



MALMÖ UNIVERSITY

**DANCE AS EXPRESSION IN PHYSICAL
EDUCATION? - AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES,
IDENTITIES AND UNUSUAL LEARNING
PROCESSES**

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My background

PE teacher in compulsory school in Sweden (1984-1999).

PETE teacher in pedagogy, dance, outdoor education (1999-).

Head of PETE programme at Malmö University (2002-2011).

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WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

PE is a multiactivity model, underpinned by discourses of health/fitness and sport as competition (Evans 2013; Kirk 2010; Larsson & Redelius 2008).

PE is an arena for masculinities (Flintoff 2006; Londos 2010).

DANCE IN PE?

Dance is a part of PE curriculum (Buck 2006).

Dance is rare in PE and aesthetic perspectives are absent (Gard 2006; Mattsson & Lundvall 2013).

PE teachers feel uncertain about the role of dance and how to teach it (Lundvall & Meckbach 2008).

DANCE IN SWEDISH PE CURRICULUM

	Dance as expression	Dance as bodily exercise	Dance as cultural preserver
Lgr 2011	weak	strong	strong
Lpo 1994	weak	strong	strong
Lgr 1980	weak	strong	strong
Lgr 1969	strong	strong	strong
Lgr 1962	strong	strong	strong

EXPRESSIVE DANCE

A photograph of a dance studio with large windows in the background. Several dancers are silhouetted against the bright light, performing expressive dance movements. One dancer is in a deep backbend, another is in a handstand, and others are in various dynamic poses. The floor is dark and reflective.

Expressive dance highlights the aesthetic dimension of movements and emphasizes embodied senses and feelings through bodily movements.

The aim

...is to discuss whether dance and aesthetic experiences can help broaden understandings of the body and the use of the body within PE as a part of an identity process.



DEWEY AND HIS ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS

Aesthetic experience is an intensified unique subjective experience and it is a situation when you feel especially present (Dewey 1934).

Habits can be explained as predispositions to action. More specific habits lead to more differentiated ways to act (Dewey 1938).

AESTHETIC LEARNING PROCESSES

Unusual learning processes are situations that challenge and disturb young people to avoid reproduction (Ziehe 1986).

THE DANCE PROJECT

4 PE teachers (1 female, 3 male).

3 PE classes (68 students) in compulsory school.

8 PE lessons with expressive dance from the concepts of Rudolph Laban (Laban 1948/1988).

METHODS

Pre and post semi structured interviews with PE teachers.

24 video observed PE lessons.

68 students' log books.

” We want to change the role of dance in PE and move away from traditional dance. It does not need to be so controlled”

(male teacher, interview before).

” You should feel the music and use the whole sports hall. We will turn off the lights so that you dare to move more”

(female teacher, video observation lesson 1).

”It surprised me that both boys and girls liked it. They were better than I thought. Boys and girls who normally do not like sports took place. I can assess everyone in this moment

(male teacher, interview after).

”We may not be good dancers but the teaching in dance was very good anyway”

(male teacher, interview after).

CHANGES IN STUDENTS' HABITS

Lesson 3 "The body". Two boys are working in pair exploring balance and weight.

1. Running and chasing each other to avoid body contact.
1. Body contact like a wrestling match.
2. Exploring bodies in relation to music.

WHAT, HOW AND WHY?

Content based on Laban's concepts of the bodily movements in space (Laban 1948/1988).

Student centered teaching instead of direct teaching with specified movements. The teacher is co-creator.

Subjective experiences and the sensual body are given space in PE.

STUDENTS' LOG BOOKS

For me, dance is magic because one can express oneself if one is sad or happy. It can be hard to tell how you feel and then you can tell it by dancing...It is better to dance when it is dark in the sports hall. It is nice and fun (Maya 8th grade).

Dance is something some people has as a hobby. It is something I am not interested in. It is something I do not like. It is difficult and not fun. I am not a dance person...I think it is better to dance in the dark, because no one will watch you (Elsa 8th grade).

STUDENTS' AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES

Positive aesthetic experience (48 students).

Fun, magic, love, important, dance is life.

Negative aesthetic experience (6 students).

Boring, not fun, not important, not a dance person.

From neutral to positive aesthetic experience (7 students).

From positive to negative aesthetic experience (3 students).

No identified aesthetic experience (4 students).

RESULTS

Expressive dance as non-competitive and without predetermined movements can challenge a masculine-coded subject.

Aesthetic experiences can help students to be more creative and reflective.

Expressive dance can challenge students' habits in bodily movements.



Expressive dance can add new dimensions to debates and purposes of a sustainable PE.

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Thank you for
your attention!

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