

“Kind of Business”:

Hip-hop Dance Classes and the Commercialisation of Inclusion

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Abstract

Inclusion within education and culture has been valued within successive global policy documents, as an essential component of social cohesion and sustainable development. While this has led to the reform of formal educational systems and national cultural policies, it has more recently involved the commercialisation of inclusion as an experience within the non-formal education marketplace. This marketplace includes adult dance classes, and particularly popular social dance forms like hip-hop, which can seek new students by promoting an inclusive educational experience. While *doux commerce* theory has advanced the idea that progressive social agendas can be made more widespread through such marketisation, we may question the impact of a commercialisation on the meanings and values of inclusion when it is actually being implemented within such commercial dance classes. This study therefore asks: How do adult learners experience inclusion within a studio hip-hop class in New Zealand?

Through a qualitative, phenomenological inquiry, this study critically examines the experiences of seven adult learners of hip-hop; exploring their dance learning and inclusion journeys through semi-structured interviews. Their stories give rise to significant themes, which are positioned within academic literature on inclusion and exclusion in arts education. These adult learners describe experiencing inclusion through the ethnic diversity of the classroom environment and the encouraging behaviours of teachers. They also perceive exclusion through the different ways that more advanced dancers and beginners are treated by teachers and other dancers, and how this reinforced a sense of hierarchy and expectations of assimilation. My critical analysis sought further obstacles to inclusion that my participants discussed but did not identify as exclusive, such as assumptions regarding movement vocabulary, physical coordination and physical fitness, to reveal how exclusion may be being unwittingly perpetuated within the pedagogic practices of these class. This reveals the dilemmas of seeking to incorporate and promote concepts like inclusion within learning environments, that also seek to maintain competitive and elitist goals within dance education.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Preface: “All good?”

I had lived in Auckland for two months, but I still felt lonely and left out occasionally. One day, I was viewing a dance video saved on my phone, which brought me back to the memories of dancing with my friends. An inexplicable sense of loneliness hit me. At that moment, a WeChat message suddenly popped up, which was sent by my classmate Chen. She told me that there is a studio hip-hop dance class I could join in, which is open access, welcoming learners of all dance levels and only charging NZD 15 for each class. I was so excited for I perceived this as a good chance for me to adapt and blend in this unfamiliar city a little bit. Then, I replied to Chen without hesitation: Let’s dance together for fun and meet some new friends!

Walking into the hip-hop dance class at a studio in Auckland for the first time one day in October 2019, I was struck by how different it was to every other dance class I had ever attended during my dancing life. The hot vibe of the classroom contrasted with the chill night outside. It was my first experience of attending a dance class abroad, and I was totally obsessed by the exciting, lively and energetic atmosphere. People within this class seemed to be familiar with each other. They greeted and hugged each other, which made the whole classroom filled with pleasure. There was a voice in my mind: it is totally worth it to get a wonderful dancing experience for only 15 dollars.

However, this excited and relaxed mood did not seem to last long for me. When the teacher started teaching movements of the dance piece, I tried very hard, but I just could not keep up all the time. In the process of teaching, the teacher only did demonstrations a couple of times and gave some brief explanations. She asked everyone: “All good? Do you have any questions about my movements or the whole dance?” Just as I was about to raise my hand to ask her, several other participants responded in one voice: “We all good, just keep going!” I silently hid my hand which was about to rise up at that moment. I had to bite the bullet and

kept trying to keep up with the class. When I still struggling with those complicated movements, I found that other learners could dance thoroughly with their own styles and feelings. I just could not control my body, and I was so embarrassed and overwhelmed when I realised how badly I danced. A strong sense of frustration and loss came over me, and I even started to suspect that my previous dance training had been for nothing. I stood in the corner for the rest of the class, trying to hide myself without being found by others. The first time I learned hip-hop dance here made me feel very disappointed and even a little bit humiliated. Although this is an open-access hip-hop dance class, the first learning experience was far beyond from what I expected.

This memory of hip-hop dance learning as my starting point of this master's research journey, and the consideration that for adult learners, there may be some barriers in the classroom that affect learners' experience of inclusion. As a student learning dance in diverse cultural contexts, I wondered how adult learners might perceive and experience being included or excluded within a dance class. What experience did adult learners have in a hip-hop dance class? What difficulties did they encounter in the process of learning? Were they able to be involved better into the classroom? If not, why not? I maintained my curiosity to explore these issues, which further led me into the study and helped me to believe in the significance of this research.

1.2 Inclusion and hip-hop dance classes

These questions, stimulated by my own experience, led me to explore the meaning of inclusion in different educational contexts, and I found that inclusion in hip-hop dance classes is complex and that there might be obvious or hidden obstacles that affect learners' experience of inclusion.

Inclusion is a significant but complex social concept that not only can be seen as representing the values of "equal opportunity, social respect and solidarity" (Norwich, 2013, p. 2), but also as an expression of the statecraft project and underlying policy for establishing forms of

social regulation (Jayasuriya, 2006). The complexity of inclusion implies different models of social association that can appeal to equal forms of community and identity (Jayasuriya, 2006). With the progress and development of a society, ideas and policies around inclusion are not only considered from the perspective of disability and social justice, but also explored from the perspectives of school life such as cultural and gender equality as well as social respect (Norwich, 2013; Thomas, 2013).

The idea of inclusion is further adopted and applied in the field of education, and it is valued as one of the significant principles and practices within the education system (Felder, 2018; Slee, 2001; Thomas, 2013). Especially in dance education, an inclusive dance education environment emphasises a space where everyone has an opportunity to access equal learning experiences and gain a sense of belonging (Kaufmann, 2006; Zitomer, 2016). Dance provides participants with the equal opportunity to be involved in physical activities by utilising physical movements in a learning environment (Zitomer, 2013). A dance class that involves practices of inclusion has potential for learners to communicate with and learn from each other outside the hierarchical frameworks that may develop in classrooms and social networks (Longley, 2003) and creates platforms for people of all abilities to experience feeling welcome and “accepted for who they are” (Zitomer, 2013, p. 18).

Hip-hop dance is promoted as providing inclusive access to education, for both cultural and commercial reasons (Arthur, 2006; Harrison, 2009; Markula, 2020). From the cultural perspective, hip-hop is built on the inclusive value of peace and unity (Chang, 2009; Macpherson, 2018; Walker, 2012), which reflects the inclusion of diversity for different countries, regions, ages, genders and ethnic communities within dance education (Price & Iber, 2006). Given the expansion of hip-hop culture worldwide, hip-hop dance has been valued as a marketing tool (Durden, Guarino, & Oliver, 2014) not only to connect products with people, but also as a medium to facilitate the feeling of inclusion and belonging (Huntington, 2007). Within this thesis, I acknowledge this commercial rationale as a basis for promoting hip-hop dance class as an inclusive space.

From the above research context, the direction of my focus is based on existing literature and

explores how different adult learners experienced inclusion in a studio hip-hop dance class in New Zealand.

1.3 My research question

This study critically examines the complexity of inclusion to explore how the barriers to a sense of inclusion experienced by adult learners may be obvious or hidden within a hip-hop dance class. The main research question motivating this study is: *How do adult learners experience inclusion within a studio hip-hop class in New Zealand?*

Through qualitative and phenomenological research approaches, this research question focuses on examining the learning experience of seven adult hip-hop dance learners to explore how they experience the sense of inclusion in the dance classroom. This raises further queries within this study, such as how do they perceive inclusion in the dance class, what influenced their experience of inclusion, what does inclusion mean to them and what do they consider to be obstacles to learn hip-hop dance?

This master's thesis explores the complexity of inclusion in a dance class from the perspective of adult learners so that it can generate a comprehensive understanding of inclusion from learners' insights. The theoretical concept of phenomenology provides a reference for understanding and exploring the adult hip-hop dance learners' personal experience of the sense of inclusion (Albright, 2011; Flood, 2010). This study has also been stimulated by my own experience as a student with professional dance training and as a participant learning dance in diverse cultural contexts, in both my home environment and abroad. It has also been influenced by my time learning and researching dance in New Zealand in which I have been fortunate to invite seven adult learners who have shared their journeys of learning hip-hop dance with me. The seven involved adult participants are given pseudonyms: Allen, Bella, Carr, Mary, Rachel, Sam and Sara. They recall their learning experiences in a studio hip-hop dance class, they share stories of how they learned hip-hop dance, their feelings and understandings of being included and excluded in dance classroom,

which help this research to critically reflect on how inclusive ideology has been challenged in dance teaching practices.

1.4 Research significance

The key significance of this study is that it seeks to understand how inclusion is experienced by students. In this thesis, the findings reveal how inclusion within a dance class was experienced by learners, to examine complex dimensions of inclusion and exclusion, including diversity, conformity, hierarchy and assimilation (Berry, 1997; Pickett, Silver, & Brewer, 2002; Thomas, 2013). Through analysing the personal learning stories of seven adult hip-hop participants, this study examines learners' different experiences and understanding of inclusion, and reflects on the complexity of the inclusion presented in hip-hop dance classroom as well as the practices of inclusive ideology in dance education. Thus, this study contributes a significant reference in regard to teaching adult learners in inclusive dance education.

Although the theoretical context of this research and interview data presented are from a hip-hop dance studio in New Zealand, the tensions and the different strands of thinking identified can provide a reference for diverse educational contexts and may also offer reflections for teachers who teach adult learners in different disciplines. This may prompt dance educators to consider how to provide the class on the premise of learners' learning needs and competence, and how to design a teaching and learning environment as an inclusive and accessible space for commercialised education institutions.

1.5 Overview of the thesis

This master's thesis explores how adult learners experience a sense of inclusion within a studio hip-hop dance class. To provide focus through reading this thesis, it might be helpful to summarise the structure of the thesis by briefly outlining the content presented in each chapter.

Chapter 2 outlines the research methods undertaken in this study. This chapter begins with the explanation of the main question and four sub-questions. The qualitative approach and phenomenological inquiry as key theoretical frameworks of this study are illustrated, followed by articulating my research position as both insider and outsider. It then reviews the process of data collection, which included a literature review, semi-structured interviews, selection of participants and auto-narratives to gather information for this study. This is followed by an explanation of a thematic approach to analyse data, and the ethical concerns as well as limitations of this research are further clarified.

In the following chapter, the academic literature relevant to this study and the key issues that emerged from this literature review is presented and explored. Through reviewing the literature, several central concepts and theories are related to the critical examination of inclusive ideologies and inclusive education practices in dance, which further extend the arguments of this research. This is followed by an exploration of commercialising inclusion in the context of non-formal education and dance education. This leads to an analysis of how inclusion is perceived as a commodity in diverse educational environments. The final section of this chapter provides a contextual overview of how the values of inclusion might be displayed in both cultural and commercial context within hip-hop culture.

Chapter 4 constructs the key part within this thesis. This chapter combines interviews of seven participants with scholarly literature to demonstrate discussions striving to explore my research question and four sub-questions in-depth. In terms of the structure, this chapter starts with the exploration of how inclusion appeared in hip-hop dance classes. This is followed by an analysis of how adult learners perceived a sense of hierarchy presented in different ways to affect their experience of inclusion. Then the discussion concludes with an argument of the dance competence as a hidden obstacle challenging participants' experience of inclusion.

Finally, chapter 5 provides the conclusions of this thesis, which includes the key findings and the relevant recommendations based on these findings. The potential directions for future research emerging from this study are also offered in this chapter. This thesis ends with reflecting on my final ideas as a brief summary of this study.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter mainly focuses the research methods undertaken in this study. Firstly, this chapter outlines the main question and sub-questions of this research to help readers gain a general understanding of how adult learners experience inclusion in a studio hip-hop dance class. The second section explains the theoretical framework used, which includes a qualitative approach (Malterud, 2001; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015) and phenomenological inquiry (Lloyd, 2015). The third section discusses my position as both an ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ researcher, and how this may shape my research. In the fourth section, diverse methods of data collection are reviewed, which include a literature review, semi-structured interviews, selection of participants and auto-narratives. This is followed by further elaboration on how the data was analysed. Lastly, this chapter introduces and clarifies the ethics and the challenges as well as limitations encountered in the process of this research.

2.1.1 Research question and sub-questions

This study seeks to explore the complexity of inclusion within a studio hip-hop dance class in New Zealand, by investigating the meanings and understandings of seven adult learners within a hip-hop dance learning environment. The main question of this research is: *How do adult learners experience inclusion within a studio hip-hop class in New Zealand?* This research question focuses on how inclusion in the context of commercialised dance classes affects learners’ experience and how it might promote a sense of social hierarchy in the classroom to reinforce assimilation. The narrations from adult learners of experiences of attending open hip-hop dance classes at a popular and well-established hip-hop school in New Zealand, which I am giving the pseudonym of the ‘Hope Dance Studio’. The stories of these participants are examined to reflect their different perceptions of experiencing the inclusion and to explore what may influence the inclusivity of a classroom environment. Through

comparing seven adult learners' hip-hop dance class experience, the following four sub-questions helped me further explore the key research question.

Firstly, I ask: Why and how has 'inclusion' been valued within hip-hop classes? This question explores literature on hip-hop and dance education, critically questioning how economic imperatives have prompted a 'commercialisation of inclusion' within adult dance classes in New Zealand. I respond to this question through my literature review.

My second sub-question asks: How do participants value and perceive inclusion in hip-hop dance classes? This sub-question seeks to understand what inclusion means to adult learners, and how they perceive it occurring within hip-hop classes, which serves as a basis for following sub-questions to provide a framework for understanding deeply how else inclusion may or may not be happening in the classes.

The third sub-question asks: How do the participants express an awareness of social hierarchies and expectations to assimilate within hip-hop classes? This question attempts to connect the sense of social hierarchy presented within a dance classroom to the concept of cultural assimilation (Berry, 1997; Dahlsted & Ekholm, 2017; Yoon, Simpson, & Haag, 2010) through learners' experiences and narratives, to examine how a sense of exclusion might be reinforced in different ways through hierarchy and assimilation.

The last sub-question queries: How do diverse aspects of the hip-hop class perpetuate hidden practices of exclusion and hierarchy? Through comparing the seven involved adult learners' hip-hop dance learning experience, this sub-question mainly focuses on unpacking and identifying aspects of the hip-hop class that may not be apparent to the participants, but nevertheless might impact on their sense of inclusion. This issue is examined through the lens of participants' movement vocabulary, physical coordination and physical fitness.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The qualitative methods including phenomenology, narrative and semi-structured interviews

that were utilised within this research. Phenomenological and qualitative researches are used as approaches to understand phenomena experienced by human beings in context-specific settings (see for example: Hoepfl, 1997; Patton, 1990). Central to my phenomenological approach, I am undertaking qualitative research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010; Marshall & Rossman, 2006) to understand participants from personal frames of reference and experiences (Taylor et al., 2015). Therefore, to answer the question of this study how adult learners experience inclusion within a studio hip-hop class in New Zealand, qualitative and phenomenological research approaches will be used as key theoretical frameworks.

2.2.1 Qualitative research

Malterud (2001) notes that qualitative research focuses on the “exploration of meanings of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves, in their natural context” (p. 483). A purpose of qualitative research is to analyse the perspective of people’s experiences in their local contexts (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Taylor et al., 2015). Within this research, my approach is relevant to the lives, experiences and beliefs of my participants.

Qualitative research takes into account that in a particular field, people’s views and practices vary according to the subjective perspectives and social contexts involved (Taylor et al., 2015). A qualitative approach reflects how the individuals involved in the study view their experiences differently, which can offer new insights and perspectives on what is already known or perhaps more in-depth information that is difficult to convey through quantitative research (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2017). The purpose of this study is to explore how seven adult participants experienced and perceived inclusion during their hip-hop learning process. In this context, different people might have different experiences, opinions and understandings on the inclusion of hip-hop dance. Therefore, as a researcher, a qualitative approach gives me the opportunity to have a deep understanding of the personal learning experiences of adult learners.

Qualitative research also has the characteristics of flexibility, openness and dynamics, so that

researchers may have accidental, unexpected discoveries and explore new understandings in the process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). It can be considered that through the perspectives of both researchers and participants, qualitative inquiry reveals and accepts the complexity and dynamics of the society (Hoepfl, 1997). Therefore, in qualitative research, rich details and subtle insights about the participants' experiences of the world are considered (Hoepfl, 1997). In my study, I seek to establish a solid relationship with adult participants and to get a better understanding of hip-hop culture through sharing narratives and examining their personal experiences and perspectives. Therefore, a qualitative methodology will enable me to examine various issues, perspectives and understandings shared by adult hip-hop learners in open classes at a dance studio in New Zealand.

2.2.2 Phenomenology

As an interpretive and qualitative form of research, phenomenology seeks to study phenomena that are perceived or experienced by individuals, which offers a means to "identify the essences of the experience" (Flood, 2010, p. 11). Within this study, I choose a phenomenological approach, because it enables the voices of diverse adult learners of hip-hop dance to be shared. Additionally, it allows me to interpret the meanings of the participants' lifelong learning within the context of their everyday lives (Narushima, Liu, & Diestelkamp, 2018). Through this methodology, there is the potential to gather the learners' meanings and opinions about their own experiences.

Because my leading research question focuses on adult learners' experience of inclusion within a hip-hop dance class, the theories and practices of phenomenology will be involved in my thesis. According to Merleau-Ponty's (1956) opinion, phenomenology is an attempt to describe our experience directly, rather than considering the psychological genesis or the causal explanations of these experiences. Phenomenology not only attempts to describe the basic structures of human experience and understanding from a first-person perspective, but also aims to reveal essences of experiences (Tuffour, 2017). Omery (1983) states that phenomenological research is both inductive and descriptive, because researchers focus on

understanding personal subjectivities of the participants' lived experience. Therefore, a phenomenological lens would “never perceive a phenomenon in static unchanging perspectives, but rather as existing through time” (Fraleigh, 1991, p. 12).

Additionally, phenomenology is the study of how the world is sensed and perceived (Flood, 2010; Vanhoutte & Wynants, 2011). Albright (2011) emphasises phenomenology as “a philosophical approach that considers the body as a core aspect of the lived experience” (p. 8). From the perspective of phenomenology, dance is not only a phenomenon of kinetic energy, it is also a vivid and significant human experience (Sheets-Johnstone & Cunningham, 2015). Phenomenological dance experiences also value the feelings and thoughts of participants (Warburton, 2011). Therefore, as a researcher it is necessary to explore the phenomena of the participants' life experiences, especially their experiences of learning dance, to obtain significant insights into their experience of dance learning.

2.3 Position of the researcher

The narrative at the beginning of this master's thesis related to my personal dance learning experience, which has offered a starting point for this research (Liu, 2020). As a student with professional dance training, I learned different kinds of dance at Beijing Dance Academy, such as ballet, Chinese classical dance, Chinese folk dance, modern dance and choreography. Additionally, I also took jazz and hip-hop dance classes in Chinese dance studios. Although I have not studied hip-hop dance in New Zealand for long, my experience and feelings of learning hip-hop dance in China might help me to understand the various phenomena and issues of adults' dance learning. This also can lead me to think about and explore the relevant questions. Furthermore, I am also a Chinese international student who is studying for a master's degree in New Zealand. During the time I studied at the University of Auckland, not only did I actively participate in open classes at dance studios in Auckland in my spare time, I also learned different kinds of research methods during my research process, which allowed me to reflect on issues of this study with a critical viewpoint.

Based on my educational background and learning experiences, I consider my position within this research as both insider and outsider (Foster, 2017; Mullings, 1999). Within academia, and especially from a qualitative research perspective, the significance of understanding the position of the researcher has been emphasised (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Polkinghorne, 2005; Savvides, Al-Youssef, Colin, & Garrido, 2014). The background of a researcher could affect their perspective, methods of the research, findings, the framework of discussions and conclusions (Malterud, 2001), which allows researchers to conduct their study with two perspectives, both inside and outside (Hellowell, 2006). Firstly, I stand as an insider within this research. My experience of learning dance helped me to look at the inquiries of my research from diverse perspectives, as well as prompted me to design detailed and relevant interview questions of hip-hop dance learning. When my participants mentioned their different experiences and perspective for learning hip-hop dance, I would communicate and resonate with them based on my past personal experiences. Secondly, understanding the learning experiences of my participants and their voices related to hip-hop dance learning in New Zealand allows me to hold a view as an outsider in this study. My research position as an outsider may allow the collection of data for this study to be less impacted by the personal stereotypes and preferences of the participants (Creswell, 2007; Wang, 2017). Therefore, as a student researcher with an external perspective, I might be able to stand independently outside the hip-hop dance educational context to further explore a comprehensive understanding of the issues of inclusive practices.

Through the position as a both insider and outsider researcher, I have the opportunity to promote a “fluid engagement” (Savvides et al., 2014, p. 413) with my participants. Standing as an insider allows me to combine my own experiences and understandings of learning dance with this research inquiry. Meanwhile, acting as an insider researcher, I seek to explore and share personal stories of participants, which helps me to co-construct a deep understanding with them of this study in order to analyse the gathered data with less bias and judgement (Foster, 2017; Jin, 2017; Liu, 2020).

2.4 Data collection

This section outlines the specific methods of data collection for this study and the reasons for using them. Firstly, the literature review seeks to place this research within a broader academic framework (Foster, 2017). Secondly, semi-structured interviews and auto-narrative are also used as the key methods to collect research data. In addition, the profiles of the selected participants are mentioned in this section.

2.4.1 Literature review

This research process began with reviewing academic literature. The qualitative literature review which sought to reveal the complexity of issues surrounding my research (Randolph, 2009). It involves critically investigating the literature in order to construct key arguments that establish the platforms for this research (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2012; Rozas & Klein, 2010). Through this review I sought to identify key concepts related to the research question in order to contextualise the question further.

The process of writing the literature review involved looking for academic literature associated with the key terms. Keywords examined through my literature search included: inclusion, inclusive education, assimilation, arts and dance education, hip-hop, hip-hop dance, non-formal education, students as consumers, and hierarchy. This process not only helped me to identify salient issues, but also promote this study rationalising the connections between the idea of inclusion and economic theory. Therefore, academic articles of *doux commerce* theory, commercialisation, commodification, were reviewed and analysed after initial literature searches. These keywords used multiple word combinations for searching and would often unveil new terms to further explore. During the process of sorting the material, I sought qualitative meanings rather than quantitative summaries.

I accessed and gathered the literature in library and on-line databases. I searched English sources from Google Scholar and the on-line database of The University of Auckland General

Library. It can be considered that all literature within this study was searched for in English, which meant a limitation of the research. In compiling the literature review, I developed themes and these identified gaps that my research could address. A phenomenological approach (Albright, 2011; Fraleigh, 1991; Merleau-Ponty, 1956) directed my attention to inclusive hip-hop dance class as a commercial service for learners-consumers (O'Donnell, Kirkner, & Meyer-Adams, 2008). From this point I searched for literature that might re-frame the relationship between the idea of inclusion and assimilation within a contemporary economic context.

2.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

Experiences of hip-hop dance class are diverse (Sulé, 2015). To explore participants' narratives of inclusion, semi-structured interviews (Longhurst, 2010) were utilised. Firstly, a semi-structured interview method is used to investigate "complex behaviours, opinions and emotions and for collecting a diversity of experiences" (Longhurst, 2010, p. 112), which is aimed to explore in-depth participants' experiences and the meanings they attribute to these personal stories (Adams, 2010). As an effective and versatile means of gathering information (Fylan, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), using semi-structured interviews was selected to enable interviewees to provide responses in their own ways of expression and between English or Chinese language (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

Secondly, the popularity of semi-structured interviews is due to their characteristics of being "flexible, accessible and intelligible" (Qu & Dumay, 2011, p. 246), which could help researchers to disclose significant and often hidden aspects of human and organisational behaviours. As an approach of talking with people in ways that are "self-conscious, orderly and partially structured" (Longhurst, 2010, p. 103), semi-structured interviews require me to fully mobilise the self-expression of these seven participants in order to obtain more relevant information within the established framework. In my own perspective, semi-structured interviews are more than just 'chats', rather offering me a route to partial insights into what people do and think. Thus, unlike structured interviews, the flexibility and in-depth nature of

semi-structured interviews within my research offered me the opportunity to explore perceptions and opinions of each adult participant regarding the multiple meanings of learning hip-hop dance in open classes in dance studios.

Longhurst (2010) considers that “the researcher needs to formulate questions, select and recruit participant, choose a location and transcribe data while at the same time remaining cognizant of the ethical issues and power relations involved in qualitative research” (p. 106). As a means of better understanding the perspective of interviewees, semi-structured interviews are not only conversational in tone, but also informal in location and environment in order to provide a relaxed, free and flexible environment for participants (Liu, 2020; Wang, 2017). Since all the interviewees were unfamiliar to me beforehand, I chose to attend open hip-hop classes at one dance studio and take advantage of opportunities to communicate with them actively in order to get to know them in a very short time. I chose some relaxed and safe interview environments for my interviewees during the process of interviews, such as a coffee shop and park, to ensure that our dialogue was conducted in a relaxed atmosphere.

During the process of interviewing, I practiced finding appropriate ways to ask questions and communicate with my participants, so as to gain personal stories and ideas. In order to better conduct formal interviews, two of my companions helped me to practice by doing pre-interviews. During these two pre-interviews, I found that some misunderstandings and biases were prompted by language barriers between me and other interviewees. This led me to stray from my interview questions at times so that it became difficult to explore valuable personal stories. After these practices, my supervisor suggested that I could chat with respondents about their dance experiences so that I can become familiar with them in a short time and bring them into the interview context. At the same time, I could also guide my interviewees through my own stories in order to construct my interviews. This became helpful to my later interviews with the seven adult hip-hop dance learners, which were conducted in English. Within this research, their different learning experiences and personal perspectives provide the complex and detailed data related to examine the learning and teaching of hip-hop dance.

2.4.3 Interview participants

The purpose of this study was to explore how adult learners experience inclusion within a studio hip-hop class in New Zealand. Based on this focus, I sought research participants who were adults with learning experiences within 'open adult hip-hop dance' classes. I purposefully sought research participants with a limited learning experience in hip-hop dance, who had joined the dance classes because of promotional material associated with the class led them to believe the classes would be inclusive. Respondents who fit into this profile were invited to participate in the study through an initial public advertisement, in-person inquiries, social media and email.

Initially, I invited eight people who met the requirement of this study. Then, from those interviews, seven people provided key information. I gave them the following pseudonyms: Allen, Bella, Carr, Mary, Rachel, Sam, and Sara. These adult learners included three males and four females from different countries with dance learning experiences at different levels. This range helped me to maintain a diversity of my research and to gather as much data as possible from the various stories of interviewees from different backgrounds. Through listening to their unique personal experiences, this interview group prompted me to explore the differences and similarities among these individuals, revealing the complexities of inclusion within the hip-hop learning environment through their various voices.

2.4.4 Auto-narrative

One method of data collection within this research is personal auto-narrative. The research question motivating this study arose from my personal experiences of attending hip-hop dance classes in Auckland. In this learning context, my culturally diverse experiences and background make me feel like an outsider of hip-hop culture. Therefore, I reflected regularly by journaling (Agee, 2009) on feelings, insights and encounters within dance class.

An auto-narrative process seeks to express personal stories (Fernandes, 2017). Redfern (2011)

states that “auto-narrative refers to that which is simultaneously true and constructed, a performed self, operating in the space between inner and outer” (p. 21). It is based on the real lived experiences of the writer of the narrative, which “denotes the act of writing of, about and through self” (Fernandes, 2017, p. 78). Auto-biographical narratives may also help to define one’s memory, self and identity, as they can reflect personal cultural values and beliefs (Fivush, Habermas, Waters, & Zaman, 2011) to create the opportunity for a reflexive inquiry to co-construct meaning (Tracy, 2005). This approach also allows taking a deeper look at ourselves, our lives, our relations with others, and how we structure our social, economic, and educational environment (Tracy, 2005). From this perspective, the auto-narrative is consistent with the purpose of my research inquiry. Through narrating my story at a dance studio in Auckland, I can examine and clarify perspectives and understandings of my own cultural and educational experience, while exploring my learning experiences.

2.5 Data analysis

Within the process of analysing gathered information, the interview transcripts, notes of observation, personal journal and literature review have been examined (Jin, 2017). The ideas and thoughts presented in these materials became a significant reference point for me to analyse adult learners’ experience of inclusion in a studio hip-hop class in New Zealand. This section displays a process of data analysis for this study. In this present study, the thematic approach is the main method used to analysing the data. A thematic approach is “a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). Through focusing on the meaning of data, thematic analysis allows researchers to view and understand collective or shared meanings and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Sundler, Lindberg, Nilsson, & Palmér, 2019). Therefore, this method is a way of identifying and understanding commonalities found in discussions of a topic.

Thematic analysis provides a way into qualitative research that can then be linked to broader theoretical or conceptual issues (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This method collates the data into

several specific analysis topics and elaborates on them throughout the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Furthermore, according to Braun and Clarke (2012), adopting a thematic analysis allows the researcher to identify emergent and significant themes to be explored with the research question. The approach of thematic analysis does not only summarise, interpret and rewrite collected data, but also describes and explores both “implicit and explicit meanings” (Liu, 2020, p.23) of the content gained and shared by researchers and participants. After all the data was transcribed, based on the key themes that emerged during the narratives, I further coded the data into various patterns and categories (Cope, 2010; Jin, 2017).

For qualitative research, the classification of themes is a key procedure to generate arguments and “elicit meaning” (Cope, 2010, p. 451), so I took much time to code gained data, shift the patterns of different themes and review academic literature in order to promote key discussions and interpretations for this study. I found that the process of classifying data themes was a challenge for me. Initially, the arrangement of the key themes was based on the start of the dance class, the middle of dance class and the end of the dance class. Through rereading and rethinking data (Cope, 2010), I figured that the above themes could not interpret crucial issues of this study. With the further in-depth analysis of the data and exploration of the literature, I moved themes into identifying what participants noticed regarding the inclusion and exclusion, and what might be other content that was said within their comments, which they did not seem to be aware of being related to inclusion or exclusion. This research analyses adult learners’ experiences of inclusive hip-hop dance, their awareness of social hierarchy and assimilation of expectations. Besides, it also explores the difficulties and obstacles they encountered during the learning process. To do this, I selected the three key themes that emerged from the narratives and divided them into three chapters for discussions to explore the complexity of inclusion in dance classes.

2.6 Ethics

This section outlines the ethical concerns within the present research. This study complies with

the ethical approval from the Human Participants Ethics Committee of The University of Auckland. Having adult hip-hop dance learners as research participants required detailed consideration of the ethical issues in the study. Some ethical problems will be demonstrated in detail in the following section.

Firstly, the interviewees who participated in this study did so completely voluntarily. I invited seven research participants to join this study through communicating in person and texting on social media, allowing them to respond voluntarily if they felt interested to participate in this research. To clarify the purpose and procedures of my study further, all participants received Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms prior to the interviews. After finishing the interviews and before analysis, I also submitted the interview transcripts to the participants for further reviewing and editing, which gave them rights to suspend the interview or withdraw at any time from this study. Therefore, the purpose of the project is to ensure voluntary participation.

Secondly, the identities of the participants in this study are all confidential. When participants are mentioned in the writing, they are all given pseudonyms: Allen, Bella, Carr, Mary, Rachel, Sam, and Sara. Furthermore, to avoid getting engaged in any reputational damage unnecessarily, the third parties and names of the institution, when mentioned by interviewees are also disguised. For ease of reading, I have presented the pseudonym 'the Hope Dance Studio' as a generic reference for all the hip-hop dance schools my participants named. Additionally, data involved in this study were stored safely by dedicated administrators for 6 years and only accessible to the researchers. Meanwhile, the consent forms with the signature of each participant were stored separately from the data for 6 years. After 6 years, the data will be destroyed by both shredding hard copies and deleting electronic files.

2.7 Limitations of the research

Considering the limitations encountered in the process of this study, this section will explain the limitations of word count and participants' resources. Some limitations regarding this

study should also be articulated. The first is the limited word count. This study is required to be up to 40,000 words, which limits the scope of what can be discussed in the context of my research. The word limit allows me to focus on one theme: how do adult learners experience inclusion within a studio hip-hop class in New Zealand. Although there may be a variety of interesting personal stories from my research participants, I could not analyse all the data that I collected due to the word count limits. Therefore, I chose to delve deeply into how the complexities of inclusion presented in a hip-hop dance class in New Zealand.

Secondly, since I have only one year to complete this whole study, each step of the research is fully new to me. I am challenged with the unfamiliar processes of searching literature, conducting interviews and writing an academic English thesis, which had not been part of my learning experience in China. Therefore, searching, reviewing and paraphrasing the literature took much time, but I also used part of the time to constantly adapt and adjust the key arguments within this literature review. Additionally, all readings and writings as well as analysing data needed to be in English. As an international student English is my second language which has created limitations for this thesis.

The number of participants is also considered as a limitation of this study. As mentioned before, seven adult participants involved in this research whose individual learning experience and understanding for inclusion and views on hip-hop dance do not represent the views of all adult learners. It is worth mentioning that many adults who may have tentatively begun efforts in adult learning are often reluctant to discuss their perceived failures to persevere in the classroom or training context. As a result, my data collection may also be limited when it comes to discussing the aspects of failure and abandonment with my interviewees.

Last, due to the spread of COVID-19 in New Zealand, my research process and daily life have been affected to some extent. The supervisory sessions with my supervisors and my access to library services and campus were limited for at least three months, slowing my research progress of writing this thesis.

2.8 Summary

This chapter has discussed the research methodologies utilised within this study. I have instigated a qualitative and phenomenological framework to explore auto-narratives and participant experiences. An in-depth literature review and semi-structured interviews became primary forms of obtaining data to gain a comprehensive understanding of this research. Based on the process of data collection, a thematic analysis method was used to analyse data and guide the key arguments for discussion. Moreover, this chapter illustrates my research position as both insider and outsider. Some ethical issues involved in the study were considered and described. The limitations of my research have also been listed and explained in detail. Following on from the methodology, the next chapter will specifically introduce and review the academic literature related to this research.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

This chapter reviews key literature surrounding arguments and theories related to the critical examination of commercialising inclusion in dance education and exploring the research question: How do adult learners experience inclusion within a studio hip-hop class in New Zealand?

The first section of this chapter examines the meanings, principles and values of inclusion in society. This section provides an overview of how the idea of inclusion is understood and developed within contemporary contexts and further explores how it might be viewed as a form of inclusion within some hip-hop dance classes in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Within this dialogue, the influence of inclusive education practices and policies are explored, and additionally, I present the notion of hip-hop dance classes in relation to ideas of inclusion within arts practice and dance education. Then, this literature review moves to the issue of commercialising inclusion, which mainly explores how inclusion is perceived as a commodity for sale and purchase in a social context. *Doux commerce* theory is also introduced to explore how the implementation of inclusion is influenced by market strategy and business profit, and how it further affects consumers. The last section in this chapter investigates the idea of inclusion in hip-hop contexts. By focusing on what inclusion might mean through hip-hop history I explore how it might be displayed in both egalitarian and competitive environments within hip-hop culture. Additionally, this section explores the tension between inclusion and exclusion that can arise within teaching and learning in the context of commercialised hip-hop dance classes. A conclusion of the key issues that emerged from this literature review is presented at the end of this chapter.

3.1 Inclusion

This section examines scholarly literature exploring the key research question: How might inclusion be experienced by adult learners within a hip-hop class of a commercialised inclusion in New Zealand? The focus of this paper is to examine how the sense of inclusion

might affect adult learners' hip-hop dance learning. This chapter explains the emergence of the concept of inclusion and its development and application in the field of education, especially in dance education, to further explore how the principles, philosophies and features of inclusion were introduced and developed in dance art.

3.1.1 Meanings of inclusion

Inclusion is a valuable but complex concept that can be considered as representing the values and ideologies of social respect, solidarity and equal opportunity in society (Norwich, 2013; Thomas & Loxley, 2001). The political and social movement for equity in the Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s in the United States showed that inclusion can be related to diversity and social justice (Thomas, 2013). Inclusion therefore is not only about equality, collective belonging and comprehensive education (Thomas & Loxley, 2001), but is also valued as an expression for establishing forms of “social regulation that are congruent with the dominance of neo liberalism” (Jayasuriya, 2006, p. 148). There is potential for processes of inclusion to act both as a model for teaching and learning as well as promote positive social change (Thomas & Loxley, 2001). Significantly, practices of inclusion create opportunities for social equality to occur, in a way that embraces diverse communities and enhances an individual's sense of identity (Jayasuriya, 2006).

Inclusion is a practice that seeks to provide opportunities for all participants in an environment to feel understood and accepted (Ballard, 2013). In the context of social and economic development, practices of inclusion have shifted from a one-dimensional approach to participation (Thomas, 2013) to a broader approach valuing diverse participation embracing dis/ability, ethnicity and gender (Ballard, 2000), which emphasises that “no one should be left out” (Wilson, 1999, p. 111). Therefore, for individuals, inclusion may be tied to social interactions (Honneth, 1995), and is impacted by attitudes of ‘others’ to participation. Within this research, I introduced the concept of inclusion to explore what external factors might influence the acceptance and inclusion of participants in hip-hop dance classes and their integration into the learning environment.

The meaning of inclusion within this research suggests a place where everybody belongs and feels accepted, where each individual and his or her uniqueness is celebrated and embraced (Kaufmann, 2006). As one of the strategies of acculturation, assimilation is identified as different from inclusion, which occurs when individuals feel obliged to move away from their own cultural / personal practices in order to be accepted by another cultural group (Berry, 1997; Yoon et al., 2010). It can be argued that acculturation within the context of this research is when adult learners who attend a hip-hop dance class may be assimilated to adapt and integrate into the classroom culture. Individuals may seek inclusion through assimilation within society, in order to alleviate the isolation that may result from being “highly individuated” (Pickett et al., 2002, p. 546). In other words, individuals from a minority group may strive to blend in with a dominant group by relinquishing their own identities in favour of the group (Yoon et al., 2010). Thus, it has been noted that it might be difficult for assimilated groups to fully integrate into the mainstream culture (Ang, 2014), which suggests that assimilation may also be seen as a method of exclusion.

The concept of assimilation can be understood from both the group and individual levels (Rumbaut, 2015). Assimilation at the group level may include the absorption of one or more minority groups into the mainstream, or the merging of minority groups. At an individual level, assimilation may make individuals of one ethnic group more “acculturated, integrated, and identified with the members of another” (Rumbaut, 2015, p. 81). However, Dahlstedt and Ekholm (2017) emphasise that assimilation within a sports context can be seen as a way to promote social harmony and respond to social tensions, exclusion, alienation and other problems. Additionally, there are some educational ideals and practices in sporting contexts that tend to maintain “hierarchical patterns” and exclude “other racialized groups” (Dahlstedt & Ekholm, 2017, p. 6). It is problematic that one group’s inclusion, participation, adaptation and integration is based on the terms of another group (Alba & Nee, 2003; Dahlstedt & Ekholm, 2017). In other words, inclusion through assimilation might be built from unequal hierarchical relationships, where individuals of one group feel obliged to accommodate the conditions of the other group.

Although processes of assimilation endorse “feeling, thinking and acting alike” (Burgess & Park, 1933, p. 460), as a concept inclusion seeks to focus on complex, relational and multidimensional individual realities (Alba & Nee, 2003; Rumbaut, 2015). The idea of assimilation in a classroom context means valuing and welcoming differences (Slee, 1997). Tolerance for difference may embody assimilation, but it can only be achieved “when the minorities acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for participating in a mainstream, market-driven society” (Yoon et al., 2010, p. 110). In other words, although assimilation as another form of inclusion may mean to value and welcome differences, it also emphasises an unwritten prerequisite for participation. It may be possible that assimilation requires both an orientation toward, and identification with, the out-group (Alexander, 2001) on the part of the assimilating individual or group, and that assimilation is contingent on “acceptance by the out-group” (Teske Jr & Nelson, 1974, p. 361). Therefore, this study will further examine how the hidden rules established by assimilation might affect the experience of inclusion among different groups.

From the above perspective, a similar situation might be encountered in the context of dance education and practice. Within this research, adult learners are viewed as individuals with dance capabilities, that may vary widely in a cultural context, with diverse cultural competencies. These differences can include knowledge of particular steps, particular skills in coordination and particular types of physical fitness. Specifically, in the context of dance education, the tension or hierarchy between participants with diverse dancing abilities may promote assimilation. This type of assimilation within the above context might be problematic because it can result in unintended or discreet exclusion. Therefore, this research mainly focuses on exploring how assimilation might reinforce the tension among participants in a hip-hop dance classroom through hierarchical relationships and hidden rules between different cultural groups.

Furthermore, inclusion through assimilation implies that someone has been excluded and that individuals may be prevented from participating in significant community, economic and political activities (Ballard, 2013). The processes of inclusion and exclusion “reflect ideas

about how the world is to be seen and understood, about who is to be attended to and who ignored, and about how institutions are to be organised” (Ballard, 2013, p. 762). Practices of assimilation may also impact how the community treats individuals (Wilson, 1999). From this perspective, my research considers that inclusion is about learning how to live with and learn from differences, so the idea of inclusion should be seen as a “never-ending search” (Ainscow & Tweddle, 2003, p. 173) to find better ways of responding to diversity. Therefore, changing towards more inclusive and socially just arrangements requires a serious interrogation of the ideas informing policy and practice and critical analysis of the cultural beliefs and values from which ideas derive their influence and power. The New Zealand hip-hop dance institution, which I focus on this study, provides a research context for the above vision to help readers understand and apply inclusion in education. As a result, this leads me to question further: How might the ideas, principles and values of inclusion examine and apply in the field of education?

3.1.2 Inclusion in education

Involving inclusion in education is a practice that seeks to ensure access to equity and justice in learning for all students (Ballard, 2000). Historically, the idea of inclusion was introduced and adopted in the field of education, and it is one of the significant values and objectives within the education system (Felder, 2018; Slee, 2001; Thomas, 2013). Inclusion has also been the subject of discussion in several important international agreements and conventions (UNESCO, 1990, 2001; 2004; United Nations, 2006). Therefore, this section explores how the idea of inclusion can be extended and developed in the field of education.

The origins of inclusive education stemmed from special education in the 1960s (Florian, 2014; Osgood, 2005), which is based on an ideology that ensures equal treatment of all people (Stepanova et al., 2018). Politicians, scholars, and practitioners alike commonly refer to the following broad definition in the UNESCO document *Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All* when introducing inclusive educational practices nowadays (Stadler-Heer, 2019):

Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. (UNESCO, 2005, p. 13)

Many scholars believe that inclusion is a complex term that has been developed over decades by the social and political agendas of different countries (Hatton, 2015). Different definitions of inclusive education have been continually proposed, reflecting the diverse but complementary concepts developed simultaneously around the world (Florian, 2014). The definitions of inclusion are divided into 'narrow' and 'broad' (Ainscow et al., 2006). From one perspective, inclusion in a narrow sense refers to the inclusion of specific groups of students, mainly, but not exclusively, disabled students and/or students with special education needs in 'mainstream' or 'regular' education (Ainscow et al., 2006; Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2011). The 'broad' definitions of inclusion may not focus on specific groups of students, but rather on diversity and how schools respond to the diversity of all learners (Armstrong et al., 2011; Thomas, 2013; UNESCO, 2001).

Inclusive education is integral to a democratic society (Lipsky & Gartner, 1999). The idea of inclusive education emerged in relation to that of inclusion within society and is widely understood as being related to the values of a democracy (Norwich, 2013; Terzi, 2014) as a new model of education management focusing on the "values of the human and social capitals" (Stepanova et al., 2018, p. 158). It also mainly aims to overcome barriers of learning and participation for all (Booth et al, 2000; Nes, 2003) and addresses the vast number of issues associated with poverty, social exclusion and disadvantage (Terzi, 2014). Within this research, I view inclusive education as linked with a social dimension, as well as with addressing forms of exclusion.

Inclusive education can also be about responding to diversity and "listening to unfamiliar voices, being open, empowering all members and about celebrating 'difference' in dignified ways" (Barton, 1997, p. 233). With the progress and development of the society, ideas and

policy around inclusion should not only be considered from the perspective of disability and social justice, but also be explored and considered from various aspects of school life such as culture, gender, community, equality and respect (Thomas, 2013; Urton, Wilbert, & Hennemann, 2014). Based on the above aspects of inclusion in education, this research examines participant experiences of hip-hop dance institutions that offer ‘open adult dance classes’ under the guise of inclusive arts education.

3.1.3 Inclusion in arts and dance education

Art education can be regarded as “conservative, repetitive and exclusive” (Hatton, 2015, p. 3). Art can be seen as a form of potential “deterritorialisation” (Allen, 2010, p. 417) in education, by shifting the space in which education takes place, from a rigid boundary between teachers and learners to stable and open possibilities. Inclusion in educational and cultural fields, can be both a force that draws people into participation and as a “political vehicle for seeking out normally silenced or disenfranchised voices” (Allan, 2014, p. 518). Therefore, art is recognised for its potentially simultaneous universal and inclusive values as well as for “the reinforcement of elite and exclusive practices” (Penketh, 2017, p. 154). The powerful potential of the arts, however, lies in its ability to reach out to the individual and encourage them to participate.

Dance may be recognised as an “exclusive and elite art form that privileges ideal feminine bodies” (Longley, 2003, p. 9). However, New Zealand dance scholars Ralph Buck and Barbara Snook (2017) in their research suggest that dance seems to have shifted its focus to “imagination, creativity and relationships” (p. 44) in the twenty-first century, which encourages wider participation and inclusion. As an artistic form of creative self-expression, dance utilises physical movement to provide participants with the opportunity to be involved in physical activities in a non-competitive environment (Zitomer, 2013). Inclusion within dance also creates opportunities for people of all capabilities to experience where they feel welcome and accepted (Zitomer, 2013). Dance that involves practices of inclusion has great potential to provide platforms for learners to communicate with and learn from each other

outside the hierarchical frameworks that may develop in classrooms and social networks (Longley, 2003). Therefore, I propose that one role of inclusion is to promote everyone who participates in dance education.

An inclusive dance education environment is a space where everyone has an opportunity to access quality learning experiences and gain a sense of belonging (Kaufmann, 2006; Zitomer, 2016). When an inclusive education approach is adopted and absorbed in a dance education context, it may break any internal barriers of the classroom dance practice to promote and attract diverse participants. Inclusive dance is not only a product, or a unifying idea, but a “lived negotiation between different individuals” (Kostoula, 2008, p. 19). By valuing the input of every student, diversity is encouraged in the dance class, and difference can be seen as a positive rather than a negative trait (Longley, 2003). As well as being student-centred (Dragon, 2015; Risner, 2017), that is, acknowledging and working from the diversity of students and their unique contexts, dance education also requires an understanding of inclusive teaching forms in order to be recognised as an open-access educational discipline.

It can be seen that the idea of inclusion is being paid increasing attention within arts and dance education (Rowe, Martin, Buck, & Anttila, 2018). Therefore, in the following section, I will introduce economic theory to examine how inclusion is perceived by the market as a commodity to be sold and purchased within education. In addition, I will further analyse the opportunities and challenges that inclusion offers to the education market through the lens of *doux commerce* theory.

3.2 Commercialising inclusion

The commercialisation of inclusion is a key concept in this research, which provides a critical perspective to explore how adult learners experience inclusion within a studio hip-hop class in New Zealand. This section of the review consists of four aspects. Firstly, I introduce *doux commerce* as a key theory to give a new perspective for this research. In the second section, I focus on inclusion and education as a commodity in private sectors. Then, a broader concept

of non-formal education has been drawn into this section to establish and examine the philosophical values underpinning the way hip-hop is taught in commercial institutions. Lastly, this section further discusses how the concept of inclusion embodied in dance schools may be gradually commercialised, thereby providing a context for exploration and discussion of this research.

3.2.1 The economy as a force for good: *Doux commerce* theory

Due to the perspective that commercial factors are complex, the impact of market and economy on education has value. The theory of *doux commerce* holds that commerce, or free trade, is a force for good (Fourcade & Healy, 2007). The *doux commerce* is a concept that originated from the Age of Enlightenment with thinkers such as Montesquieu and Voltaire, Adam Smith and David Hume, and has been advocated by many thinkers following them (Borg, 2020; Movsesian, 2018; Oman, 2016). *Doux commerce* acts as a “civilizing force” (Borg, 2020, p. 1), contributing to the advancement and well-being of societies by inculcating certain core moral values in those who engage in it (Borg, 2020). The *doux commerce* theory holds that market relations in the eighteenth century made people more cordial and less inclined to compete with one another, which prompted the world to be fairer and more tolerant through relations of trade (Borg, 2020; Fourcade & Healy, 2007).

The idea of *doux commerce* requires that “markets be widely accessible” (Oman, 2016, p. 711), and that commerce promotes attitudes of tolerance and promotes “liberalism and pluralism” (Movsesian, 2018, p. 457). According to Oman (2016), *doux commerce* argues that exclusion stems not from a strong vision of what human dignity demands but rather from a modest ambition that commerce be maintained as a mechanism for managing pluralism and fostering peaceful cooperation. Oman (2016) also proposes that markets are not ideologically fraught spaces indifferent to political, ethnic, religious and moral differences, but rather significant engines of peaceful cooperation and social inclusion in a pluralistic society. Thus, I propose that markets are valued because they promote cooperation in the face of difference, foster habits of tolerance, and have the potential to generate prosperity and opportunity.

3.2.2 Inclusion in education as a commodity in private sectors

Inclusion is becoming a commercialised sector of the educational marketplace. The anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1986) points out in his research that,

...commoditization lies at the complex intersection of temporal, cultural, and social factors. To the degree that some things in a society are frequently to be found in the commodity phase, to fit the requirements of commodity candidacy, and to appear in a commodity context, they are its quintessential commodities. (p. 15)

The commodification here can be understood as a process of bringing elements that have not yet been explicitly part of the ‘capitalist machine’ into the realm of capital circulation (Murtola, 2014). This approach may embrace a person’s “innermost being and shared sociality” (Murtola, 2014, p. 836). The concept of inclusion echoes a sociality for entering ‘capital circulation’, which is not only reflected in the welfare rationality of individuals being included in social and economic life, but also in policies that promote the “social market economy” (Jayasuriya, 2006, p. 20). In such a scenario, cultural concepts, products and services, such as the promotion and application of inclusion in the education market, can be regarded as a commodity. Although the idea of inclusion is not clearly recognised as a marketable commodity, its social and educational values are introduced into the commercial market as an experience (Jayasuriya, 2006; Rouse & Florian, 1997).

Hardt and Negri (2009) argue that people are living in an era nowadays where the results of social production are no longer predominantly material commodities but rather more inclined to the formation of a way of life and social relations. This means that the value of the “immaterial aspects of commodities” takes a key position in the pricing process (Murtola, 2014, p. 836). What distinguishes experiences from the economic offerings of previous eras, according to Pine and Gilmore (1998), is their internal character:

While prior economic offerings – commodities, goods, and services – are external to the buyer, experiences are inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level. (p. 99)

This quotation suggests that commodification of experience may place more emphasis on the economic value of an individual's experience of a commodity. Murtola (2014) further points out in his study that what people buy is not just tangible goods but also various forms of 'shopping experiences', services or "educational experience[s]" (p. 836). This indicates a shift from an 'experience economy' to an 'experience content economy', where consumers demand the essence of experience. In non-formal education environments that promote the idea of inclusion, like hip-hop dance classes, participants might be looking for acquisition of knowledge, gaining a sense of participation and experiencing belonging in their learning process. Therefore, this study provides the new perspective that inclusion may be a commercial experience within the education market. This lens has allowed me to explore how inclusion may be a commercialised experience in hip-hop dance classes and participants' experiences of inclusion.

Murtola (2014) argues that capital operates on both material and symbolic levels. It provides more spaces for "expression of subjectivity and social interaction" (p. 849) but is always guided by the interests of capital. The two aspects of commodified education demonstrated by Singh (2015) provide evidence for the above viewpoints. On the one hand, within a neoliberal educational agenda, education may be commodified for subsequent profit generation; on the other hand, it reduces "education to mere skill development for developing docile and useful workers and consumers for the smooth functioning of the market economy" (Singh, 2015, p. 262).

From the perspective of *doux commerce* theory, the market and commerce not only promote social tolerance, but also provide an important channel for the application of inclusive ideas in education. Within the context of dance education, the values and practices of inclusion might be economically rationalised to encourage dance consumers to maintain the economic operation of dance education institutions. Driven by the competitive education marketplace, inclusive ideas and practices may generate competition and potential tension between teachers and students. Therefore, my research will focus on how inclusion, marketisation and commercialisation impacts student learning experiences and participation. This has led me to

examine further how the notion of commercialised inclusion is demonstrated and reinforced in the field of the non-formal education marketplace.

3.2.3 The non-formal education marketplace

Coombs and Ahmed (1974) propose that education can no longer be confined to time-bound and place-bound school settings, and conclude that education can be equated with learning, “regardless of where, how or when the learning occurs” (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8). Therefore, they introduced the idea of ‘non-formal education’ (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). The concept of non-formal education is considered as any organised, systematic educational activity carried out outside the framework of the formal system, designed to provide selected types of learning for particular groups (Batlle, 2019; Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). Non-formal education therefore can be a response to the different demands and needs of individuals or groups (Hamadache, 1991), especially for adult learners outside the framework of formal education (Ngaka, Openjuru, & Mazur, 2012). Furthermore, non-formal educational spaces are recognised to foster egalitarian and ‘horizontal’ relationships between adults and youth (Batlle, 2019).

As a supplement to formal education, non-formal education may negotiate “a capitalist approach to economic and political issues and the globalization of commerce and trade” (Brennan, 1997, p. 187). Compared with formal education, non-formal education is able to respond quickly to educational, social, and economic needs (Brennan, 1997); it includes a market approach whereby different courses are sold either for direct consumption or as a human capital investment (Carr-Hill, Carron, & Peart, 2001). In a neoliberal economic sphere, in which public funding in the public domain is diminished, non-formal education can become increasingly competitive to gain a market share. With the commercialisation of education, the educational process and knowledge are sold as commodities, and the educational relationship becomes a market transaction relationship dependent on commodities. Teachers become the ‘producers’ of commodities while students become ‘consumers’ (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005). The traditional teaching relationship is destabilised

under this economic system, and each party is endowed with unique or even opposite interests and demands (Naidoo & Jamieson 2002; Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005).

Within this research, I have drawn on broader theories of ‘non-formal learning’ to establish and examine the philosophical values underpinning the way hip-hop is taught in studios that promote inclusion, particularly to adult beginners. Reddy (2003) states that non-formal learning includes the characteristics of “activities outside the formal learning setting and voluntary as opposed to mandatory participation” (p. 21), and it is also not restricted by conventions, rules and ceremonies (Morgan, 2000). In other words, non-formal learning can refer to any educational activity organised by different institutions for a specific target group in a given population, which developed on the idea of a flexible, broad and inclusive concept. Through the ideas and characteristics of ‘non-formal learning’, I consider the studios attended by my interviewees as non-formal learning and teaching spaces that offer resources and an inclusive environment for adult participants to learn hip-hop dance.

With the continuous development of inclusive education, many scholars have raised corresponding questions about it under the development and reform of marketisation. Rouse and Florian (1997) point out that,

...during the past decade, there has been a shift from legislation and policies based upon principles of equity, social progress and altruism, to new legislation underpinned by a market-place philosophy based on principles of academic excellence, choice and competition. In a climate in which educational reforms are based upon the principles of the market, students with disabilities and/or special educational needs are particularly vulnerable. (p. 324)

Education is increasingly viewed as a “private good rather than a public responsibility” (Barton, 1997, p. 238) that encourages a self-interested approach to learning. Under the guidance and influence of marketisation in education, Barton (1997) proposes that some educational practices seem to be against inclusive outcomes in terms of access and experience in schools. This may result in the increasing marketisation of educational provision as well as the reinforcement of competitiveness and selection. Meanwhile, educational practices in the marketplace may promote a set of values that celebrate “individualism” (Barton, 1997, p. 239)

thereby making the possibilities of cooperation and interaction at a level between institution and individual less desirable or possible. This phenomenon might divert the idea of inclusion from its original purpose and essence, which further exacerbates the sense of exclusion for learners.

An educational institution may be designed to impart knowledge and skills, while the primary purpose of marketing is to make money, which makes marketing incompatible with the mission of education (Joseph & Joseph, 1997). In this study, non-formal educational institutions, which are essentially profit-oriented commercial teaching institutions, may promote philosophical ideals like inclusion, while seeking to maintain cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Dumais, 2006; Urquía, 2005) in the hip-hop world. Moving forward I will discuss from a new perspective how the concept of inclusion demonstrated in dance institutions has been gradually commercialised.

3.2.4 Dance schools and the commercialisation of inclusion

In the research of Risner, Godfrey and Simmons (2004), a contradictory phenomenon within dance education is shown. In the process of operating private dance studios, their economic reality may be linked to pleasing their customers (parents and students) so they can maintain competitiveness in the market. On the other hand, it is added that operators of private dance studios also need to develop their artistic choices and educational qualities within the framework of “buyers’ markets” (Risner et al., 2004, p. 27). The compromise is between consumer expectations and satisfaction, economy and cost, and lack of alternative business options. In the process of making choices in regards to the above aspects, a dance studio may unknowingly weaken the inclusion, sensitivity and educational mission of their artistic practice. Promoting inclusion within art education is increasingly regarded as a core factor of competitiveness, which can be used as a marketing tool for private studios to achieve the goals of economic advancement and artistic development. This research contends that the value and meaning of inclusiveness have been reduced and distorted in the trade-offs of commercialisation.

Private dance schools or studios are also affected by commercialisation within a non-formal education context. Posey (2002) specifically analyses how the public's perception of private dance institution education affects the operation and value of the institution in his research.

She says:

In the private sector, the public's perception of dance education determines what they will buy and marketing strategies are developed accordingly. This has an impact on the curricula offered at private schools of dance. In order to meet operating expenses, the private dance school must offer classes that someone will buy, and thus economic reality intrudes on dance education and influences both its artistic and educational values. (p. 43)

The above quotation suggests that dance schools in the private sector reflect the public impressions of dance (Posey, 2002), and the same situation may apply in hip-hop dance education. However, Woerner (2011) suggests that even through economic change, the bottom line of an institutions is still to help students feel supported, accepted and involved. Even as a for-profit private educational institution, its essence still needs to promote openness to stimulate prosperity and inclusion. Moving forward from these points, the next section will further explore how inclusive ideas are embodied in the context of hip-hop culture, and at the same time examine the complex theme of embracing egalitarianism while challenging competition, and how the idea of inclusion might impact on the process of hip-hop dance teaching and learning.

3.3 Hip-Hop dance education from an inclusive perspective

In order to better understand the research context of hip-hop dance classes, this section will focus on the history and current teaching practices evident within hip-hop dance internationally and within New Zealand. Firstly, this section summarises the history of hip-hop through egalitarian and competitive ideologies in order to show how the principle of inclusion is displayed in hip-hop. Further, this section specifically explores how hip-hop culture and hip-hop dance education develop under the influence of commercialisation to explore the tensions associated with inclusion in the hip-hop dance teaching environment. To

do so, I have investigated and analysed relevant literature within the field of hip-hop dance and wider dance-focused discourses.

3.3.1 The history of hip-hop

Hip-hop culture began to develop in the Bronx of New York City in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Chang, 2009; González, 2016; Walker, 2012). Shaped by the socio-cultural and socio-political environment, hip-hop culture evolved under the social context of the economic struggles and environmental upheavals (Durdin et al., 2014; González, 2016). Hip-hop culture has been known as a combination of “rapping and rap music, graffiti writing, particular dance styles (including breakdancing), specific attire, and a specialized language and vocabulary” (Hazzard-Donald, 2004, p. 508). Each element is a form of self-expression that relies on individual creativity and highly personalised performance patterns (Price & Iber, 2006). Meanwhile, hip-hop can also be valued as a complex system connected between different disciplines and subcultures including graffiti, deejaying, emceeing, and dance (Hazzard-Donald, 2004; Walker, 2012). The combination between these four disciplines is complicated and may affect the development of personal identity, the status of peer groups and the dynamics and conflicts between groups (Hazzard-Donald, 2004). From the above perspective, it can be suggested that hip-hop expresses both the significance of an individual creative identity within a society and that such individual creative identity should be included within a wider society. Within my research, this emphasises a tension that individual identity might not be included within one hip-hop community.

The rise of hip-hop culture not only provides oppressed and marginalised people with the opportunity to express their anger, fear and distress (Chang, 2007), but also help them to “find that sense of belonging and collective character in which they form part of” (González, 2016, p. 64). Moreover, Price and Iber (2006) consider that the greatest potential of hip-hop is,

... to be a catalyst for racial and social-class healing and reconciliation. As an expression catering to a variety of communities both around the country and around the world, Hip Hop is positioned to begin conversations addressing ways to mend

both racial tensions and social-class disparities. (p. 1)

Therefore, hip-hop culture is built on the inclusive value of peace, unity, love and having fun (Chang, 2009; Macpherson, 2018; Walker, 2012), which developed as an art form that represents communities of all ages, genders, economic classes, religions and ethnicities in different countries and regions (Price & Iber, 2006). Hip-hop dance, especially the fact that it has become open access by welcoming both children and adults to participate (Gorney, 2009), emphasises the importance of equality and inclusion that makes participants feel they can be included. Within my research, the perspective of equality of hip-hop dance (Gorney, 2009) enabled me to examine how hip-hop dance classes might involve inclusive approaches (Terzi, 2014) to teaching and learning.

New Zealand based hip-hop dancer and teacher Katherine Walker's (2012) research identified the context, practice and issues of hip-hop dance development in New Zealand, which provided me with essential background knowledge and research inspiration around New Zealand hip-hop dance. Hip-hop dance in New Zealand started with b-boying and is famous globally for its development based on competitions and crew culture (Walker, 2012). Walker (2012) proposes that "the culture of the hip-hop dance community in New Zealand would be a progression or extension of the environmental and ethnic influences, such as whānau culture" (p. 108). 'Whānau' is an extended family or community of related families who live together in the same area (Broughton, 1993; Gibbons et al., 1994). Within the whānau culture, members were acculturated and socialised into the rules, protocols and support systems of that particular whānau (Moeke-Pickering, 1996), which may be understood as valuing inclusion. The hip-hop dance culture in New Zealand may embody competition as a dominant practice (Walker, 2012), which continues to mature and develop under the influence of indigenous culture (Marsh, 2012; Warren & Evitt, 2010). It is possible that the hip-hop concerns of the United States of America that involve exclusion and cultural minoritisation has found a culturally relevant space within New Zealand, particularly amongst Pasifika and Māori populations.

However, Katherine Walker (2012) alludes to some contention within the hip-hop dance

community by noting that hip-hop dance is a controversial topic and according to those who consider themselves 'authentic' insiders, it is often quite exclusive. This perspective may relate to what González (2016) identifies as the root of hip-hop having "powerful political content related to racism, marginalization and oppression" (p. 65). In the context of hip-hop culture, the members of majority underground communities vary in identity and social background. Members of different hip-hop communities also maintain an open and respectful attitude towards this diversity and difference of individuals, while the tradition of 'battling' (see for example Chang, 2006; Storhoff, 2009; Walker, 2012), the particular act of competing in hip-hop is becoming the way to "settle disputes" (Price & Iber, 2006, p. 50). This may demonstrate that hip-hop culture not only emphasises an egalitarian ideology for the participants, but also maintains the competitive ideals of excellence and battle for communal and individual identities. Furthermore, the battle ground of ideological identity within hip-hop might still be played out in teaching and learning spaces, which makes me query in this research how exclusion and competition inherent in hip-hop culture might be reflected and reinforced in the teaching and learning processes within hip-hop dance class.

Gorney (2009) suggests that the competitive element has been within hip-hop since the beginning. Gorney (2009) goes further to propose that the main formats in competitions involving hip-hop dance, include "cypher battles, crew battles, and performance competitions" (p. 34). People within the hip-hop culture thrive on competition with others to gain respect and admiration within the profession or from the partygoers (Price & Iber, 2006). Therefore, these types of battles were not only used for recruitment (Gorney, 2009) and building reputations of identity (Chang, 2007; Storhoff, 2009), but may also be a way of "gaining social capital and asserting dominance over others" (Storhoff, 2009, p. 17).

On one hand, competitions help legitimise the hip-hop community and encourage new people to participate in these art forms by showcasing and rewarding talented hip-hop performers (Storhoff, 2009). Many participants of hip-hop also see the competition as a way to get into their professional careers, as Storhoff (2009) identifies from a music perspective that "[m]any rappers saw organized competitions as a method of not only building a reputation but starting

a career as a recording artist” (p. 13). On the other hand, the risks (see: Chang, 2009; Storhoff, 2009) and criteria of competitions might create a hierarchy within hip-hop culture. Storhoff (2009) notes that organised hip-hop competition is “typically a realm for amateur performers; professionals and those who already have strong reputations are fully aware that they risk diminishing those reputations in competition” (p. 17).

To sum up, while aspects of hip-hop culture sought to break down cultural hierarchies and value individuality within different groups (both within the United States of America and subsequently within New Zealand), the culture of competition and a growing professional hip-hop scene has developed new hierarchies, which may value conformity to particular hip-hop aesthetics. This phenomenon might help me to better understand the mix of ‘professional’ and ‘non-professional’ dance participants within the hip-hop classroom context of this research and the tensions that may exist between these groups. Thus, I will explore this question in the following section to explore how such phenomena or historical influences can be reflected and reinforced in the teaching and learning environment of hip-hop dance.

3.3.2 The commercialisation of hip-hop

The hip-hop culture that I am examining within this research might not only be seen as focused on the origins or history of hip-hop, but also on its practice in a general context of hip-hop learning and teaching. Hip-hop culture has evolved from a cultural phenomenon addressing inner-city youth’s desires and needs to nowadays being an international, “multibillion-dollar institution” (Price & Iber, 2006, p. 1) that has gradually changed the nature of the entertainment industries. As Levy (2001) suggests, hip-hop has gone on to become “a global, post-industrial signifying practice, giving new parameters of meaning to otherwise locally or nationally diverse identities” (p. 134). Xie, Osumare and Ibrahim (2007) articulate that the commercialisation of hip-hop has allowed the boundaries between white/black, consumer/producer to remain intact without erasing them. In other words, the commodification of hip-hop can be viewed not only as an appropriation of African-American culture, but also as “the prism of a kaleidoscope of cultures” (Xie et al., 2007, p. 458) to

emphasise the implicit collisions within contemporary culture and ethnic groups for hip-hop.

According to Flores (2012) hip-hop has not only spread from being consumed solely by urban blacks to being popular throughout the United States, but currently hip-hop has been “internationally recognized as a dominant commercial force” (Kun, 2002, p. 580). Flores (2012) identifies that many companies combine hip-hop’s “outlaw stance” with “conspicuous, brand-name consumption” (Condry, 2007, p. 640) to successfully promote the business, providing further evidence that hip-hop can represent products and companies, not just people (Condry, 2007). Additionally, Xie et al. (2007) examine in their research that hip-hop culture maintains a distinction between people who produce the cultural commodities and who consume them. Therefore, from the above viewpoint, this study will conduct an in-depth exploration that explores how commercial hip-hop institutions in New Zealand might reinforce the potential contradictions and tensions between the producers and consumers of cultural commodities.

Since the emergence of hip-hop dance in the 1970s, it has evolved into various styles that have shifted from the street of the Bronx to competitive, commercial and professional dance forms (Markula, 2020). Given the rapid expansion of hip-hop dance in the world, it is an excellent dance medium to connect products with people to allow people the feeling of inclusion, and to enhance belonging within a community (Huntington, 2007). Durden et al. (2014) state in their article that the word ‘hip-hop’ became more of a marketing tool in the late 1990s, especially through the appropriation and assimilation of hip-hop dance to become known as commercial hip-hop. This commercialisation of hip-hop may have led many studios to offer teaching and learning spaces for hip-hop dance.

The rise of hip-hop dance classes and studio-based training practices throughout the 1990s has led to “the codification of hip-hop as a pyramid structure” (DeFrantz, 2014, p. 18), which is the main way of transmitting hip-hop knowledge based on an instructor-led teaching paradigm. DeFrantz (2014) further suggests that the instructor-led way of teaching restabilised hip-hop as a form that can be controlled by the marketplace. Markula (2020) echoes and extends the argument of DeFrantz (2014) saying that with the provision of

instructor-led classes in commercial dance studios, hip-hop dance is further distanced from its “grass-root level” (p. 4) and aligned with the dance competition industry, which has now become an integral part of commercial dance and leisure culture. The commercialisation of hip-hop dance has not only entered the market as a kind of leisure culture, but also introduced teaching as a commercial profit-making means in the competition industry to be more patterned and specialised. Huntington (2007) proposes that,

...learning commoditized hip hop dance in a studio affords the art form the beginnings of new connotations in the consciousnesses of Euro Americans and forces it further away from gaining acknowledgement that the dance, when written by historically enslaved colored bodies on ghetto street corners, in African American house parties and at African American social dance clubs, serves a use and provides historical teachings. (p. 147)

The above quotation suggests that when hip-hop dance was transformed and introduced into a commercial dance form in the European and American consciousness, it is possible that it weakened the historical significance of hip-hop dance as an African American family tradition. This might mean that the commercialisation or educational trend of hip-hop may have weakened the original racial identity and authenticity within hip-hop culture.

Alternatively, Durden et al. (2014) suggest that even the term hip-hop has become something of a marketing tool which is open to interpretation. Within hip-hop culture, the globalisation and complex integration of racial participation has also correspondingly influenced and changed its foundational and fundamental roots (Durden et al., 2014), which means that the idea of battle (DeFrantz, 2004) and authenticity (McLeod, 1999) within hip-hop culture might exist in teaching and learning spaces. Therefore, by understanding the commercial activities of hip-hop culture spreading from the street corners to the studio, some businesses have commercialised hip-hop dance learning (Huntington, 2007). This study will explore how the idea of inclusion in commoditised hip-hop dance classes has been advertised, taught and engaged with, but has not necessarily enacted inclusivity within its teaching practices.

This section has provided a new perspective to examine the further tensions related to inclusion, progress and performance in a hip-hop dance teaching and learning environment. Based on this, it tries to show an inclusive way, especially in the egalitarian perspective of

hip-hop history. However, especially in terms of competition, inclusiveness may also be challenged. It can be seen that the hip-hop culture can be an inclusive but complex place where it might not be easy to transmit the idea of inclusion through teaching and learning.

3.4 Conclusion

This literature review has explored the complexities and importance of inclusion and commercial commodification within hip-hop dance practice. This study examines whether the ideas of inclusion advocated by educators and institutions in a commercial-oriented hip-hop dance institution are providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for dance students. Although the theoretical context of this research and interview data presented are from New Zealand, the tensions and the different strands of thinking identified are likely to have a resonance with those in other educational systems.

Through reviewing the literature, *doux commerce* theory provides my research with a theoretical framework to understand inclusion as a commodified experience in the hip-hop dance class and also provides a possibility for applying the theory to other non-formal education institutions. The literature has also explored the significance of inclusion within hip-hop culture, which might influence the learning experience of adult dance students. This allows me to further investigate: Has the *doux commerce* approach been effective, and has the commodification of inclusion really resulted in inclusive dance class practices? These questions will be discussed in the findings and discussion chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in the literature review, inclusion does not simply mean everybody is allowed to join (Jayasuriya, 2006; Kaufmann, 2006; Thomas & Loxley, 2001). Inclusion, and the barriers to inclusion, can be complex. Within this study, I am exploring these complexities, to identify how barriers to inclusion may be obvious or hidden within a dance class. I wish to understand how inclusion might involve celebrating diversity, or how inclusion might involve requiring conformity, through establishing hierarchies and processes of assimilation (Berry, 1997; Pickett et al., 2002; Thomas, 2013). I am exploring this complexity within a context in which inclusion has been promoted as a commercially valued aspect of a dance class, to try to understand how the idea of inclusion is experienced by students.

This chapter combines interviews of seven participants with scholarly literature to form a critical discussion surrounding the query: How do adult learners experience inclusion within a studio hip-hop class in New Zealand? A key component of this research is to explore the meanings and experiences of adult participants within a hip-hop classroom learning context. This chapter seeks to unpack the complexities of inclusion, the expectations of assimilation and to further explore what inclusion really means in the context of hip-hop dance education through the voices of the seven participants.

This chapter is presented in three sections. The first section explores how the idea of inclusion is demonstrated through the diverse classroom environment and the behaviours of the teachers in hip-hop dance classes. In the second section, I mainly discuss how the hierarchical relationship and assimilation between professional and non-professional dance learners affect participants' experience of inclusion. In addition, the section also analyses how assimilation provides a method of reinforcing exclusion through group dance activities in hip-hop dance classes. The third section of this chapter further

examines how course requirements, including movement vocabulary, physical coordination and physical fitness, may present hidden obstacles to inclusion, impacting adult learners' experience of 'feeling included' within a hip-hop dance class.

4.2 The appearance of inclusion

Inclusion values participation and diversity for all, which is an idea that respects differences and social values (Ballard, 2000; Thomas, 2013). This prompts me to question further: How does the idea of inclusion emerge in hip-hop dance classes and how is it experienced by the participants? This section examines this query in two parts by analysing the narratives of participants engaged in this study.

The first part, with four narratives, discusses how participants value and experience a sense of inclusion in a mixed teaching/learning hip-hop dance class. The second part, through five stories, describes how the dance teacher's behaviours might promote the experience of inclusion and belonging for participants in hip-hop dance classes. The above two aspects help me to further examine how inclusion is presented through teaching and learning processes.

4.2.1 Diversity is welcome

Hip-hop dance can be taught in an open access format that welcomes both children and adults to participate (Gorney, 2009). This open access format can sometimes mean that the learners of all ages and levels of dance experience might be involved in the open hip-hop dance class. I ask: How might the adult learners value and experience a sense of inclusion during their first time taking an open hip-hop dance class? One participant within this research, Bella, articulated that:

You can see Asian, European, Indian and the people from New Zealand, like Māori people. You can be fat, thin, tall or short, everyone can dance there. I think it's so nice, diverse, but at the same time united.

As Bella's statement suggests, she valued and felt a kind of diversity when she saw

participants in a hip-hop class from different ethnicities and with different physical conditions. At the same time, the diversity displayed in this hip-hop classroom made Bella feel united, which Anne described as “everyone can dance there”. Longley (2003) articulates that difference can be seen as a positive trait by valuing the input of every student equally. It can be seen that diversity is encouraged in the dance class and also presented in different ways.

In the context of this study, an open hip-hop dance class might be demonstrating its complexity and diversity in two ways. Firstly, the learners come from different cultural contexts. Students in this study experienced classrooms with a high proportion of New Zealanders, while some of the class participants were also from Asia, Africa and Europe. Secondly, the diversity of the learners’ dance experiences traverses both amateur and professional dance contexts.

Cultural difference and diversity is a means to expand the range of markets and products (Giroux, 1993) and to espouse equality and inclusion by showing the diversity of race, age, gender and social class to consumers (Burton, 2002; Davis, 2018). It can be seen that multicultural education in the marketplace is a commercial vehicle for proving inclusion in order to close the distance between consumers and enable them to better experience this educational service (Burton, 2002; Giroux, 1993; Rutland & Killen, 2015). What is shown within this open hip-hop dance class is that no matter what ethnic background and physical ability the participants have, as potential educational consumers, they will be welcome to learn and participate in this environment. This perspective has allowed me to query further: how might the diversity of the class or access to mixed teaching/learning processes affect the participants’ sense of inclusion?

The need for a sense of belonging may be satisfied through comfortable interaction with individuals and the exchange of feelings and emotions, which further promote a sense of inclusion (Urwiler & Frolick, 2008). The diversity within a hip-hop class is one aspect of promoting inclusion, while on the other hand participants may experience a sense of belonging through interacting with other students. Several of my participants made distinct

observation of 'crew members'. Within the context of these open adult dance classes, 'crew members' are semi-professional members of a hip-hop team that compete on behalf of the studio. They attend the open adult dance classes to lend support to the teacher, and to maintain their own fitness and technical abilities. During the class, the other participants who are belonging to the same dance crew also try to create an inclusive, supportive and encouraging atmosphere to present their encouragement and acceptance of other learners. As a participant who was also taking classes at the Hope Dance Studio, I still remember my first learning experience there:

I was crowded into the last row during the learning process, which made me feel a little bit upset. However, a young crew member noticed me. She turned to me and invited me with a big smile to stand in front of her immediately, which allowed me to see the teacher's movements more clearly. At that moment, I felt so touched. The first class at the Hope Dance Studio was not only a release to my body, but it also enabled me to experience a sense of welcoming in this unfamiliar environment.

Because there were so many people in the classroom, the attention towards me from this teenage girl presented her welcoming attitude, which greatly relieved my nervousness. The act of 'inviting' from this crew member showed a friendliness and welcome to me. It has turned my initial mood of being upset into a feeling of encouragement and warmth and that helped me to be better involved into the classroom. The classroom environment was encouraging and welcoming, and made me feel accepted and embraced (Kaufmann, 2006) by other participants. Therefore, as a first-time learner there, I felt a sense of inclusion by the welcoming and friendly atmosphere.

When learners are in an unfamiliar learning environment, they might feel anxious and nervous (Jahng, 2009). The surrounding atmosphere and interpersonal relationships between class participants might impact on a student's sense of distance and belonging (Meeuwisse, Severiens, & Born, 2010; Strayhorn, 2009). While the idea of inclusion displayed by interacting between different participants might promote a space where people have an opportunity to access quality learning experiences and gain a sense of belonging (Kaufmann, 2006; Zitomer, 2016). The feelings of self-worth of students are enhanced as their existence

are valued and esteemed (Musil, 1999). As I mentioned in my own story, the first hip-hop class was “not only a release to my body, but it also enabled me to experience a sense of belonging”.

Rena shared a similar experience with me about being encouraged by the dance crew members:

Especially when dancing in groups, the teenagers of the Hope Dance Studio in our group would push us to stand forward. I was very resistant in my heart and said, ‘no, no, I can’t remember the movements.’ I really wanted them to stand in front of me so that I could follow them. Although I was very nervous inside of my heart, the encouraging action they did to me still let me feel their enthusiasm and support for me.

According to Rena’s narrative, the members of the dance crew showed their encouragement to Rena through their actions like pushing participants to stand further forward and suggesting that no hierarchy existed that might push lower-status learners to the back. Although Rena viscerally refuses to dance in front due to her thinking that she “can’t remember the movements”, this encouraging action (pushing a learner to stand further forward) by other participants made it possible for learners like Rena with a limited dancing ability to experience a sense of support and care. Inclusion within educational context seeks to dissolve the entry standards and barriers for classroom in order to attract and help students fully involving themselves in the learning environment. As learners’ sense of belonging within the group is established, they may become more accepted as well as increasing trust and mutual respect of each other (Musil, 1999).

In this hip-hop class as an open and inclusive learning environment, members of the majority group (who come from the same professional dance crew) displayed their encouraging actions to the other non-professional learners within this class. Such behaviour as a manifestation of inclusion in education may help participants with limited dancing ability to adapt and better integrate into the learning process. As a form of inclusion, when the members of the dominant cultural group have low expectations for welcoming of incompetence, the learning experience and classroom integration for learners might be valued and emphasised. Therefore, during the

class, the members of the same dance crew showed their support and encouragement to other participants who are outside the crew context, which might help them to establish self-confidence to a certain extent, so they can better adapt to and integrate into the current learning environment.

4.2.2 Teacher is encouraging

In addition to the diversity of the classroom and the interaction between participants, teachers' behaviours may also promote a perception of inclusion for hip-hop dance learners. In the classroom, a sense of inclusion is cultivated through some behaviours of teachers (McCarthy-Brown, 2009). Their guidance in the course may not only affect students' performance, but also may have an impact on their experiencing inclusion and belonging during their learning process. To unpack the above perspective, one of my participants, Carr, recalled his experience:

I got 10 minutes late at the first class. But when I had entered the classroom, the teacher waved to me and said 'hi' warmly. He let others show me the first movement to help me keep up with their progress. I think the environment was nice and warm. You're feeling welcome when you walked in there. For me, it didn't feel like they looked at me with disdainfulness and thought about 'who are you'. I think that's really important as well as to make people feel that they want to keep dancing there.

As Carr's statement suggests, he felt warm and accepted when the teacher showed his welcome by a set of behaviours. This hip-hop dance teacher's acts like waving, greeting and helping Carr keep up with the pace of the class created a welcoming classroom environment for him to get a sense of warmth and inclusion rather than feeling excluded for his being 10 minutes late. Carr described that he felt "welcome" when he walked in the classroom. Nonverbal immediacy is largely a relational language perceived to convey affective feelings of warmth, closeness, and belonging (Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey, 1987). The welcoming and inclusive classroom environment created by teachers not only brings closer the relationship between learners and teachers, but also maintains a safe and accepted learning space for participants to experience a sense of belonging to the classroom.

The economic reality of a private dance studio is focusing on their educational service and pleasing potential customers (parents and students) in order to remain competitive in the marketplace (Risner et al., 2004). Within this context, teachers and students act as the ‘producers’ and ‘consumers’ of inclusive hip-hop dance classes (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005). Teachers strive to create an inclusive classroom environment so that potential learners continue to learn, while students, as consumers, also require quality educational services to experience a sense of inclusion and belonging in the classroom (Naidoo & Jamieson 2002; Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005). For a dance class in which the idea of inclusion is presented, as my participant Carr articulated, it is important “to make people feel that they want to keep dancing there”. Therefore, the sustainability of inclusion in private dance studios might depend on a service delivery model that is mindful of good and welcoming customer relations.

The use of encouragement and positive reinforcement is one of the most important factors in a well-functioning classroom (Vijayan, Chakravarthi, & Philips, 2016). Teachers’ positive feedback to students in the classroom might help them better adapt to the environment and improve themselves. We may query how teachers’ behaviours in the classroom construct a sense of belonging required by the commercialised inclusion. There is an unforgettable experience in my mind about the teacher’s feedback on me and other learners’ performance during the process of teaching:

At the beginning, I felt a sense of tension in the classroom, because everyone followed the teacher seriously to learn the movements. Suddenly, the teacher asked us whether we knew the people around us, and we answered ‘no’. He asked us to mix around and give high fives to each other. After we high-fived to each other, I vaguely felt that the classroom atmosphere had gradually become relaxed and active from some previous tension and seriousness. Then he continued saying that ‘This class is not just between you and the teacher, there other people and things around you. So, you have to feel other people’s energy and feel how that powerful energy influence your movements and your style.’ Then, I gradually realised that the learners around me became more and more active when dancing, which also affected me to try to relax my body and dance freely with the music. Sometimes I just had the eye contact with the teacher, he always smiled and nodded to me. I felt more relaxed and fully immersed in this inclusive atmosphere of this classroom.

During this class, I could deeply feel that the classroom atmosphere created by this teacher was relaxed, cheerful, enjoyable and mutually supportive. He not only explained the movements to all of us, but also paid more attention to creating the atmosphere of the whole class through his guidance. Instead of seeing his students as the individual, he broke down the barriers between them with the word “energy”. In this way, learners could better feel the transformation and integration of energy with their partners and with the environment, which made learners to internalise the power for their movements and dancing. The guidance and feedback of the teacher in the teaching process is like a ‘bridge’, which connects teachers, students and the classroom environment (Bonk et al., 1998; Sadler, 2010). Through language, teachers relieve learners’ tension and fear in their learning, eliminate the distance from the teaching environment and that enables each student to better integrate into the unfamiliar classroom environment.

The idea of inclusion in commercial education institutions implies a different model of association between teachers and students, which can promote cohesive communities and equal identities that are not based on social class (Jayasuriya, 2006). The classroom can be considered as a learning community (Klein, 2000; Splitter & Sharp, 1995) where teachers can establish cohesion through interacting with students, which may strengthen experience of inclusion in the commercialised classroom (Cross, 2009). In the hip-hop dance classroom, the guidance of teachers builds a close connection between individuals to provide an inclusive learning atmosphere. This might help learners perceive a sense of belonging within the classroom and that may further allow them to be fully immersed in the learning process.

In hip-hop dance classes, in addition to the teachers’ positive guidance, their timely feedback on students’ performance might also have a corresponding impact on their sense of belonging during the learning progress. Praise can satisfy the needs of students to ensure the quantity and quality of student’s work and performance (Vijayan et al., 2016). Teachers’ use of verbal encouragement and feedback can help students to receive satisfaction for their progress (Burden, 2016). This allows me to further question how important using encouragement and positive affirmation as a means of fostering inclusion is. When I talked to one of the

participants who is named Allen about what impressed him in the process of learning hip-hop dance, he said to me:

In that class, [the teacher] told me that ‘You’re dancing really brilliant and the expressions are really good.’ As you know English is not our language and it’s not your language as well. That’s why [the teacher] was saying that ‘what you are actually doing is really good and you understand the lyrics as well. And your coordination is really good.’ Her encouragement made me try to do the dance very well.

It can be seen from Allen’s experience that the encouragement and recognition from the teacher made him more confident and brave to show his dancing style in the class. Allen also mentioned in his narrative that English was not his first language, which could have resulted in him not being able to confidently express what he understood or lyrics through his movements during the process of learning hip-hop dance. But the teacher was aware of his condition during the class, so he used positive words like “brilliant” and “really good” to increase the learner’s confidence and his performance of learning. As a result, Allen felt that the positive feedback from his teacher about his performance made him more motivated to dance better.

During the learning process of the class, positive affirmation and encouragement as a means of commercialised inclusion may promote participants’ confidence and maintain their enthusiasm for learning. As Allen expressed the teachers’ encouragement made him “try to do the dance very well”. It can be considered that the above methods of teaching may further improve students’ classroom performance as well as their desire to make progress.

Meanwhile, the encouragement and affirmation displayed by teachers, as a strategy under the guidance of commercialised inclusion, may create a supportive and cheerful classroom in order to enhance the sense of inclusion for learners (Gamlem & Munthe, 2014). Thus, it might be significant to provide a supportive learning environment to promote participants’ adaption and integration into a hip-hop dance class.

The quality of the relationship developed between the teacher and the student has a direct impact on the student’s sense of belonging in the classroom and subsequent participation

(Osterman, 2010). This led me to further examine the following question: How do teacher-student relations need to be maintained beyond the educational service delivery in order to commercialise inclusion? Rachel shared an impressive story with me, which is about the interaction between her and the teacher:

After that class, this teacher saw me and said to me actively that ‘I’m very happy to meet you’ and then there was a short communication between us. She asked me about what I’m doing in New Zealand and I told her that I am studying here. And then she said warmly, ‘you should come here a lot for fun with us.’ I felt that in a way it made me feel very welcome, it would make me feel accepted. One of her memorable words was ‘it’s so cool to see you dancing my choreography,’ which I think made me suddenly feel that I had such a small milestone in the process of adapting to this culture.

As Rachel describes in her story, the teacher warmly invited her saying that “you should come here a lot for fun with us”, which made Rachel feel accepted and welcome. Strayhorn (2018) states that “socialization matters because it produces certain outcomes that move individuals from being perpetual ‘outsiders’ to valued ‘insiders’” (p. 98). This hip-hop dance teacher expressed her support and appreciation to Rachel actively, which means the teacher’s attention to Rachel continued from inside class to outside class. In Rachel’s perspective, the conversation between her and the teacher was a small but important “milestone” in her learning process of hip-hop dance. Because of the teacher’s encouragement, she felt that she could gradually adapt to and be involved in the class.

Dobransky and Frymier (2004) state that when teachers and students interact with each other as individuals, their communication would be at the psychological level and would be interpersonal in nature, which would be most likely to occur outside of the classroom when the teacher and student were able to communicate one-on-one with one another. The communication between teachers and students outside the class may allow students to feel that their relationship with teachers is more equal and intimate, so that they can further adapt to and integrate into the current learning environment (Dobransky & Frymier, 2004).

Within the context of a commercialised institution like Hope Dance Studio, the strategy of out-of-class communication might lead to a greater level of trust and acceptance within the

teacher-student relationship (Jaasma & Koper, 1999). Teacher's after-class interactions not only create a supportive, welcoming and safe atmosphere for learners, but might also help the participants who are outside of the professional context to be more adapted and involved in the hip-hop dance culture (Martin & Myers, 2006). It can be seen that in order to present inclusion of the class, educational institutions maintain a close and accepted interaction between students and teachers (producers and customers) through after-class communication, in addition to providing curriculum services. Therefore, as a business service means to maintain and attract learners (consumers), the socialisation and communication after classes may strengthen and reinforce participants' experience of inclusion that is advocated by educational institutions.

4.2.3 Summary

This section identifies how inclusion is recognised and valued in diverse ways through the stories shared by participants. The themes above reveal how within an open hip-hop dance class as a commercialised learning environment, interviewees felt the diversity displayed in the class and the friendly behaviours of other dancers during their learning process.

Interviewees also perceived that teachers strove to create an inclusive and warm environment in the open hip-hop class, to encourage the start of adult learners' journey into hip-hop.

Specifically, participants felt acceptance and adaption to the hip-hop culture when teachers and other dancers paid attention to them, providing feedback and interacting with them during the class.

After exploring the inclusion presented in different ways of hip-hop dance classes perceived by participants, it seems that not all stories presented by them were positive. Interviewees had mixed feelings regarding a sense of inclusion in these open hip-hop dance classes. This leads me to a question further how participants might perceive whether they could really fit into the classroom through other learning experiences within this hip-hop dance classroom. This theme will be examined in the following section.

4.3 Hierarchy and assimilation

As discussed in the previous section, inclusion has been perceived by my research interviewees through the diversity of participant groups and the kind behaviours of teachers in the classroom. Not all stories positively demonstrated the idea of inclusion in the classroom. Some participants also perceived a sense of hierarchy and exclusion during their learning process. Based on the stories of participants in my study, this section seeks to explore how a sense of hierarchy presented in different ways has been perceived by the participants, which in turn affects their experience of inclusion in hip-hop dance classes.

The interviews with my research participants identified the differences between crew members and more advanced hip-hop learners and participants themselves within this hip-hop dance classroom. In addition, participants also felt a sense of distance from the classroom through teachers' behaviours, such as choosing groups and interaction with students in the classroom. Therefore, this section is divided into six parts to explore deeply how interviewees perceive the divisions and differences between groups and through teachers' behaviours in a mixed-level hip-hop dance class. This section will also take an in-depth perspective of how the hierarchy and assimilation between different groups is further reinforced in the participants' interactions with teachers and other professional dancers, thus affecting their experience and understanding of inclusion.

4.3.1 The 'in' crowd

The idea of commercialised inclusion within a dance education context might be presented not only as a product that can be sold or a unifying idea but as a "lived negotiation" (Kostoula, 2008, p. 19) between different cultural groups. The following statement of Rena made me realise that although the members of the dance crew proved their supportive behaviours to the newcomers to some extent, participants could still feel the clear distinction between the crew members and others who are outside of the context. She said:

I think that each open class, the members from [that crew] would attend class with us. It's a very encouraging way, though, because someone might be around to encourage you. But sometimes it creates a kind of invisible pressure on myself, and I got very nervous when I'm assigned to dance with them in one group. Sometimes that kind of support can backfire.

Rena articulated that she felt pressure to take classes with professional dancers especially in the activity of group dancing, as she said that “this kind of support can backfire”. We may question further why this kind of support turned into an “invisible pressure” to learners? How does this invisible pressure form a hierarchy by expectations of learner's competence?

Based on the narrative of Rena, it can be seen that there is an unspoken sense of distinction and tension between professional dancers and beginners that may prevent them from fitting in the classroom completely. Within an organisation, the basis of respect and recognition is competence when defining status as given by others to the target individual (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). In the context of a dance classroom, when professional dancers have high expectations for the performance of non-professional learners while ignoring their dance ability, this might promote a gap between expectations and behaviours. Therefore, an unequal hierarchy might be generated in this kind of mixed-level dance classroom. Despite the enthusiasm, support and encouragement displayed by the members of the dance crew in the class to make the beginners feel warm, the learners' sense of inclusion might not be sustainable due to the differences between crew members and other learners. This makes me continue to query: In the learning process of participants, how does this hierarchy further challenge learners' experience of inclusion through obvious differences among groups?

The difference of the group itself might inadvertently let learners feel a sense of alienation in a classroom (Hascher & Hadjar, 2018). When I asked the participants how they felt first time they went to the Hope Dance Studio, Bella shared her feeling with me:

You can identify easily who are from the crew, because they already knew each other and met every day. It is very difficult to mix with the members of [that crew].

For the environment of the open hip-hop dance class, Bella clearly noticed the distinction

between the crew members and her. She also found it difficult to “mix” with the crew members. Through the narratives of the above participant, I further question: For people who are from outside of this cultural context, how might establishing racial sensitivity give rise to mutual respect in the dance classroom? Individuals of a minority group are capable of acknowledging their different status from other cultures (Jones et al., 2015). When majority group interact with the majority, it may be easy for them to distinguish the members of the majority group. As a learner from outside of a professional dance group, like Bella, it may be easy to identify “who are from the crew”. Therefore, when learners are in a mixed-level dance classroom, a sensitivity to group differences leads to a hierarchy, which may reinforce a sense of exclusion within the classroom.

As a community that has been getting along and developing for a long time, a hip-hop dance crew shares a common culture and a strong collective consciousness (Marfori, 2020; Walker, 2012). For other participants who are from outside, the individuals of a specific dance crew are easily identified through their own characteristics. Rena shared her feelings when we talked about what it was like to attend classes with the crew members:

Every time I went to attend the class, I felt that I was not going to class, but to a big party of [this dance crew]. As some crew members danced in the middle, other members shouted and screamed around them, which made me feel very excited and shocked, but I could only watch their interaction from a distance.

Rena described the hip-hop class as a “big party” of this particular dance crew, although she was infected by the interaction between the crew members during the course, it also reinforced her feelings of distance from this classroom. The performance of the crew members is valued and highlighted during the class, as Rena observed clearly that “when other crew members danced in the middle, other members shouted and screamed around them”. Pless and Maak (2004) suggest that “a culture of inclusion depends on the degree of mutual recognition” (p. 133). When the support and encouragement among individuals only within a community are shown to people outside the community as a distinct cultural feature, a hierarchy between ‘in’ people and ‘outsider’ may be established by the close interaction within the community (Pless & Maak, 2004). In the scenario of hip-hop dance class, the

interaction between dance crew members is easily identified in the process of the class, which led participants to only “watch from a distance” without truly getting involved in this environment. Therefore, a sense of hierarchy promoted by valuing individuals within a group may further contribute to a sense of exclusion for people who are from outside of the group.

In addition, the invisible and unequal relationships between outside learners and the members of the dance crew might also make learners reinforce the idea that they do not belong to other groups. When I asked the participants if they had tried to communicate with the members of the dance crew during attending the class, one of them, who is named Carr, responded sincerely:

I think they're cool people, but at the same time, after I finished the class I would say 'thank you' to them. But I didn't really talk to them, a kind of scared for me to be honest. Because I would say that they're kind of like celebrity of dancing, so I don't want to look like a stupid person like walking to them and say 'hi'. But I followed them on some social media, I didn't expect them to talk to me and things like that.

In Carr's narrative, he considered the crew member as “celebrity” of the dance world, which made him felt “scared” to communicate with them. As a means of “conspicuous brand consumption” (Condry, 2007, p. 640), hip-hop dance studios may promote their business by branding their professional dancers through social media (Flores, 2012). This phenomenon of branding and ‘stardom’ may extend into hip-hop dance classes, as Carr shared his experience that he followed the crew members on some social media but did not “expect them to talk” to him in the class.

Meanwhile, Carr made it clear that he does not want to “look like a stupid person” to communicate with other crew members. Hurtado and Carter (1997) suggest that a “sense of belonging contains both cognitive and affective elements in that the individual's cognitive evaluation of his or her role in relation to the group results in an effective response” (p. 328). In other words, the popularity and influence of a specific dance crew may lead participants who are from outside of this context feel a sense of distance towards this group. This sense of celebrity may reinforce the hierarchical relationship between professional dancers and other

learners, which leads learners like Carr to position themselves as a 'follower' and be excluded from hip-hop dance classroom. Therefore, we may see that a sense of hierarchy fostered by a sense of stardom within this hip-hop dance class impacts the experiencing of inclusion for participants.

4.3.2 The teacher's choices

As one of the main parts during the hip-hop dance class, the group dance activity provides the opportunity for all participants to show themselves and get along with others (Amans, 2008). After completing the teaching process of the whole choreography, the teacher divides the participants into different groups. Then, the teacher selects some participants individually to dance in front of others. Perhaps there is a tense moment in the hip-hop dance class when the students get chosen or not chosen to dance in the middle. It can be a moment in which students might experience a sense of exclusion or inclusion. This brings me back to one memory of my learning experience in the hip-hop dance class:

When all the groups were finished, the teacher said directly, 'I'm gonna choose some confident people to dance in the middle.' The first group he chose was all girls, which included Indians, New Zealanders and Māori people except Chinese. I thought he would choose all the Chinese to dance for the second time, but after he had asked all the boys to dance in front, he just announced the end of class. Every time he picked someone, I watched him and hoped he would pick me. Instead of making eye contact with me when he came to me, he just skipped over me and invited the others around me. At that time, I found that none of the Chinese girls, including me, were invited ever. I didn't think that I danced that bad, so I was a little bit depressed but angry for this experience. At the same time, a strong sense of exclusion filled my heart.

After this class, I reflected again that maybe this teacher did not mean it, but it actually hit my confidence a lot and even triggered some of my sensitive ideas. Although I still learned very hard in the following classes, it just made me less enthusiastic in this teacher's class. This learning experience of my own makes me further query how ethnicity might feature as a factor to prevent learners to experience inclusion.

Schenkel and Calabrese Barton (2020) articulate that communities may limit the opportunities of participation and action for individuals of different social groups through the use of social markers, including gender, race, language and so on. In the dance class, the teacher may show preference for certain groups in the process of selecting participants, while ignoring other groups that have not been selected. In other words, the behaviour of choosing groups might “carry explicit and implicit racialized and gendered notions of who does and does not belong” (Nasir & Vakil, 2017, p. 378) within a dance classroom. Even in a dance educational environment where pluralism is accepted, there are differences in the relative acceptance of specific cultural, racial, and religious groups (Berry, 1997; Berry & Kalin, 1995; Hagendoorn, 1993). From this perspective, it can be considered that the selection of groups by teachers may promote a sense of hierarchy between different ethnic groups becomes obvious in the classroom, further leading to marginalisation or even exclusion (Crozier & Davies, 2008). As I felt in the open hip-hop dance class, not being selected makes me feel that a “strong sense of exclusion filled my heart”. Therefore, through my own hip-hop dance learning experience, it can be suggested that ethnic features might make it difficult for learners to integrate into the classroom, and so affect their inclusive learning experience further.

A sense of hierarchy and exclusion may be generated by the fact that the learner is not selected. On the other hand, although some students are being chosen to dance in the middle, they may still perceive a sense of tension when selected by the teacher so that makes them unable to integrate into the class better. According to the narratives of the participants in my research, they all had the experience of being selected by the teacher for group performance during the course, and they also had different feelings and perspectives about this action of the teacher. When I asked my participants: how did you feel about being picked by teachers to dance in the middle during the class? Among them, one of my participants, Sara, seems to have had an apprehensive reaction to being chosen by her teacher to do a group dance. She reviewed her experience in that dance class:

I was so nervous that I didn't want to dance in the middle with the focus of everyone. Because sometimes, I couldn't remember the movements, and I also was not dancing so well. Once I was invited to dance in the front by [the teacher], I had no choice but to take the plunge. Because I couldn't remember

every step or movement, it was kind of embarrassing and shameful to dance under the gaze of everyone. Most of the time of group dancing, I am still silently watching others dance in the middle, I would not want the teacher asked me to go to the front of dancing. Although, I've been dancing there for that long time, and I still feel a bit shy and less confident when I'm dancing.

The teacher's behaviour of choosing students to dance in the middle might essentially create a sense of tension for the participants, especially for learners like Sara who might not be confident about their performance during the class. Because Sara perceives that when she could not remember the movements, "it was kind of embarrassing and shameful to dance under the gaze of everyone". It can be seen from Sara's experience that she felt a sense of pressure when the teacher selected her to dance in the middle, as she said that "I had no choice but to take the plunge". Mason (1999) emphasised that "any policy of assimilation which attempted to cultivate a shared sense of belonging together by promoting a culturally specific conception of the good would have to be oppressive" (p. 266). In the scenario of a dance class, group dance as a means aims to promote learners' sense of belonging within the classroom (Bräuninger, 2014). In the process of choosing learners, teachers may put pressure on some learners with insufficient dance competence, which excludes learners from an inclusive and welcoming classroom.

At the same time, the activities of selecting participants as a method may be demonstrating the assimilation ideology (Berry, 1997; Yoon et al., 2010) in the dance class, which expects that students forsake their cultural identity as non-dancers and feel obliged to adapt to the "prevailing norms and values" of hip-hop culture (Houtkamp, 2015, p. 78). From this perspective, during the process of adapting to the classroom culture, a feeling of stress for learners may be reinforced through the selections made by teachers. Under the pressure of assimilation, participants' confidence and self-esteem might be affected, thus undermining their interest and their sense of belonging into the class atmosphere. As Mary said, "[a]lthough I've been dancing there for that long time, ... I still feel a bit shy and less confident when I'm dancing".

In the process of selecting participants to dance in groups, the teacher shows their power beyond

the idea of inclusion might promote a hierarchy, which in turn reinforces participants' expectations of assimilation. The invisible pressure then formed in the process of teachers' selection makes it hard for participants to experience a sense of inclusion in the process of classroom assimilation. Therefore, assimilation within in a hip-hop dance class might be established by promoting a method of exclusion through the activity of choosing participant.

In addition to strengthening a sense of hierarchy in the hip-hop dance classroom by the teacher's selection of participants, teachers may further maintain a sense of division between participants and the learning environment through other behaviours and expressions. One of my interviewees, Mary, told me a depressing experience of her friend, which made Mary so shocked:

When I attended the class of this teacher with my friend, my friend tried to talk to [her]. My friend said that 'she is just a bitch'.

I was shocked at that time and kept asking: What happened and why did your friend say that?

She continued explaining:

Because my friend just wanted to know the name of the song which was used in [this teacher's] class. My friend thanked her very warmly and said, 'Thank you for today's teaching. I am really honoured to attend your class.' And [the teacher] responded without any expression, she said coldly 'oh, thank you.' That's why my friend gave up talking to her and asked others about the song's name. I think this was too bad that she showed indifference and ignored others.

Through the narration of Mary, it can be seen that when her friend showed her respect to the teacher and asked the question mildly, the teacher just responded with an emotionless "oh, thank you". The performance of the teacher ignores the respect and goodwill of learners, which forms a sense of distance between teachers and students. This causes learners to feel disrespected or even ignored in the process of communication. As an onlooker, Mary felt the indifference revealed by some teachers' behaviours through her friend's bad experience. We may question further how in an environment of presumed social hierarchies, individual expressions might appear to be a reinforcement of that hierarchy.

Not only the language, but also the teacher's facial expressions and negative attitude towards

the students strengthened feelings of exclusion for Mary and her friend. As Mary commented, “this was too bad that she showed indifference and ignored others”. During the process of the class, students may have the desire and needs to communicate with teachers. In some cases, the learner’s initiative and enthusiasm for communication and questions might be lost due to the teacher’s negligence or indifference. The indifference, disregard and arrogance showed by teachers through their expressions may reinforce a sense of hierarchy for learners within the classroom.

If arrogance may be considered as a form of expression that promotes a sense of exclusion for learners, then the indifferent attitude of teachers towards students may further strengthen a sense of hierarchy, which makes it difficult for learners to experience inclusion in the classroom (Tian & Lowe, 2009). In the process of talking with the participants, some of them articulated that they enjoyed the dynamic dance and the enthusiastic atmosphere during the class. However, they felt regretful that the teachers did not communicate with them. Sara told me that,

I also feel that the teachers there do not communicate with the students who are from the outside too much after class. Teachers were very active and full of energy during the classes, but then they were very quiet and even a little indifferent when classes were dismissed. They never take the initiative to communicate with us.

Mary, another participant, felt the same way as Sara. She shared her feelings with a comparison of her previous learning experience:

I was really nervous to do this, like talk to the teacher. I felt teachers there are a little bit indifferent. Because in Japan, teachers usually started to communicate and talk to students after class, which made me feel close to my teacher. But at the Hope Dance Studio, teachers would only communicate with you during the classes. Kind of business, you know.

In the narratives of Mary and Sara, when they noticed the obvious contrast between the teacher’s attitude towards the students during and out of class, they thought that the teacher was “indifferent” after class. Mary’s comment that communication ended at the same time as class because it was “kind of business” presents a vivid illustration of how the ideal of

inclusion had become part of a commercialised service. Furthermore, Mary compared her own experience of learning hip-hop dance in Japan. As she emphasised, “teachers usually started to communicate and talk to students after class”, which made Mary feel there was closeness between her and the teacher. For learners, they might have an inner desire to communicate and share feelings with the teacher outside of the teaching environment. When students are in an environment of presumed social hierarchy, personal expressions, such as the teachers’, may reinforce the hierarchical relationship between teachers and students, thereby making learners feel a sense of alienation within the classroom.

4.3.3 The ‘out’ crowd

A sense of social hierarchy between different groups in a hip-hop dance classroom might be reinforced in different ways, such as members of the dance crew are more identified and valued, the subtle contempt expressed by ‘in’ people, and even through teachers’ behaviours.

Carr gently expressed his views on the above phenomenon. He said:

I think it would be very nice if people talked to each other a little bit more. Especially the members of the crew could communicate with new people a little bit more, that would be the next level as well. We maybe feel like more closer and fitting in it easier.

From Carr’s perspective, if there is more communication between the crew and non-crew members, it might become easier for the participants to “fit in” the classroom and the hip-hop culture better. As both learners and consumers of hip-hop dance classes, participants expressed their desire to fit into the classroom to experience a better inclusive education service. The promotional advertising of this the Hope Dance Studio acknowledges: “our studio promotes a supportive, ... friendly environment”. However, this is not consistent with a learner’s potential desire to further integrate into the classroom as the Hope Dance Studio may not facilitate a deep and mutual interaction between different groups. As a result, there is still a distinct boundary between crew and non-crew members. Another participant, Sara, considered that,

maybe this open class just gives us a little taste of their dance style or atmosphere, but it doesn't mean that they specifically or truly wanted to let you blend in with their group.

As consumers of hip-hop dance education, learners enter the classroom and seek to experience an educational service for inclusion. But participants like Sara felt a sense of social hierarchy in the class, which led her to consider that the open dance class does not actually welcomes learners to “blend in”, although it provides learners with different pedagogical approaches and dance styles. Although the members of the dance crew and teachers showed accepting, inclusive and encouraging behaviours, in fact, they might not actually break the barriers between them and other learners. From the above stories shared by my participants, it can be considered further for the sense of hierarchy reflected in the classroom “to be more about the power to include and exclude groups and individuals” (Frankenberg, 1997, p. 13), which is opposite to learners' experience of inclusion. Therefore, this sense of hierarchy reinforces the distinctions between cultural groups and outsiders, and by keeping participants out of the classroom atmosphere.

4.3.4 Summary

According to the narratives from the above participants, it is revealed that a sense of hierarchy may be promoted through differences and interactions between more advanced dancers and adult beginners. This leads participants to identify themselves as a group which is outside of the main group in the class. During the class, my participants perceived how these professional dancers from the same dance crew are valued in the classroom. At the same time, from the tangible stories of the participants, the behaviours of teachers such as choosing groups of dances and interacting with learners after class might be considered as different ways to expand and maintain the division between different groups. Therefore, the distinction between advanced dancers and beginners as well as teachers' behaviours presented in the classroom, may reinforce a sense of hierarchy, which promotes an expectation of assimilation for participant to gain inclusion during the learning process. These behaviours also suggested the inclusive arts previously discussed were all “kind of business”, or the commercialisation

of inclusion.

To conclude the discussion above, the key arguments suggest that while aspects of hip-hop culture sought to break down cultural hierarchies and value individuality within different groups, the division between people who belong to a hip-hop community and who are outside of it has formed a new hierarchical relationship under a commercial model of education.

While these ideas emerged from the observation of my interviewees, I wondered what other factors might inhibit inclusion that my interviewees did not actively identify as exclusionary.

4.4 Hidden obstacles to inclusion

This thesis examines the difficulties encountered by participants that might prevent them from experiencing a sense of inclusion in dance classes. As the previous section argued, participants could perceive a sense of exclusion and hierarchy within hip-hop dance classes through a distinction between advanced and beginning learners, as well as behaviours of teachers. However, from the narratives of my interviewees, it can be considered that not all forms of exclusion are obvious and easily identified by participants, which prompts me to query: How is exclusion being established in insidious ways in hip-hop dance classes?

Through reviewing the hip-hop dance learning experiences of my interviewees, I recognise that dance classes may assume a level of dance competence as a condition of classroom entry (Kaeppeler, 2000; Zitomer & Reid, 2011). Sometimes, however, this level of expected competence does not align with the dance activities presented during the teaching process. Therefore, this section mainly focuses on the following three aspects: knowledge of particular dance movement, particular skills in coordination and particular types of physical fitness as hidden obstacles challenging participants' experience of inclusion in the process of learning hip-hop dance. To critically reflect on the admission expectations out of alignment with class activities through examining the narratives of participants, this section further explores how the expectations for learners' dance competence may sustain a hierarchy and promote assimilation in dance education, undermining a deeper sense of inclusion.

4.4.1 Movement vocabulary

During the process of adult learning, “what they are learning is examined within the context of their prior knowledge and experiences” (Graham, Donaldson, Kasworm, & Dirks, 2000, p. 22). The particular movement vocabulary is the prior knowledge which participants bring when they enter the dance classroom, which may have an impact on their learning experience. When I asked my participants about what difficulty they met during their first learning experience in the open hip-hop class, a few mentioned difficulties in learning movements. Bella shared the experience of her first hip-hop dance class at the Hope Dance Studio:

I want to say that I felt a little down actually, because in a sense that I thought it might be difficult but not so much difficult.... But no, the open classes were started from the movements of one dance piece directly. In the open class, if you don't know really how to dance hip-hop and don't have the basic steps, it is actually very difficult. The class is not really for the beginners.

And then, she explained why some basic movements of hip-hop is necessary for her learning:

As a beginner, I would say that maybe I should first learn the main hip-hop steps and then go to an open class. Because even though they put a piece for the beginners, I know there are so many steps and many new steps of hip-hop, but I've never danced hip-hop before. I had to learn and to remember the steps in a short time.

From Bella's narrative her first hip-hop dance experience was far from what she expected at the Hope Dance Studio. Bella emphasised that “I felt a little bit down” at her first hip-hop class, which made her feel that she has a certain distance from the learning environment. The participant in the story realised that even in the open class, it was very difficult for beginners to learn if they had not mastered some basic steps of hip-hop dance before. As Bella said, “as a beginner, I would say that maybe I should first learn the main hip-hop steps and then go to an open class”. Therefore, due to the lack of prior knowledge, learners feel the difficulty of learning a whole dance piece which may further affect their experience of inclusion in the hip-hop classroom.

When the minorities possess the prerequisite knowledge and skills for participating in a “mainstream and market-driven society” (Yoon et al., 2010, p. 110), they can be equally accepted and assimilated by this society. In the hip-hop dance classroom, the content of the class emphasises the specific hip-hop dance movement vocabulary as a standard for entering the classroom with prerequisite knowledge. It means that for beginners to be better involved in and be accepted by the hip-hop dance classroom and to keep up with the learning progress, they may need to master prior knowledge of particular movement vocabularies. Therefore, the lack of prerequisite knowledge for people who never danced hip-hop before, like Bella, might lead them to feel a sense of alienation and exclusion during their dance learning experience.

However, individuals want to alleviate the isolation that may result from being “highly individuated” (Pickett et al., 2002, p. 546), so they might seek inclusion through assimilation within society. Hedegaard-Soerensen and Grumloese (2020) argue that students who cannot fulfill implicit expectations of school performance may be ignored, which promotes a sense of exclusion. As my participant Bella said, “if you don’t know really how to dance hip-hop and don’t have the basic steps, it is actually very difficult”. Thus, in hip-hop dance classes, participants’ sense of alienation from the class due to their own differences may inspire a desire for assimilation.

4.4.2 Physical coordination

Although, the lack of movement vocabulary knowledge has a certain influence on the hip-hop dance learning experience of some learners, during the process of interviews, many of my participants also mentioned the challenges of hip-hop learning for their physical coordination. Among them, Sam stated in his narrative that,

I had great difficulty in learning the majority of moves the first few times I attended the class as I had to move my body in all sorts of different ways. I’ve never done dancing before, so all of this was a very new experience.

Bella, shared her own perspective of physical coordination in hip-hop dance:

In hip-hop, you have to move everything in a very fast beat. It's not only you move a part of your body, but also the hands, arms, legs, waist and hip.

It can be seen that hip-hop dance not only allow learners to move their body “in all sorts of different ways” from the first learning experience of Sam. In Bella’s understanding hip-hop dance also needs to move every part of learner’s body “in a very fast beat”. In other words, the learning of hip-hop dance requires physical coordination (Faber, 2017; Miura, Fujii, Okano, Kudo, & Nakazawa, 2016; Murrock & Madigan, 2008). As Sam emphasised in his narrative, he had “great difficulty in learning the majority of moves” during the first few times he attended the class. Due to the limitations of physical coordination for non-dancers, it may further affect their performance and classroom experience. We may further query how physical coordination might affect the learning experience for participants in a hip-hop dance class. Sara shared her feelings:

Some people who lack coordination may not have a very good experience at that class and it will be very difficult for them. Therefore, I feel that people who need a little dance foundation can basically keep up with the whole course. For example, when I first attended the class, I just couldn't keep up with the music. I felt very awkward and embarrassed, and felt that there was a big gap between me and others. Because, you know, I would feel like it would be a blow to my confidence to be dancing.

Sara suggested in her narrative that the difficulty of coordinating her body prevented her from “keeping up with the music”. Furthermore, in comparison with other learners, Sara considered a “big gap” between herself and others, which led her to feel “awkward and embarrassed”. In dance learning, compared with professional dancers, non-dancers have limited flexibility, muscle ability and physical coordination (Brown & Meulenbroek, 2016; Miura, Kudo, & Nakazawa, 2013; Washburn et al., 2014), which may further affect their feelings and experience during the learning process. Compared with other learners in the class, this obvious lag made participants like Sara feel embarrassed, which might affect her confidence during the learning process. As Sara said in her narrative, “I would feel like it would be a blow to my confidence to be dancing”. The experience of Sara reminds me of a time when I was learning hip-hop dance, which also had such moments of struggle and frustration:

When I was still struggling with those complicated movements, I found that other learners could dance thoroughly with their own style and feeling. Later, when we grouped to dance with the music, I just felt that I couldn't control my body, and I was so confused and embarrassed that I was overwhelmed. A strong sense of frustration and loss came over me, and I even doubted myself for learning hip-hop dance.

I remember after that, I was standing in the corner, trying to hide myself without being found by others. It is the first time that I felt very disappointed and humiliated for my dancing. The participants' stories provide a profound explanation of cognitive self-awareness, as well as the tension and anxiety that accompany their inability to better coordinate their limbs in their hip-hop dance learning. Gray (2009) states that assimilation means for people with disabilities that the specific disabling qualities they possess need to either be eliminated or 'compensated' for in a way that "completely eliminates not only the physical appearance of the disability, but also the perceived physical limitations that it produces" (p. 323). In the scenario of dance class, failure to coordinate movement may be considered as a difference for non-dancers, which reinforcing a sense of exclusion by comparing them to other professional dancers. It is difficult for non-dancers to be like professional dancers due to their physical conditions; they may not be able to coordinate their bodies and movements in a short period of time. This sense of ability might further strengthen their need to be assimilated in the mainstream group through learners' desire for classroom inclusion and identity. As Sara articulated, "people who lack coordination may not have a very good experience at that class and it will be very difficult for them".

Fitzpatrick and Watkinson (2003) state in their research that "the words 'embarrassment' and 'humiliation' are used frequently to describe how participants felt as a result of a physically awkward incident" (p. 287). Hip-hop dance, as a kind of dance with strong rhythm, flexibility and technique skills, to some extent requires learners to coordinate and cooperate all parts of their body in a certain rhythm during dancing. For beginners, the learning of a single movement might be mastered by repetition in a short time. But the memory of multiple movement sequences and the coordination of various parts of the body might need a long period of learning and practicing, which has a considerable challenge for their memory,

physical coordination and flexibility. For non-dancers who failed to keep up with the teaching progress in a short period of time, leading to feelings of being “embarrassed”, “awkward” and even excluded so this may further reinforce a sense of shame for them.

4.4.3 Physical fitness

For some learners, the learning of hip-hop dance not only requires them to learn the basic movements and their own coordination, but they also need a strong body level to ensure the strength and speed of hip-hop dance movements (Flores, 1995; Koutedakis, 2005). The level of physical fitness may be a potential obstacle to learning hip-hop dance, which may affect learners’ performance and learning experience during the class. I asked my participants: besides the challenges of movements and physical coordination, do you think there are other challenges or dilemmas for you when you attended the open class? Through reviewing the experience of my participants' learning, another difficulty that learners encountered emerged as their physical ability is insufficient to support their hip-hop dance learning. Bella answered without hesitation to the above question:

I want to say that you need to be fit to do hip-hop. You need to be physically a bit strong, because the movements are not soft.

When I asked about what happened specifically in that time, Bella said, “after the first class my body hurt. I suffered; muscles hurt.” To my surprise, the first hip-hop dance lesson for this participant was not “enjoyable” and “happy”, but “suffer” and “hurt”. Also, she was not impressed by the classroom atmosphere or learning content but had a strong feeling of her physical pain caused by dancing hip-hop. According to her own experience, this learner believes that hip-hop dance is not a dance with static gestures and slow rhythm, but a dance with great need for speed, power and physical flexibility (Koutedakis, 2005). Thus, Bella felt that her body should “be physically a bit strong” to learn hip-hop dance well.

Like knowledge and physical coordination, in the context of dance education limited physical fitness might be considered as a form of ‘disability’, so as to exclude learners who have a

limited fitness level (Van de Vliet et al., 2006). However, the potential requirement of hip-hop dance classes for learners' dancing ability makes learners question whether they can meet the expectation of health level of the course, which might be an obstacle for students to become involved in the learning environment better. In other words, in order to become better involved in the classroom, students feel obliged to enhance their ability to adapt to a learning environment which demands dance competence. Sam had the same feeling and experience and he shared this with me:

To begin with, I would often get home exhausted with body aches for days...
After the first lesson, when I saw how badly I did, I almost didn't want to go back there as I felt I didn't belong in that class.

For beginners who have never learned dance before, the lack of ability might bring them physical pain. Sam described how he "would often get home exhausted with body aches for days" after taking a hip-hop dance class. However, due to the low level of physical fitness, participants may feel less confident and motivation to keep learning dance. When participants during their learning process noticed themselves being far apart from the course pace and movement standards due to their limited and non-professional physical conditions, a strong sense of inferiority formed. This, in turn, might affect their attitude towards learning dance, which led to a feeling that they did "not belong to this class". Gray (2009) suggests that individuals are not expected to completely rid themselves of "stigmatizing qualities" (p. 325), but they are expected to make efforts to become more like the 'insider' groups of a particular society. Within a dance class, a sense of hierarchy prompted by fitness levels may continuously reinforce learners' needs and expectations for assimilation. Therefore, it can be seen that in the context of hip-hop dance classes, adult learners may feel obliged to ignore their physical abilities as a non-professional dancer in order to better fit into the current learning environment, even if the need for classroom assimilation may lead to physical harm.

4.4.4 Summary

It can be seen that knowledge of particular dance steps, particular skills in coordination and

particular types of physical fitness all present implicit standards that prevent participants from experiencing a sense of engagement and inclusion in a hip-hop classroom. The knowledge of movement vocabulary, physical coordination and fitness level within hip-hop dance class establish a hidden or insidious process of cultural assimilation between different cultural groups, that is, professional dancers may judge whether to accept the inclusion of non-dancers through the above three aspects. In this hip-hop educational space, the non-professional learners feeling obliged to lose whatever it was about them as a non-professional dancer so that they can better adapt and integrate into the current learning environment. This type of assimilation within the above context is problematic because it can result in unintended or discreet exclusion.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter along with interviews of seven participants has discussed how adult learners experience inclusion within a studio hip-hop class in New Zealand. The assimilation function as a form of inclusion is then discussed based on these perceptions. The key arguments, emerging from four sections of this chapter, are presented as follows:

The first section of this chapter found that the idea of inclusion is demonstrated through the diverse classroom environment and the behaviours of the teachers. The idea of valuing diversity and positive affirmation might promote the learning experience of commercialised inclusion for students within a dance class.

The key findings, emerging from the second section in this chapter, suggest that in the context of mixed-level dance classes, a sense of hierarchy is generated by the differences between advanced and beginning dancers and reinforced through personal expression, which may affect learners' experience of inclusion. This section further found that teachers' behaviour of choosing participants might also promote a method of exclusion for fostering an assimilation in the dance class.

The discussion within the third section emphasises that an insidious process of cultural

assimilation between different cultural groups is established by the knowledge of movement vocabulary, physical coordination and fitness level within hip-hop dance class. Meanwhile, this section also provides a key finding that the expectations of the dance competence for learners could sustain a hierarchy and promote assimilation in dance education, thus undermining a deeper sense of inclusion.

To sum up, this chapter presented different narratives to discuss how the inclusion in a hip-hop dance classroom actually promotes assimilation, which makes me query eventually what inclusion means. The next chapter will present a conclusion of this research.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This research examined how seven adult learners - Allen, Bella, Carr, Mary, Rachel, Sam and Sara - experienced inclusion during the process of learning dance, with a focus on studio hip-hop dance classes in New Zealand. By applying qualitative approaches and phenomenological inquiry, this study explored these learners' learning journeys through reviewing academic literature of inclusive ideology presented in different cultural and commercial context, to promote a comprehensive understanding of how the inclusion could be affected. Under the guidance of the methodological approaches, semi-structured interviews occurred with seven participants and auto-narrative of myself, allowing me to co-construct the key arguments with learners' experiences, and revealing complex understandings and meanings of inclusion in dance education.

The overall rationale for investigating adult hip-hop dance learners' experiences and perceptions of inclusion was to prompt reflections on the complexity of inclusion in commercial institutions. To offer several contributions and values for specific fields of research, key findings related to the discussion of this study are articulated first. Then, the relevant recommendations for students, teachers and educational institutions are presented. In order to further expand the potential influences of these research findings, I propose possible research directions for future studies.

5.2 Key findings

This thesis focused on adult dance learners' experience of inclusion to explore how their inclusive experiences were affected within a studio hip-hop dance class in New Zealand. The discussions in this study uncovered that the complexity of inclusion might influence adult learners' inclusive learning experience in dance classes. Through collecting and analysing

literature on inclusion, education, dance, commerce and hip-hop, I constructed a new theory that argues that concepts of inclusion have been commercialised within hip-hop dance education. I then sought to explore this idea through the experience of adult learners in open hip-hop dance classes.

My first sub-question asked how participants value and perceive inclusion in hip-hop dance classes. The key findings within this theme revealed that for participants of this research, inclusion means welcoming and embracing the diversity of the various participating groups. Within an open hip-hop dance class as a commercialised learning environment, interviewees noticed the diversity displayed in the class and the friendly behaviours of other dancers during their learning process. Interviewees also perceived that teachers tended to create an inclusive dance class, encouraging the start of adult learners' journeys into hip-hop dance. Specifically, participants felt acceptance and adaption to the classroom when teachers and other learners paid attention to them, providing feedback and interacting with them during the class.

Secondly, I asked how the participants express an awareness of social hierarchies and expectations to assimilate within hip-hop classes. This question continues to build on the previous question by exploring how inclusion may not occur in the classroom. The key findings suggested that in the context of mixed-level dance class, a sense of hierarchy is promoted through differences and interactions between different group of learners. Participants of this research perceived how more advanced dancers were valued in the classroom, which led these learners to identify themselves as a group that is outside of the main crew. Furthermore, from the narratives shared by these adult learners, the behaviours of teachers such as choosing groups and interacting with learners after class could be considered as different ways to expand the division between different groups as well as a method of exclusion, for fostering an assimilation. Therefore, the distinction between dancers and non-dancers as well as teachers' personal expression presented in the classroom reinforced a sense of hierarchy, promoting an expectation of assimilation for participants to gain inclusion during the learning process. Notably for this thesis, one of my interviewees acknowledged this as part of the "business" of inclusion.

My third sub-question asked how diverse aspects of the hip-hop class perpetuate hidden practices of exclusion and hierarchy. From the analysis of this theme, a key finding emerging to suggest that knowledge of particular dance steps, particular skills in coordination and particular types of physical fitness all present implicit standards that prevents participants from experiencing a sense of engagement and inclusion in a hip-hop classroom. The knowledge of movement vocabulary, physical coordination and fitness level within hip-hop dance class establish a hidden or insidious process of cultural assimilation between different cultural groups, affecting learners' experience of inclusion and acceptance. Adult hip-hop dance learners within this research might seek inclusion through being assimilated from the above three aspects in order to alleviate the isolation that may result from being "highly individuated" (Pickett et al., 2002, p. 546) within a dance classroom. While acknowledging that it is a common assumption that students might attend a dance class to be transformed, this thesis argues that such a position can challenge practices of inclusion. In this hip-hop educational space, the non-professional learners felt obliged to lose whatever it was about them as a non-dancer so that they can better adapt and integrate into the current learning environment. Therefore, this study perceives that the assimilation within the above context is problematic because it could result in unintended or discreet exclusion for students.

The key findings from the above three sub-questions could facilitate the response to the research question of this study: *How do adult learners experience inclusion within a studio hip-hop class in New Zealand?* The key arguments within this thesis suggest that while inclusive ideology within the context of hip-hop dance class sought to break down cultural differences and value individuality within different groups, students' dance competence and cultural identity as hidden obstacles have formed a new hierarchical relationship under a commercial model of education, further affecting their experience of inclusion. What is called 'inclusion' in a dance class might mean a kind of assimilation. This kind of assimilation functioned as a form of inclusion, reinforced the hierarchy between teachers and students, as well as students with different competence, which might exclude learners who do not meet the pre-requisite conditions from the classroom.

5.3 Recommendations

From the findings of this research, various recommendations can be suggested in this section. There are several considerations provided for students, teachers and educational institutions who are engaged with dance and inclusive education and also those who might be involved in such experiences in the future.

Firstly, this research has certain reference value for learners who have experienced or plan to participate in dance learning. Based on the above findings, learners might reflect on their expectations of an inclusive experience, and how it can be challenged by actions of service providers. This might help learners acknowledge the experience of exclusion and relieve learners from feeling that their sense of exclusion is somehow their own fault. From this awareness of how they experience exclusion learners can articulate to teachers and educational institutions as well as make their own choices whether to keep learning based on this understanding.

Secondly, many participants within this research shared that a distinction between them and other learners has prevented them from the experience of inclusion, which was further reinforced by teachers. Even though this study was not constructed on the perspectives of dance educators, it could help teachers engaged in studio dance teaching and inclusive education to further understand how learners experienced exclusion, which reflects on how educators' behaviours affect the inclusion experience of students. It could be beneficial for educators to enhance their awareness of some learners who are initially confused and sensitive to involve them in a new learning environment. Thus, it might be more helpful for educators to identify and understand the different feelings and experiences of students, rather than assuming that all students are already capable of adapting to the classroom.

For dance schools and other education institutions promoting their commercialised inclusion as part of service, there is a responsibility to provide learners with a complex inclusive learning environment that meets the diverse expectations and needs of students. This can

require an acknowledgement of the complexity of inclusion, and that inclusion requires more than simply declaring “all are welcome”. Inclusion can require a much more nuanced approach to learners’ needs, and the design of learning systems and teaching behaviours that embody inclusive ideals.

5.4 Further research directions

This study has explored how adult learners experienced inclusion during the process of learning dance within a commercialised hip-hop dance class context in New Zealand. While this research has only examined the experience of inclusion for seven adult learners in studio hip-hop dance in New Zealand, their stories nevertheless emphasised significant issues concerning the complexities of inclusion. This suggests that if inclusion is to be effectively commercialised, it is necessary to understand and develop the ideology of inclusive education in a broader socio-cultural context. From this perspective, this thesis is just a starting point for the relevant research on the complexity of inclusion presented within a commercialised hip-hop dance educational context. In doing so, it provides a theoretical platform for research that could be developed in future academic exploration.

To extend this research into the commercialisation and experience of inclusion in hip-hop dance, further exploration of the themes may be undertaken within other cultural contexts. It could also extend to classes in other dance forms, and to other art forms. This examination of the commercialisation of inclusion might also seek the viewpoints of different types of learners, teachers and studio businesses. To reveal further complex problems of inclusive, educational practices and commercialisation, it is my hope that this research motivates more voices and opinions that explore the meanings and values of inclusion within dance education as well as broader educational disciplines.

5.5 Epilogue

When I finished reviewing my thesis, I closed my computer with feeling of relief. The quote from one of my participants, “kind of business”, was echoing in my mind. It was a warm afternoon and I sat in the park, thinking that I might finally find my way back to a hip-hop dance class after weeks of being chained to my desk writing my thesis. I was looking forward to just moving again, and so started scrolling through the Facebook pages of a couple of local hip-hop schools. Under pictures of dynamic looking teachers, short blurbs talking about the class kept catching my eye:

“Don’t miss out! Everyone welcome!”

“Everyone and anyone welcome through the door!”

I felt excited to go along and just join in, but I also wondered: Why they are wanting me to feel included? What is their reason for their broad welcoming statements? Is it just to make money, or do they really want to include me and everyone else who comes? Do they really want to welcome anyone, any stranger, regardless of their difference in appearance and ability? How will they maintain that sense of welcome once we are through the door?

This thesis has been a journey that has helped me understand and reflect on these questions. I still feel that a hip-hop classis can be a great place to feel included, but I will always be wondering how that inclusion might be managed better.

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