration within her dance class. Further investigation might explore why this was not achieved as she had envisaged, and how dance teachers can be supported to create this space.

David also seems to pick up on similar ideas around creating an environment or space within dance studio classes for fostering inclusion and social integration. He shared:

If we're talking about unifying them, I think that we almost had to set a different culture for them, to allow themselves to think freely in the space. It's coming up against it, and it's not like different cultures turning on each other or a war against each other, but it's finding a common ground. That's why it comes back to setting, not a new standard, but a new pattern of ways that we get to understand, and have this space where all different diverse cultures come together, and we still respect that. But in saying that what does that look like?

From David's narrative it seems that like Taylor, he recognises the cultural differences and various worldviews among the students in his classes. He comments that "coming up against" different cultures does not mean "turning on each other or a war against each other". This idea of tension or conflict between diverse cultures perhaps reflects the tensions felt within dance studio classes in Eurocentric rural towns. It could be perceived that David is acknowledging and aspiring to facilitate ethnorelative practices to overcome Western dominance and marginalisation of minority groups within dance classes. Referring to Shapiro's (2008) concept of global aesthetics, Lisa Wilson (2014) discusses the benefits of engaging in "an attitude and perspective that not only recognizes the diverse nature of dancing peoples, bodies, forms, and expressions, but which also assigns equal value and importance to each" (p.169). Utilising this ethnorelative perspective and pedagogical approach may provide a setting that "disrupts ethnocentrism and immerses students into new cultural experiences" (Mabingo, 2019, p. 50) within the dance studio class, and further allows for ethnorelative attitudes and practices to emerge. Yet, referring back to David's narrative above, he asks "what does that look like?". Here, it can again be questioned whether some dance teachers have the confidence and skills to overcome barriers and tensions around cultural difference and social integration. How can dance studio teachers allow their ethnorelative perspectives of cultural difference come to fruition within their teaching practices?

Several of the dance studio teachers discussed the ways they aspired to foster integration through their pedagogical and practical approaches. Firstly, David shared:

I teach every student the same. I have to teach the same thing to all of them. In saying that, to teach them the right thing, I have to tap into their culture and to explore what that looks like, and understand. Because I can't just know it all and go 'oh so this is what they do', but still teach and operate in a different way to what I think. So when I look into that, I ask 'why are they like that?' - because a culture could mean different things. Then that's when I start looking at coming up with ways that I'm able to meet their requirements, and there's always that one thing that they all have in common, and it's the passion to do something. But you see

what I have to do is bring an understanding between the two, where I'm going, okay I understand that, how do I merge that together with the work and teaching?

From this narrative, it can be seen David is acknowledging and reflecting on the diverse worldviews and experiences of his students. It seems he is aware of both the similarities and differences among his students and seeks to “merge” the differences in order to foster an inclusive learning environment within the class. This may reflect a significant ethnorelative attitude as his ability to “recognize that [his] own view of the world is not universally shared” is evident, and that his students “have views of the world that are profoundly different from [his] own” (Anderson, 1982, p. 203). David’s suggestion that a passion to do something is “one thing that they all have in common” may mean he is using an interest in dance to unify and integrate the students.

However, it is also important to note David’s reflection, “I can’t just know it all and go ‘oh so this is what they do’ but still teach and operate in a different way and what I think”. Here he may be referring to content knowledge and pedagogical approaches versus intercultural competence, as the former may be considered more important in dance studio contexts than teachers’ intercultural competence. The arguments in the literature review (see Sections 2.1.3 and 2.3.3) suggest intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivities are significant, particularly for multicultural dance education. David’s reflection perhaps aligns with this perspective, as he recognises the potential for dance teachers to rely on familiar ways of teaching (Green, 2003; Walus, 2019). In relation to my previous teaching experiences, I have often found myself returning to familiar dance content and pedagogy for various reasons, such as time restrictions, the challenge of adapting class content, or because I think it might work for the dance class. However, I recognise that relying on familiar content and pedagogies is not suitable for all dance classes and students, and I try to be reflective when teaching to ensure I avoid doing this. As highlighted throughout these discussion chapters, reliance on familiarity may be a significant challenge for dance studio teachers to overcome within Western and Eurocentric dance studio classes. This is illustrated by David’s question, “How do I merge that together with the work and teaching?” Articulating this further, how can dance teachers work with students’ cultural differences in such a way that content and pedagogical knowledge are supported with intercultural competence and integrated intercultural sensitivities? How might dance teachers utilise these aspects to foster an inclusive hybrid space within dance studio classes?

When considering pedagogical teaching strategies, Taylor emphasised using collaborative teaching pedagogies to assist with integrating the students’ cultural differences and fostering an inclusive space within the dance class. She shared how this helped her to navigate hierarchical power structures within the class:

Pedagogically it's one of the like keys things I have to work with, is this kind of value system of inferiority to get the students to contribute with the class. Often when I put them into smaller groups and send them away, they come back with amazing stuff and I'm surprised. But within a big group it's like 'I feel so little'. A lot of the pedagogical strategies I use, is we do stuff in groups and partners. Hardly ever we do things individually, just because I believe in that social learning, collaborative learning, and that they can learn off each other.

Taylor's narrative illustrates the potential significance of having students work together with their peers to create, exchange and share ideas. She highlights the significance of this pedagogical approach for reducing the potential power structures existing within the dance class. Collaborative learning can allow the students to "understand one another's differences while realizing similarities" (Ssebuuma & Martin, 2018, p. 22). While Taylor's approach may support an inclusive learning environment, it can be questioned whether she is integrating different cultural worldviews and differences beyond the surface level. How often and at what times Taylor utilises collaborative teaching strategies could also be further investigated, as her narrative indicates this approach may be used primarily during creative dance activities. Considering the dominance of technique, and a performance and competition focus within dance studio classes, how might collaborative teaching pedagogies be used in this context? Further, how might this approach assist in navigating Eurocentric power structures and the maintenance of ethnocentric bias?

Both Kylie and Evie shared examples of how they try to integrate cultural difference through including cultural aspects within their dance studio classes. Kylie shared:

Occasionally, we haven't done much of it this year, but I know last year and earlier in the year we did - we do like kind of cultural dances. We've done like a Pasifika dance once before which was really cool, and we try and relate it back to students that we have in the class, and get them to help us out a little bit. Because when we're doing a Pasifika dance, we know so much of it, but when you've got a Pasifika student you can be like 'okay can you come up and show us how this looks', and kind of include them that way so they've got like a special kind of role in the class.

Referring back to Rachel's example of including a Korean student by having her perform cultural dance at the centre of a performance involving other students (see Section 6.2.1), the above example given by Kylie can be understood as an ethnorelative approach, as she is attempting to integrate one student's culture within the Western dance studio. In doing this, the student may be able to maintain a sense of her own culture and the host culture (Berry, 2005). While Kylie's example of teaching a Pacific Island dance still highlights the student as 'different', she is attempting to approach this in a way whereby the class, including the teacher, are all engaging in a cultural exchange. Allowing the Pacific Island student to lead and be included in this exchange may assist both a culturally responsive approach to integrating cultural dance, as well as foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity within the dance studio. Here it is worth repeating Daniela Sider's (2016) view that "the only way to counter this [European-American ethnocentrism] pattern is to expose ourselves to diverse dances from all over the globe, understand their history, and embody them as authentically as possible" (p.2). However, as with Taylor's example above, it can be questioned whether Kylie's approach is successfully integrating cultural difference and diverse worldviews. Kylie could be seen as holding an ethnocentric view of Western and non-Western dance forms (as discussed in the literature review, see Section 2.2.1), which means her aspiration to integrate cultural difference does not fully achieve cultural inclusion. She perhaps makes an assumption that the Pacific Island student will feel connected, knowledgeable and interested in contributing to teaching and learning a Pacific Island dance. It is also quite likely that within the dance studio context, the Pacific Island dance form has been

decontextualised – perhaps even more so because it appears that cultural dance forms from a range of countries with very different histories, traditions and backgrounds have been lumped into ‘Pacific Island’ dance. Again, questions arise (see Section 6.1.1) around how teachers in a Western dance studio context can incorporate cultural dance genres without decontextualising these dance forms. It is important to explore how this can be achieved without placing assumptions on students who might belong to non-Western cultures.

Evie had also attempted to integrate cultural difference and differing worldviews through including some activities in relation to a venture in Vanuatu. She shared:

Recently I've been to Vanuatu to do some dance stuff over there, and kids here in New Zealand were really interested to learn about the kids over there. So we had a little dress up week and all the kids brought a gold coin donation, and then when I went to Vanuatu we bought them some school supplies and stuff. So that was really cool for the kids to learn about another culture that way. We also did a little pen pal thing, so the children from [our town] wrote a wee letter and then we took those to Vanuatu, and then the kids there wrote a letter back, so it's been quite cool. It's just opened their minds a little bit.

Evie's narrative highlights the way she attempted to integrate cultural difference through including cultural diversity within her dance studio classes. While this did not occur as such within her pedagogical approach to teaching dance, cultural diversity is being acknowledged and included through non-dance activities. Embracing diversity in such a way could possibly help diminish perceptions of inferiority and superiority between different cultural groups, and see all cultures as valuable (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). Furthermore, Mabingo (2019) adds that cultural diversity within the dance class “can allow students and teachers to value the abundance of knowledge, insights, and perspectives that are inherent to the dance forms” (p.49). However, Evie's narrative could also be considered in terms of Anttila et al.'s (2018) discussion of the “teachers' privileged position as ‘benevolent givers’”, where “this positivity appeared to be associated with broader ideals of civic responsibility, rather than specifically related to the process of cultural integration” (p.9). Therefore, while Evie's aspiration to foster inclusion and social integration may have resulted in the students engaging in cultural diversity, her approach may not be sufficiently ethnorelative to foster cultural and social integration for the students in her dance studio classes.

Another key idea that emerged within the narratives is around social connectedness within a dance class and building relationships. In particular, David and Taylor discussed building relationships with their students as a significant aspect of their dance classes and teaching practice. They both expressed that this was important for understanding students' cultural differences, particularly as they both had mostly Tongan and Samoan students, and aspired to foster inclusivity and social integration for their students. Taylor discussed the “importance of building relationships and knowing people being so key to how learners respond, first of all by getting there, and second of all by interacting within the classroom”. Similarly, David said, “For me, I have to understand to a point where I build relationships with them and their parents to understand their culture, because that's how I find out how different they all are.” Taylor and David's narratives suggest that building connections and

understanding with the students and their families is key for addressing issues around accessibility and culturally responsive dance pedagogies. For example, Taylor shared, “If we don’t understand how to build relationships and talk to Peni’s parents to get her to the class, who cares what we know, because she won’t even be learning it, she won’t even have the opportunity to learn.” This highlights the significance of teachers establishing social bridges with students’ parents (Crozier, 1998; Matuszny, Devender, & Coleman, 2007). David reflects on this further, particularly in relation to his students from various Pacific Island cultures:

We would go and pick them up all the time, drop them off afterwards, hang out and just have some food. They would welcome us in, and sometimes I would go and stay over there with the boys. It’s that stuff that is really key, because the parents are used to doing that in Tonga, or in the Islands.

Here it can be understood that David is reflecting on the cultural worldviews and practices valued and experienced by Pacific Island students and families. This may reflect an integrated intercultural sensitivity as he recognises the significance of relationships within Pacific Island cultures. Taylor also reflected upon the significance of building relationships within her dance studio pedagogic practice:

I think looking at it now, understanding is actually a key part when interacting with Pacific learners, and building relationships as well. Because for example, say my student Nela goes to a dance studio, and they’ve got an end of year show and they’re doing a salsa piece where Nela has to wear a short skirt. Nela will probably just end up leaving the studio and actually not turning up anymore, because she knows ‘I’m not going to have that conversation with my parents, and I’m also too scared to tell the teacher that I can’t wear that’. Because maybe Nela is the only one [non-European student] in the class, and ‘oh I don’t want to be the only one that can’t wear it’. I’m just thinking, if I was to put myself in her shoes, but I guess that’s where the building relationships comes from. But I mean that’s something I’ve had to learn, not being a Pacific islander but teaching a different culture, and man it’s a conscious effort that you have to make.

Taylor’s narrative illustrates an empathic attitude as she is considering a situation from the student’s position and worldview (Bennett, 1986). However, she is also seeking to integrate her own worldview by expressing the value of and her intention toward building relationships with her students, both within and outside of her dance classes. If the dance studio teachers are able to understand their students’ worldviews and their shifting nature, this may allow space for ethnorelative practices to emerge within the dance studio class. This is important to consider, as while relationships with parents in Western and Eurocentric dance studios may be considered significant, it is highly likely that most dance studio teachers would not go to the effort of building in-depth relationships beyond the dance studio class walls. As Taylor further explained, “It’s going and sitting there and having dinner with them, going along to their church things that I don’t understand at all. But that’s just some examples of making a conscious effort.” However, is this level of fostering social connectedness achievable and sustainable for dance teachers, particularly in long-established dance studios with many students? Additionally, how can dance studio teachers foster stronger relationships with a culturally responsive approach within their dance studios?

#### **7.4 Summary**

This chapter explored how the dance studio teachers interviewed for this study may attempt to allow space for ethnorelative attitudes and practices to emerge in their dance studio classes. As discussed, some of the dance studio teachers may hold aspirations for ethnorelative practices that potentially foster inclusion and social integration.

The narratives in the first section of the chapter illustrated the ways some dance teachers expressed that while they recognise and accept there are cultural differences within their dance studio classes, they do not seek to adapt or integrate these differences. The dance studio teachers' responses seemed to still be coming from universal and ethnocentric perspectives. While some of the teachers accepted cultural difference within their dance studio classes, they still expected the differences to fit within the activities they were doing, or utilised hegemonic practices (such as sending notices home in writing) to try and foster social integration. It was questioned how these responses could be developed into more advanced practices of integration.

The second section discussed the ways the dance studio teachers sought to understand cultural difference and then respond appropriately through adapting their practices within dance studio classes. Some of the dance studio teachers acknowledged adapting their practices based on an understanding that cultural difference is a significant part of their teaching practice. Some of the teachers shared how they attempted to adapt through using costumes, creative movement activities, and incorporating different languages. However, despite their attempts and aspirations for inclusion and social integration, questions and issues remain around power structures, stereotyping, and the depth of cultural integration. It was suggested that culturally responsive dance pedagogies would assist in navigating these issues.

Lastly, the third section of this chapter investigated how the dance studio teachers may aspire to draw on and integrate different worldviews by attempting to foster 'new' inclusive spaces, and build relationships with students and parents. In this regard, some of the dance studio teachers recognised tensions and issues surrounding cultural difference within the dance studio classes. One dance teacher sought to integrate perceived cultural groups, and another dance teacher discussed challenges around the dance content being taught and intercultural sensitivities. It was recognised that dance studio teachers may need support to develop their dance studio pedagogies in relation to culturally responsive dance pedagogies and intercultural sensitivities. The narratives also presented suggestions for collaborative teaching and inclusion of a range of cultural dances and activities to integrate cultural difference and foster social integration. This raised questions around how collaborative pedagogies might be used in technique focussed classes, and issues around assumptions, decontextualising dance forms and perspectives of privilege. This section also discussed suggestions by some dance studio teachers that building relationships with students' families can help with social integration, but questioned whether this might be difficult to sustain at a wider level for some dance studios.

## **Chapter 8: Conclusion**

As someone who grew up in a rural town where I participated and taught in dance studio classes, I feel this study contributes critical reflections relevant to dance education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Specifically, understanding rural dance studio teachers' responses to cultural difference may ensure that culturally diverse young people living in rural towns can feel included and integrated. Now at the conclusion of this study, my thoughts return to the narrative I shared at the opening of Chapter One. I think about the students I talked to, and how their experiences in dance classes in a rural town may have been different if they had culturally responsive and inclusive dance teachers. It is my hope that research such as reported in this thesis and my practice as a dance educator might enable these students, and others like them, to participate in classes where cultural difference is recognised and integrated.

This final chapter of my thesis presents a summary and the conclusions of the study. First, I will share an overview of the thesis, followed by four key findings from the research. I will then outline recommendations based on the research findings. Following this, I will suggest future directions for research with several new research questions. To conclude my thesis, I share a narrative of one of my own teaching experiences and connect this to the issues and offerings shared throughout the thesis.

### **8.1 Overview of thesis**

This study was guided by the research question: How are dance studio teachers responding to cultural difference within their dance studio classes in rural towns in Aotearoa? The narratives shared throughout this study offer critical meanings, reflections and responses on the ways dance studio teachers are contributing to inclusion/exclusion and social integration for young people in a dance studio context. The investigation and interweaving of points from the literature review and narratives provide insight into the influence of mainstream media and Eurocentric practices, and the way this constructs the dance studio context and contributes to the maintenance of ethnocentric bias.

Within a post-positivist, qualitative paradigm, ethnographic semi-structured interviews were used to investigate seven dance teachers' responses to cultural difference within their dance studio classes. This methodology allowed the dance teachers to share their experiences and perspectives, from which I was then able to develop a deep and meaningful investigation with multiple perspectives. Applying an ethnographic research method from a contemporary paradigm enabled a critical exploration of the lived experiences of dance studio teachers in rural contexts. A rigorous process of analysis supported critical reflections on the ideas pertinent to this study. On reflection, if I were to conduct this study again, I could incorporate observations and possibly an action-based research method to gain some practical and tangible examples of the experiences shared through the dance teachers' narratives.

Overall, it was identified that the dance studio teachers recognised they hold roles as agents of social integration. The dance teachers value the role of dance in fostering inclusion and socialisation within dance studio classes, and expressed attitudes of openness and understanding towards cultural difference. However, despite these inclusive and integrative aspirations, many of the dance studio teachers maintain ethnocentric bias to some extent, even while attempting to allow space for ethnorelative practices. This study reveals the complexity of multiculturalism and cultural difference within dance studio classes and contributes to existing discourse and dialogue surrounding issues of inclusion and exclusion within dance education.

## **8.2 Key findings**

This section presents four key findings that emerged through the course of this study. The first finding identifies the dance studio teachers' aspirations for inclusion and social connections. The second finding reveals the diverse meanings and attitudes towards cultural difference held by the dance studio teachers. The third finding recognises the maintenance of ethnocentric bias within dance studio classes, and the fourth relates to the dance studio teachers' aspirations for ethnorelative practice.

### ***8.2.1 Dance studio teachers value inclusion and socialisation within dance studio classes***

Throughout the research process, one key finding that emerged repeatedly was that the dance studio teachers valued the role of dance in fostering inclusion and socialisation within their dance studio classes. The dance teachers sought to foster inclusion by recognising the differences among their students, including financial position, dance abilities, and socio-cultural background. The dance teachers also sought to welcome students of diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, and recognised the dance studio class as a place for students to feel a sense of belonging. However, issues around hierarchy, ethnocentric bias, binary perspectives and othering emerged from the dance teachers' narratives. It appeared that hierarchy was constructed around the technique and product rather than recreation and process focus of the dance studio classes. The literature review made it evident that mainstream media and Western dance practices have a strong influence on the dance studio context. This was identified as problematic as it can foster segregation and exclusion towards those who cannot afford to participate or do not meet expectations or ideals of dance ability, and may lead to hegemonic and superficial attempts at including cultural difference from the dance teachers.

Similarly, it was found the dance studio teachers seek to foster socialisation through aspiring to build social bonds and bridges within the dance studio classes and wider community (Putnam, 2007). Some of the dance teachers valued the role of dance in building social bonds to enhance social connections and integration. However, it seemed this was coming from a perspective of people and dance as universal, which may work to minimise cultural difference. It was also found that building social bonds was primarily expected to occur within recreational or process focussed classes, further perpetuating the hierarchy between technique and recreational dance studio classes. Some of the dance teachers also valued dance classes as a place to build social bridges within the wider

community, although it appeared this was linked to expectations of students assimilating within dance studio classes and rural towns.

Overall, the dance studio teachers recognised their role as agents of social integration and were seeking to fulfil these roles, but throughout the research questions emerged around how these aspirations for fostering inclusion and social integration may or may not be delivered within the dance studio classes.

### ***8.2.2 Dance studio teachers hold diverse meanings of culture and aspire to be open and understand cultural difference***

In seeking to understand the ways the dance studio teachers respond to cultural difference within their dance studio classes, it was important to consider the relevance of cultural difference for the teachers. A key finding revealed that the dance teachers held various meanings of culture, and in general held attitudes of aspiring to be open towards and understand cultural difference within their dance studio classes. The dance teachers variously understood culture in relation to ethnicity, nationality, behaviour and identity. Through analysing their narratives, it was found that for many of the dance studio teachers, their meanings of culture led to surface-level perceptions of difference, as well as colour-blind and stereotypical perspectives (Bennett, 1986; Harrison et al., 1998). This is problematic, as if teachers demonstrate colour-blindness and difference as deficit perspectives, this can ignore and minimise cultural difference. This raised questions around how the dance studio teachers upheld their various meanings of culture within their dance classes, and whether these meanings assisted with fulfilling their inclusive and integrative aspirations. It was also found that some of the dance studio teachers acknowledged the subjective aspects of culture, recognising that individuals may behave and act differently depending on their culture. However, this raised further questions around whether this recognition extended to cultural groups, or individuals within cultural groups.

Despite the issues raised around the meanings of culture held by the dance studio teachers, they largely expressed attitudes of openness towards cultural difference, and understanding cultural difference. Open attitudes were expressed in the form of aspirations to embrace, let in, and accept cultural difference within their dance studio classes. However, further questions emerged (as mentioned in the previous section) around binary and superficial perspectives, with issues arising particularly in relation to lack of experience and opportunities to work with culturally diverse students among some of the dance teachers. It was proposed that further investigation is required into how this lack of experience might limit dance studio teachers' attempts to be open and inclusive to cultural difference, and how the teachers might move beyond 'embracing' cultural difference towards an openness that integrates, rather than alienates and assimilates.

Several of the dance teachers also expressed attitudes of seeking to understand cultural difference in order to foster inclusion and social integration within dance studio classes. Further, it was identified

that some of the dance teachers perceived having an understanding of cultural difference as a significant aspect on their dance studio teaching practice. Issues were identified in the narratives around the ways some of the dance studio teachers referred to only understanding 'important', 'significant' or 'basic' aspects of cultural difference, which illustrated the teachers lacked in-depth understandings of culture and cultural difference. The literature suggests that paired with an open mind, this 'basic' knowledge can be used as a 'tentative' hypothesis to develop further ethnorelative understandings of cultural difference (Bennett, 2001). Questions also emerged around who determines which aspects of cultural difference are important to understand or have knowledge of. It was also suggested that for some dance teachers, their students' parents may provide information about 'important' cultural considerations. However, perhaps this avenue should not be solely relied upon by teachers, who instead need to seek additional ways to build understanding of cultural difference. Additionally, one dance teacher's narrative revealed that while she aspired to understand each student's individual cultural differences, she acknowledged she does not know everything. This provided an important example of reflecting on one's own dance studio teaching practices, as perhaps all dance teachers need to do.

### ***8.2.3 Dance studio teachers are maintaining ethnocentric bias by denying, denigrating and diminishing cultural difference***

In relation to the dance studio teachers' narratives and the aspirations expressed toward fostering inclusion and social integration for culturally diverse students, the research analysis explored how these aspirations might be carried through into their dance studios and teaching practices. A key finding is that all of the dance studio teachers were maintaining ethnocentric bias, and therefore perhaps expressing exclusion towards their students. The teachers' ethnocentric bias was evident in their denial, denigration and diminishing of cultural difference within their dance studio classes.

It was found that several of the dance teachers did not recognise cultural difference, despite their aforementioned aspirations. Some of the dance teachers expressed not experiencing any cultural differences within their classes, and one teacher referred to cultural difference existing in bigger towns, but not the rural town where she teaches dance. This finding was connected to the dance teachers' lack of exposure to and experience of cultural difference. Similarly, one of the dance teachers suggested she tries to perceive students as individuals, but explained that this was not connected to culture, therefore illustrating an ethnocentric perspective. Another dance teacher reflected denial of cultural difference where she acknowledged that she had not considered incorporating 'other' cultural dance genres. This raised questions around how various cultural dance forms might fit within a dance studio context beyond stereotypical assumptions and decontextualising of such dance forms. Additionally, the research revealed that some of the dance studio teachers have fixed or set teaching approaches informed by their personalities and the ways they have been taught – which in turn are most often informed by ethnocentric bias in beliefs, perspectives and practices. It was suggested that reflection on their teaching practices (as mentioned in Section 8.2.2) by dance teachers is crucial for developing their pedagogical practices, and therefore fostering social

integration. One dance teacher did raise the possibility of reflecting and adapting their teaching practices in the 'future', but it is suggested such reflection and adaptation should be occurring now, and frequently, throughout their practice.

Another key aspect of this finding is that some of the dance teachers perceived cultural difference and cultural knowledge as unimportant, therefore denigrating cultural difference within their dance studio classes. This was illustrated by the ways the dance studio teachers either expected 'other' cultures to respect and fit into the dominant cultural group, or their perspective there was not 'enough' cultural difference to warrant a response. Yet, how much is enough? It was suggested that perhaps all students, regardless of who or how many are present, should be approached in a considerate and appropriate way through culturally responsive pedagogies. An example was given where a dance teacher attempted to embrace exchange students, but did so in a way that highlighted their differences and possibly caused segregation rather than integration and inclusion (Berry, 1997). Dance teachers should seek ways to move beyond 'embracing' cultural difference to also emphasise similarities (Shapiro, 2015). It was also recognised that some dance teachers perceived cultural and intercultural knowledge as unimportant within their dance studio teaching practices, which means the dance teachers were more likely to be ignoring cultural difference than being open to and understanding of it. It was suggested that the dance teachers should question their assumptions around superiority of cultures and dance forms.

Several of the dance studio teachers also appeared to minimise cultural differences within their dance studio classes. This was illustrated in the ways they approached their dance classes with universal perspectives. One dance teacher identified different languages as a barrier to participation within their dance class. Their suggestion that a universal perspective can be used to manage this appeared to stem from ethnocentric bias. Similarly, some dance teachers recognised cultural difference, but aspired to treat all of their students the same, thus minimising cultural difference. For example, it was noted that some of the dance studio teachers chose to focus on students' dance abilities, which presented some stereotypical cultural assumptions. It was also found that some of the dance teachers maintained ethnocentric bias through utilising Western hegemonic approaches (such as enrolment forms) as a means to recognise cultural difference. It was suggested the dance teachers may need to find more advanced approaches to integration.

#### ***8.2.4 Dance studio teachers seek to allow space for ethnorelative practices to emerge by attempting to accept, understand, and integrate cultural difference***

The fourth key finding that emerged from this research is that the dance studio teachers tried to allow space for ethnorelative practices to emerge through aspiring to accept cultural differences, apply understanding of cultural differences to adapt their practices, and integrate cultural difference within their dance studio classes.

Several of the dance studio teachers acknowledged and aspired to accept cultural difference within their dance studio classes. However, analysis of the data suggested these aspirations were still coming from a biased ethnocentric perspective. This was particularly evident in their responses to language barriers, as some teachers would either try talking and demonstrating more slowly, or send notices home in writing. Another teacher also identified seeking to accept culturally diverse students within her class, yet suggested that as all students were participating in the same class, she did not need to respond to the cultural difference in any way. This raised questions around how the dance teachers might develop more in-depth and responsive approaches to cultural difference, and how they can foster social integration when teaching the same content to diverse students.

The research also found that in addition to expressing attitudes towards understanding cultural difference (as mentioned in Section 8.2.2), some teachers sought to use this understanding to adapt their dance studio teaching practices so as to foster inclusion and social integration. The significance to their role of building cultural understanding and knowledge in order to be responsive to their students was also acknowledged. Within the interview narratives, the dance teachers provided several examples of how they sought to allow space for ethnorelativism by adapting different aspects of their dance studio teaching practices. However, the examples given by the dance teachers showed that despite their intentions, issues remained that prevented the teachers from fulfilling their roles as agents of social integration. Issues emerged around power structures, stereotyping, and the depth of adaptation or integration. While it was suggested that culturally responsive dance pedagogies would assist in negotiating these issues, it was identified that the dance teachers may not hold the required skills and knowledge for implementing such pedagogical approaches.

The final key finding of this doctoral research emerged in the ways the dance studio teachers sought to integrate cultural difference through acknowledging and drawing on diverse cultural worldviews to potentially create an integrated hybrid space (Bennett, 1986; Bhabha, 1994). Some of the dance teachers recognised division and tensions among cultural groups within their dance studio classes, particularly in terms of the minority group feeling inferior. It was found that although the dance teachers attempted to integrate the cultural groups, this was not achieved to the extent they wished. An additional challenge was highlighted when one of the dance teachers discussed trying to value dance content and pedagogical knowledge while also being interculturally competent and sensitive within his dance studio teaching practices. Questions were posed around how these aspects of multicultural dance education could be utilised to foster an integrated hybrid space, and how dance teachers might be supported in doing so.

One dance teacher suggested she used collaborative teaching practices to manage tensions around power issues, but it was found this was primarily in relation to creative dance tasks, rather than in the dominant technique and skills focussed classes. It was suggested this teaching approach could be utilised more, and consideration given to how this may fit within a dance studio context. Some of the dance teachers sought to foster integration by including cultural dance content, such as a Pacific

Island dance, or through fundraising activities for an overseas trip to Vanuatu. These examples were considered problematic as they raise issues around stereotypical assumptions about students, decontextualisation of cultural dance forms, and a privileged approach to cultural difference. It was also found that for some of the dance studio teachers, building relationships with the students' parents was a significant task when fostering social integration, particularly for students of Pacific Island ethnicities. However, it was questioned how this approach would work within larger Western dance studio contexts.

Overall, it was found that for all the dance studio teachers, despite their aspirations to foster inclusion and social integration and the attitudes of openness and understanding toward cultural difference they expressed, often their ethnocentric bias and the dominance of Western hegemonic practices led to exclusion through segregation and marginalisation of students in minority cultural groups. Culturally responsive dance pedagogy is a significant approach that may assist in fostering inclusion and social integration, and the need to reflect on and develop their practice was evident among the dance studio teachers.

### **8.3 Recommendations**

On the basis of the research findings outlined, there are several recommendations I would like to suggest in the areas of dance studio teaching practices, professional development, syllabus and teacher education, community engagement, and research.

Firstly, it is clear that the dance studio teachers interviewed in this study would benefit from professional development around intercultural sensitivities and culturally responsive dance pedagogies. Given the global dominance of mainstream media and Western practices (as discussed in the literature review), it seems highly likely this could be an issue in dance studio classes in rural towns throughout Aotearoa and around the world. I therefore recommend that intercultural professional development be established and offered to dance studio teachers in rural towns and wider communities. This professional development should provide dance studio teachers with the opportunity to reflect on their current teaching practices in their dance studio classes, discuss the principles and practice of culturally responsive dance pedagogies, and ideally provide the dance teachers with an opportunity to engage in one or more multicultural dance studio classes. This professional development would assist in shifting the ethnocentric bias held by the dance studio teachers by incorporating ethnorelative perspectives and practices. Ethnorelativism allows for more complex and in-depth understandings of culture and cultural difference, and in turn assists with fostering social integration for students.

Extending on this, I recommend that dance studio teachers seek to utilise culturally responsive dance pedagogies within their dance studio classes, regardless of 'how many' culturally diverse students are present. As discussed throughout this study, recognising and integrating students' 'funds of knowledge' is significant as it allows them to be 'fully human' and socially integrated (Freire, 1970;

Salazar, 2013). Employing culturally responsive pedagogies within dance studio classes would help to move beyond ethnocentric bias and practices – such as simply ‘embracing’ cultural difference, othering and stereotyping cultural groups, and decontextualising cultural forms – to instead foster inclusion and social integration by allowing space for ethnorelative practices that emphasise hybrid understandings of difference. It is therefore important for dance teachers (in all education contexts) to recognise their role as agents of social integration. While this aspect was recognised by the dance studio teachers interviewed in this study, I recommend they give attention to and reflect on the ways they are teaching in their dance studio classes. Despite the changing demographic and world they dance in, it seems common for dance educators to teach in their set way, and continue doing so without changing or developing their practice. This attention and reflection by dance teachers should thus be ongoing in order to fulfil their roles as agents of social integration.

Importantly to the context of dance studio classes, I also seek to make a recommendation aimed at organisations that develop dance syllabi and institutions that provide teacher education. Here I recommend that attention be given to the ways dance syllabi and dance studio education programmes predominantly draw on Eurocentric practices that perpetuate whiteness as the norm (as discussed in the literature review). As dance studio teachers utilise a syllabus to provide the dance content within dance studio classes, I suggest dance studio syllabus is developed to encompass cultural difference and the multicultural context in Aotearoa and worldwide. A dance syllabus should foster inclusion rather than exclusion, and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogical considerations may assist in developing a dance syllabus that inspires equity, social justice and inclusion. Additionally, many dance syllabi include dance genres such as jazz and hip hop dance which are whitewashed and decontextualised. I recommend that efforts are made to minimise these ethnocentric aspects of dance syllabi. This may take the form of acknowledging that all dance (even ballet) can be considered cultural dance, as well as making space for acknowledging cultural heritage, considering pedagogical approaches, facilitating a particular class environment, and other approaches that are culturally responsive and appropriate.

Drawing on the findings that identified the dance studio teachers’ lack of experience and engagement with cultural diversity, I offer a final recommendation around community engagement. It is problematic that despite the presence (albeit small) of cultural diversity within rural towns, some of the dance teachers suggested they do not recognise or experience cultural difference. Community engagement between the dance studio teachers themselves, local governance, and public and private sectors would increase engagement with and dialogue around cultural difference. Increasing engagement and dialogue provides opportunities for differences and similarities to be shared, and for social integration to occur – not only within dance studio classes, but also the wider community.

#### **8.4 Directions for future research**

Several areas and questions for future research emerged from this investigation of the meanings of cultural difference for seven dance studio teachers, and their responses to cultural difference in their

dance studio classes. The questions and ideas from this study could be applied to different communities and different groups of people. For example, a similar study could be carried out in other rural towns within Aotearoa (and globally) to see if similar responses and understandings are shared. This study could also be carried out in a cosmopolitan location, such as Auckland, where multiculturalism is much more evident and diverse compared to rural towns. There would also be value in gaining the perspectives of different groups of people, such as students from diverse cultures, and representatives of local governance. Some questions to guide future research include:

- How can dance studio teachers be encouraged to engage in critically reflecting and developing culturally responsive dance pedagogies within their dance studio classes?
- How are dance studio teachers' pedagogical practices and ethnocentric bias constructed?
- What would culturally responsive dance pedagogy look like in a Western dance studio?
- How might dance studio teachers incorporate cultural dances that are considered non-Western within a Western dance studio in a culturally responsive way?
- What might it look like to have ethnorelative practices in dance studio classes where teachers' and students' voices are equally integrated in a hybrid space?
- How might dance studio teachers' ethnocentric bias influence their own and students' identities and teaching/learning experiences?
- What are students' experiences of inclusion and exclusion within dance studio classes in rural towns in Aotearoa?
- How might local governance in rural towns respond to and support cultural difference for dance and arts education?
- How might dance studio teachers foster inclusion and social integration for students with differences beyond culture, such as financial background and dance ability?
- How can dance studio teachers build a learning environment which is inclusive to a range of students' differences and similarities?
- How are dance studio teachers responding to students with mobility and cognitive challenges in a responsive way within their dance studio classes?

While this research focussed on rural towns in Aotearoa and a small group of dance studio teachers, it is hoped the issues and narratives shared may hold relevance for other dance educators and wider areas of practice and study. With globalisation and cultural diversity increasing worldwide, it is important for dance educators to acknowledge the roles they hold as agents of social integration. As I reflect on the process of this research and the meanings that emerged from the dance studio teachers' narratives, I wonder how the questions raised and stories shared might have impacted the dance studio teachers' practices. I wonder whether the dance teachers' reflections on cultural difference during the interviews may have in any way affected their teaching practices within their dance studio classes, or whether they remain the same. I hope that the findings from this research offer insight into the often unconscious ethnocentric bias dance studio teachers may carry, and the ways this can be maintained and perpetuated, particularly in rural towns throughout Aotearoa.

As a result of carrying out my research, I believe as dance educators working in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are on a journey to find common ground, and facilitate and foster inclusive and integrated classrooms. As agents of social integration, dance studio teachers and wider dance educators should consider their development, and each reflect on their teaching practices and worldview. In concluding this thesis, I share a narrative of my own teaching experience that presents a moment, although small, where I was able to recognise and respond to cultural difference.

*Just over a year ago, I was teaching a contemporary dance session for a group of 12 year olds at an afterschool dance class. Sitting in a circle, we were beginning a choreographic task and were discussing the students' thoughts around what themes they might create movements about. As I asked who had ideas, many of the students eagerly put their hands up. But I also noticed one student in particular who in the moment retracted herself, as she hunched her shoulders and looked down, as if to avoid eye contact with me. This student was one of the few who could be considered in the 'minority cultural group', a young Tongan girl. In the earlier activities she was confident, engaged with learning dance movements, and chatting and giggling with her peers. Why was she so shy all of a sudden? Questioning this, I recalled a conversation with one of the dance teachers I had interviewed during my fieldwork for this study. The dance teacher told me "for some Pacific Island students they don't speak up to their teachers, because in their culture they're told to listen to their elders". Remembering this I clicked, and decided to shift the class activity. "Let's get into groups of three, and share your ideas with your own group first". The students moved into groups of three and the room filled with discussion. As I looked over to the Tongan student, she no longer seemed shy. She was her confident self again, her face lit up, as she shared her idea with two of the other students. Upon reflection this was a small moment where I enabled my role as an agent of social integration. This small moment of recognition and understanding of someone else's cultural worldview allowed the student to feel included and integrated into the dance class.*

Perhaps more such moments of reflection and responsiveness are needed from dance studio teachers to foster ethnorelative spaces within rural dance studio classes. By doing so, dance teachers can provide opportunities for young people to bring their whole selves and be fully human in dance classes – in a space where students can share, create and learn dance, while recognising each other's commonalities and differences.

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