

Chapter 4

The Dancer as Reflective Practitioner

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Reflection	Reconstruct			★
	Reason		★	
	Relate	★		
	Report			
		Foundation	Intermediate	Capstone
		Program Phase		

Trial reflection strategy plotted on the TARL Model (see Chap. 2)

1 Introduction: Reflective Practice in Performance

The Arts are rooted in human experience and feeling. It is impossible to consider an artistic performance without acknowledgement of the human conditions under which it was brought into being and the human consequences it provokes in real-life experience (Dewey 1934). These human conditions and experiences are the catalysts for self-awareness and identity-building both in the perception of the artform and through the expression of creative performance. Reflection is an integral and cumulative form of learning in dance. Reflective learning generates knowledge that is, in the main, specific to oneself and is a form of evidence upon which to analyse and change one's practice (Ryan 2014). It is through deep reflection that we respond to and represent feelings and emotions, and concurrently, make aspects of our world and our experiences more perceivable (Langer 1953).

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Reflection is an intensely personal undertaking, yet a conscious awareness can prompt deep learning about our relationship with the world and the people around us. Reflection is thus both an individual and a social process (Moon 2004) as one responds to experiences and feelings always in relation to the context in which the response was prompted. Reflection has been variously defined from different perspectives (for example, critical theory or professional practice) and disciplines (Boud 1999), but at the broad level, the definition used here includes two key elements identified by Ryan (2012): (1) Making sense of experience in relation to self, others and contextual conditions; and importantly, (2) reimagining and/or planning future experience for personal and social benefit. This definition incorporates the belief that reflection can operate at a number of levels, and suggests that to achieve the second element (reimagining), one must reach the higher, more abstract levels of critical or transformative reflection. The four levels of reflection or 4Rs model (adapted from Bain et al. 2002 and outlined in Chap. 2 of this volume), including: (1) reporting and responding, (2) relating, (3) reasoning, and (4) reconstructing, is a useful framework to teach and apply reflection in dance practice. These levels increase in complexity and move from the identification of a position or movement that requires improvement, to an application of disciplinary knowledge intimately connected with experiential self-knowledge, and ultimately transformation of practice, allowing the development of new ideas and expressions (Dewey 1934).

Stock (2004) notes the impact of *reflection on practice* in dance by providing students “a learning environment in the studio where students can consciously, actively and effectively apply anatomical knowledge, reflective/motivational skills and theoretical understandings to their dancing” (pp. 5–6). Thus, the students are displaying active engagement through developing awareness of the forms, coordinations and movements of the body in space and time as well as reflective thinking by consciously seeking the potential for improvement in practice in situ.

These approaches align with Langer’s (1953) notion that some knowledge must be expressed in non-discursive forms leading to expressive form or mode being just as important as the content in learning situations (Ryan 2012). In dance, these modes can include aesthetics, dynamics, biomechanics, sensorimotor feedback, emotional connectivity, and spatial integration. Doughty and Stevens (2002) state that: “reflective thought and judgment are central to the artistic process and established features of arts pedagogy” (p. 1).

This chapter will explore the implementation of reflective practice in a dance class from two different perspectives. First, it provides an analysis of performative reflection from external observers (Barton and Ryan—authors in this collection), and then Jones provides an ‘insider’ reflective analysis of his approach to teaching reflective practice, including student reflections on this approach. Data are woven through these two perspectives to provide a rich picture of reflective practice in teaching and learning dance. Next, the student voice is explicated with comments on their experiences interpreted through the applications of dancer-as-reflective-practitioner pedagogy. We conclude with a reflection on this approach to teaching dance.

Table 4.1 Reflective practice in dance

The 4Rs	Modes of reflection in dance
Reporting and responding	Being able to describe and feel what they are doing physically (linguistic, embodied, visual, spatial). The more accurate, detailed and comprehensive, the greater the effectiveness of the reflection on the student learning
Relating	Relate the action/form to their own body—consider what is currently achievable and expected in this context (embodied, visual, spatial). Self-awareness and knowledge of the exigencies of the dance context enable this reflection
Reasoning	Reason through physicalised anatomical knowledge, metaphor and experience—experimenting with movements and techniques (embodied, visual, spatial). Freedom and courage to try something different enriches this reflection
Reconstructing	Reconstruct their practice as a result of a number of influences: feedback, feedforward, watching others, or ‘feeling’ it themselves (embodied, visual, spatial, linguistic)

2 Teaching Dance as Reflective Practice—External Observations

External observations were provided by Barton and Ryan (in press) as part of the larger reflection project explained in Chap. 1 of this volume. In dance, spontaneous and considered performative reflections are enacted while the students prepare for their final examination during a ballet class. The students continuously view themselves (triangulating data from the mirror, peer feedback and sensorimotor feedback) and also receive oral, tactile and visual/gestural feedback from the teacher. The aim is for the students to improve their physical and aesthetic performance by examining and exploring the capacity of their own bodies, their impact on prospective audiences in the space (in this specific case, the examination panel adjudicating the examination presentations), and by working collaboratively as a team. In this way, they are prioritising embodied, visual, audio and spatial modes of reflection.

Table 4.1 outlines how the teaching of dance developed the 4 levels of reflection: reporting and responding; relating; reasoning; and reconstructing, via multiple modes. The evidence from this study strongly suggests that reflective critical thinking plays a large part in the learning and teaching journey in dance.

Barton and Ryan (2013) identified certain multimodal ‘triggers’ that are employed by dance teachers that enable more rigorous and critical reflective practice. For example, the simultaneous spatial, visual, audio and corporeal modalities ‘triggered’ a self-conscious reconstruction of technical and aesthetic disciplinary practice. These triggers are essential components of reflective practice in this discipline as they enable the sub-conscious to become conscious, the invisible (unfelt) to become visible (aware) and the automated to be exposed for analysis—thus opening the dance student up to informed disciplinary critique and the potential for improvement with clear self-awareness.

3 Analysis and Discussion

The still shots in Fig. 4.1 are taken from a dance class and show the teacher providing feedback to a student after observing her during a warm-up exercise. The teacher is demonstrating disciplinary aspects of posture and movement through verbal, tactile and gestural modes.

This reflective example is enacted in the moment. It involves visual and gestural demonstration as well as oral instruction by the teacher. As the student watches herself in the mirror it involves visual and corporeal reflection in action. She is asked to ‘feel’ the stretch and the position of the body. This enables her to modify movements and positions in order to improve her overall dance practice. Once the student actually enacts these requests the teacher responds via oral, visual and gestural instruction and tips. It is inherently *relational* as one knows one’s own body and feels its present limitations. The student *reasons* with kinaesthetic intelligence and applied knowledge about how to coordinate, move and position the body to *reconstruct* the sequence of movements in order to achieve the most technically effective and aesthetically appealing outcome.

As a ‘reflective practitioner’ the dance teacher reinforces the idea that students use self-conscious reflection in practice—using visual and sensual body prompts so it becomes embodied during performance.

You need to develop the spatial awareness of exactly where you are. Not by looking around during the exercise. You are still looking around at what you’re doing—you can do that when you’re practising at home. “Where’s my leg? here, right, this is what it feels like”. But when you’re doing the exercise for the exams and you look around at your body for what’s going on, it will be seen as an error; it changes where your weight is and the whole look. By all means check it out for yourself; but when you’re practicing the exercises in class, carry your head according to the wholeness of the movement—don’t be checking yourself out during the ‘performance’. (Reflective instance 2: Teacher feedback)

The teacher here is asking the students to be consciously ‘reflecting’ on their dance technique and awareness of their bodies through the use of discipline jargon such as ‘energy lines’, ‘projection’ and ‘muscle tension’. This involves *reporting* on what they are doing; *relating* their movement to previous attempts or that of others; *reasoning* about how they are doing something and how they might modify that doing; and *reconstructing* their practice in order to potentially improve professional practice by reflecting in and on action.

Student A reflects on the practice that takes place in the studio with the teacher:

To think about being aware of yourself in space ... where your extremities actually are rather than where you think they are. How your body feels when it is working.... He often speaks about energy lines and pathways of energy. This way of teaching makes us think about the overall finished product of a movement. It gives it a fuller and more nicely executed appearance as it makes us extend our lines and think about where the movement is going. For instance transferring balance from two feet to one foot—a whole new set of muscles must activate and he uses the term energy line to symbolise which body systems are working.... Reflection is very important otherwise there is no progression as you do not reflect upon what you have learned previously. Dancing is all about learning the muscle memory of a movement and sometimes it can take a very long time. (Reflective instance 3: Student A)



1. Imagine their head being held by an invisible string from the crown



2. Have the student project their 'energy line' forward and up. (This is making corporeal reflection a continuous process.)



3. Hold their neck in line with shoulders



4. Hold their body up and in line with head and shoulders – the overall position

Fig. 4.1 Reflective instance 1: Annotated still shots from videoed ballet class. **a** Imagine their head being held by an invisible string from the crown. **b** Have the student project their energy line forward and up (this is making corporeal reflection a continuous process). **c** Hold their neck in line with shoulders. **d** Hold their body up and in line with the head and shoulders (the overall position)

Dance as a performative art form requires reflective thinking constantly. It is a critical part of the dancer’s practice as it “involves the learner in questioning themselves and their situation, making judgments about their performance and prompting action” (Doughty and Stevens 2002, p. 2)). The teacher and students in these examples are self-consciously reflecting on performance and feedback in a continuous cycle as they demonstrate and enact ‘dancer as reflective practitioner’.

4 Teaching Dance as Reflective Practice—A Teacher's Ruminations (Evan Jones)

I use the 4Rs (*reporting/responding, relating, reasoning, reconstructing*) to reflect on the pedagogy of dance as reflective practice. My moment of crystallisation with respect to the dancer as reflective practitioner precipitated soon after I transitioned from working as a ballet master in a ballet company to working as a dance lecturer in a university. The professional company dancers were more or less self-sufficient with respect to interpretations and applications of the content and corrections I might give them in class and rehearsals. However, the university students did not have this professional self-sufficiency. They wanted me to tell them how to apply suggestions, how to find and activate the appropriate muscle sets, how to coordinate this with that, how to dance with the best dynamics, how to interpret the music,, how to communicate emotion, how to find the aesthetic expression of the genre—in short, the dance students wanted me to show them and tell them how to dance (*reporting/responding*). This is reasonable considering their stage of development and context; however I found it exhausting and extremely challenging with the large class sizes. The most I felt I could provide was a structure which could scaffold student learning, help them evaluate their decisions and inspire their intrinsic motivation to explore and search for the answers to their questions (*relating*).

My epiphany came as I was reading about Inhelder and Karmilhof-Smith's wooden block balancing experiment described in Schön (1983). Reflective practice was indeed what dance professionals did as an implicit, self-evident, 'natural' process of improving our practice. We construct our own, personal theories of allegro, pirouettes, pas de deux and performative qualities. This is based on feedback from a variety of sources and our own experiences, reflected upon, reasoned about and reconstructed in the next class, rehearsal and performance. Our knowing is in our doing, and mulling over what we had done gave us specifics to further investigate, to question, to experiment with, in order to improve the performance. The performance of a dance artist comes from an internal source rooted deep within the body/mind/spirit of the performer. The performing artist does not reproduce like a photocopier; each performance is a unique re-creation, manifesting the reconstructed outcomes of reflection and rehearsal as related to the performance and the performer (*reasoning*).

Consequently, since the purpose of the practice, the artistic expression, is associated with an internal source, the teaching of the student wishing to become a performing artist must also permit, even oblige, the learning to come from within. The student should not be told or shown how to dance; the student should be given the relevant information and methodologies to *discover* how to dance. Structured reflective practice seemed to me to be an approach with which I could help the students conduct the research required for them to find their answers to their questions (*reasoning/reconstructing*). Johns expresses the same concept in a different context:

By telling stories and using structured reflection, tacit patterns of action and intuitive performance are examined, leading to greater understanding of the way the self responds within situations. New insights and ideas are constantly applied to future situations and subsequently reflected on, leading to a spiral of reflexive knowing. Within this process the practitioner draws on relevant extant theory to inform practice which then becomes assimilated into personal knowing. (Johns 2000, p. 41).

This enlightenment has subsequently changed the essence of my interactions with students. Instead of satisfying their ravenous, questioning appetites with answers from my repertoire of knowledge and experience, I became their guide on the side (King 1993). My own studies of the work and practice of Moshe Feldenkrais provided me with the awareness that “it’s only when you know what you are doing that you can really do what you want” (Feldenkrais 1984, p. 68)). The student needs to know ‘where they’re at’ in order to be able to further develop their practice. Class content, pedagogy and the current goals of the student should all be pitched within zones of proximal conceptual knowledge and physical capabilities so that the student can relate their present state to the subsequent level of development and understanding (*reasoning*).

As the guide on the side (King 1993), I provide information through words, gestures and physical contact which the student can combine with their own embodied literacy to experiment, through responding, relating, reasoning, and reconstructing, with their dance practice. The information I provide is designed to be universally appropriate within the context and genre being studied. For example, working on fifth position of the arms, I might say, “Look for a sense of relaxation within the shoulder area, with level shoulders. Feel the form around your head as though you are embracing a large, fully inflated balloon.” If I see a student with the right shoulder higher than the left, I will suggest they check their position in the mirror, paying particular attention to the level of the shoulders and finding the position they choose to be preferable. If I see excessive tension in a student’s shoulders, I might gently brush my fingers over the area and suggest that they seek to release this tension, finding other ways to sustain the position with less effort and stress. If I see a position with droopy or forward pointing elbows, I will suggest that they ensure their “balloon” is fully inflated, expanding against the insides of their arms, as I make this gesture. The reconstruction of the fifth position of arms most often has moved to a more sophisticated, genre-appropriate level. The key aspect, though, is that the students have discovered this development for themselves, individually, with reference to the mechanics of their own bodies and their own aesthetic understanding. They have been empowered by the freedom to investigate their own work their own way with always-appropriate applications. A sense of success and ownership engenders a perception that they have the intrinsic capacity to improve their own practice, to seek their own solutions, to move from where they are at further towards where they want to be. As a result of growing awareness and ability, these goal-posts defining “what you want” are themselves then moving in the direction of professional attributes at a rate commensurate with expanding understanding and embodied achievement (*reconstructing*). One dance student said:

This reflective practice allows me to think about what my body is actually doing and feeling exactly where the execution of the movement comes from rather than just doing a class without thinking—this allows me to perform better in class. (Student B)

If the students are to be encouraged to use reflective practice in their own personal ways, the information, corrections or suggestions made by the teacher need to have a relevance and applicability that is universal, at least within the context of the dance being studied. This is because the information byte or ‘trigger’ in the mind of the student very often becomes an integral part of what the student does. In the earlier example of the fifth position of the arms, a suggestion to ‘lower your right shoulder’ would no longer have relevance once a way had been discovered to equalise the shoulder levels. It could become an internalised paradox to then associate the ‘correct’ position with the trigger ‘lower my right shoulder’. However, the experimental results the student found within her or his body to achieve this levelness can still be associated with the suggestion to “look for a sense of relaxation ... with level shoulders”. The inscribed muscle memory resulting from successful discovery should not be associated with the instruction to lower a shoulder. Another possible correction in this instance could be “don’t pull your left shoulder down”. This would be less appropriate in encouraging reflective practice for the same reason as just discussed. Furthermore, another important consideration for nurturing reflective practice is that negative directions should be avoided, if possible. An active, positive direction or suggestion will have a more developmental influence on the student’s relating, reasoning, reconstructing and motivation than an instruction couched as a negation.

There are many areas of somatic, technical, historical, biomechanical, physical, metaphysical, psychological, biological, aesthetic, ethnographic, and poetic fields which can be explored by the dance teacher in devising suggestions for universal application in classroom pedagogy. When modelling the students’ reflective practice, each teacher can find metaphors, images, descriptors, sounds, associations and gestures which resonate and work for them in their contexts with their students at any given time. This form of Action Research can function to keep the teacher both current in the field and attuned to the students’ changing requirements. Not every teacher suggestion will work every time for every student. The teacher, too, should have the freedom to experiment, to try things out, to modify and to recalibrate in order to find approaches that assist the students in their own discovery processes of responding, relating, reasoning and reconstructing. The metaphor of the fish for dinner and learning how to fish is relevant here. When teachers overtly model reflective practice in their own pedagogy, they are setting the scene for the students to involve the activities of research, exploration and discovery with respect to *their* learning to dance (*reasoning*). Being given the fish may satisfy hunger briefly, but catching your own fish is generally a far greater satisfaction. As one dance student wrote to another dance student following their peer observations:

To me, you were always a beautiful dancer but after watching you grow this year and with the help of action research, you have improved immensely, especially with your perfection of ‘freedom of breath’ in your movement. (Jones 2000, p. 4)

My post-enlightenment studio practice of engaging with the students as reflective practitioners does not mean that I have eliminated student questioning. As the guide on the side, I am there to be consulted about something a student is ready to experiment with, in a way the student has devised and at the time the student is ready. With this approach, my responses as a teacher can be much more accurately tuned into what the learner's needs are rather than what I might find in my knowledge bank to fill a perceived gap. I am not addressing a deficit in their knowing, but rather contributing to their own knowledge construction, with their permission and following their blue print (*reconstructing*). Another student observation following applications of my reflection-centred pedagogy was:

I think the practice of thinking of goals made the approach to practice completely different. It provided a clear path to work towards by giving greater focus and attention to the details and working in an achievable framework. (Jones 2009, p. 4)

Two aspects of recent scientific research findings indicate that reflective practice could be an effective approach to enhance kinaesthetic learning and conceptual understanding. Investigations into neuroplasticity and mirror neurons show how thought processes, operating independently from physical processes, can have developmental influences on both our capacities to think and move. For example, Di Pellegrino et al. (1992) discovered evidence for an action observation/action execution matching system in monkeys in the 1990s. From this work, the recognition of a new class of neurons with both visual and motor properties emerged. These were termed mirror neurons. Iacoboni et al. (2005), along with Gazzola (2009) have subsequently demonstrated evidence that a mirror neuron system is also present in humans. There is considerable ongoing debate about the functionality and genesis of our mirror neuron system (Heyes 2010). However, there is general agreement that the mirror neuron system plays a role in action understanding.

The conscious awareness of our physicality, our reporting, sets the stage for the establishment of a modulated mirror neuron network by the dancer's observing, relating and reasoning, through explorative reflective cogitation. This process provides us with the data to devise a different approach to some specific aspect of the dance we are seeking to improve. When it comes time for action, this freshly minted mirror neuron network then subtly influences the nerve systems that control the musculature and the reconstructed aspect of the dance is assisted 'from within' to become closer to what we wanted, or at least thought we wanted. The iterative spiral cycles of Action Research follow one after the other as the dance is refined and the dancer's skills are developed. Mirror neuron systems provide a scientific mechanism for the expansively observed and described benefits of 'mental rehearsal' or action simulation (Cross et al. 2006). A student's description of action simulation application was:

I know I will be working on thinking about the things I need to fix before I do the exercise and I think it is a really good habit to get into. (Jones 2009, p. 4)

Discoveries surrounding neuroplasticity (see Dayan and Cohen 2011; Francis and Song 2011) indicate that neural pathways in the developed brain are capable of growth and re-routing, so habitual behaviours or diminished functionality can be

changed through conscious, mindful, explorative applications of reflection, action simulation and practice. These developments are exciting, as they open up an array of possibilities for socio-scientific research into hither-to esoteric or murky notions of what it means to change as a human and to function as a reflective performer. “With our increased understanding of neural reorganisation, we could drive function-enabling plasticity and prevent function-disabling plasticity. Thus, this knowledge can be directed toward functional improvement” (Francis and Song 2011, p. 8). These developments have implications for pedagogies that teach students how to use reflective evidence and take action to change habitual movement for improved performance.

5 Learning Dance with Reflective Practice—Student Observations

Let us now allow the dance students to express their experiences working consciously as reflective practitioners: responding, relating, reasoning and reconstructing in their dance classes. Below are some responses, observing both positive results with the 4Rs, as theorised and noted above, as well as concomitant challenges mostly related to focus, scope and scale. Our analysis of their demonstration of the 4Rs is explicated in the text boxes woven through their reflections:

I personally reflected on my performance quality within exercises at the barre and in the centre. After completing the exercise on the first side I was able to assess what the overall look and feel was which enabled me to use performance qualities such as extending and a larger use of head and arms. I believe this improved my overall comprehension for the exercise as it gave the movement more meaning, dynamic and flow. It turned an ordinary exercise into a performance that was worth watching and doing. Overall, the idea of reflecting on movement is very helpful as I believe it improved my performance quality within a technique class. (3rd year student)

- Reporting/responding—indicates importance of reflecting on overall look and feel.
- Reasoning—using terminology and discipline specific goals
- Reconstructing—applying the technique for improvement in a different class

While on barre I found the reflection between sides of exercises very useful in focusing my self-correction. I felt more aware of my body during the exercises (as opposed to focusing just on the movement sequences) and the opportunity for self-correction helped me as an active learner. I found that I focused more on the feeling behind movements when the corrections were

generated internally. During centre work, I felt like I was less focused on the finer detail of my movement, and more focused on correcting major mishaps such as stumbles or working towards more pirouettes. I feel like perhaps in future I should pull back and refocus those basics in order to further facilitate the larger movements. (2nd year student)

- Reporting/responding—importance of self-awareness for self-correction
- Relating—comparing body awareness as a focus with (presumably) other instances where movements might have been the focus
- Reasoning—nice delineation between externally and internally generated feedback. Self-management of learning is important and reflection can help this.
- Reconstructing—identifies changes for next time and how a different approach will still facilitate the larger movements

After concentrating on reflective practice particularly in the past 2 weeks, I have felt a sense of calm whilst dancing. This has been reflected in movements where I would usually struggle and feel uneasy whilst approaching the movement. After reflecting on what may or may not be 'working' my body has been able to calm and perform the movement with a sense of fluidity and has ultimately 'worked' better. I felt stressed and up-tight during my last exam, which may have been reflected in my movements, limiting myself in some areas. This is because of the state of mind I would have after completing the exercise where I would be 'beating myself up'. I feel, after the past two weeks concentrating significantly on the reflection of the practice, I will now apply this in exams especially, to help bring a sense of calming to my movements and fluidity. (2nd year student)

- Responding/relating—identifies issues with previous approach to exams and compares it to response within a reflective approach
- Reporting—focuses on feeling the execution
- Reasoning about the effects on state of mind during performance
- Reconstructing—has identified that state of mind is the key issue and that reflection can be used in future to improve this but doesn't indicate specific strategies to try or ways forward

At first I found that when I picked things to focus on I chose too many and it crowded my brain and made it harder to focus. Now I find that when I pick one or two aspects for each exercise I do much better overall. (1st year student)

- Importance of reporting—focuses on one or two critical aspects

I was focussing on core stability throughout ballet yesterday and I found each time I focused on my core, it released tension from my upper body. I found that as the class went on I had to spend less time focussing on this as it became more natural (1st year student).

- Reporting/responding/relating—identifies critical issue, why it is important, its effect on the body
- Starting to reconstruct but doesn't quite reason it out

In ballet class, I concentrated on trying to flatten my shoulder blades when moving the arms through port de bras. On the barre, I found that helped with stability and not dropping my wrists in a la seconde. In the centre, I continued to concentrate on this and found that sometimes I pulled my focus away from the exercise, particularly in pirouettes. This may be because I was thinking of opening my back and not concentrating on the dynamics and technique involved in performing a pirouette.

In contemporary class, I was concentrating on using my body weight to direct my movement. I found that this really assisted with the direction of the body. It allowed everything to connect together, giving quality to the movement as opposed to just doing the set exercise. In many respects it felt easier because the movement was natural and fluid and I found I wasn't fighting myself. (1st year student)

- Reporting/responding—identifies critical aspect and why it is important
- Relating and reasoning—identifying intention and reasoning why
- Reasoning about how the focus on body weight helps to connect everything.
- Reconstructing—tried this technique in the second class and saw improvement. Self-awareness and self-conscious performance during learning seems to be very important in performative reflection.

Over the past few lessons when I have been focusing on being aware of what my body is doing, I have definitely noticed a difference in the amount of 'strained effort' that each movement requires. I find that if I visualise myself doing the movements first, and then perform them that way they come with a greater sense of ease than when I just try to fight my body into the practice. I have also noted that I am more aware of my fellow colleagues, and how watching them dance and seeing the movement on their bodies helps me to not only see what the movement looks like from an outside perspective, but become conscious of things that I need to be aware of when I'm dancing. We did this throughout the semester when we went in groups for the adage study and I have always felt it is an extremely beneficial exercise as you learn as much about yourself as you do about the other dancer (2nd year student)

- Reporting/responding—identifies critical aspect and why it is important. Some reasoning about attaining the 'ease' of movement
- Relating self to others
- Reasoning about the outside view of the performance.
- Not quite reconstructing—what has the student become aware of and how will this be addressed?

Consistent with the developmental aspects of the TARL model outlined in Chap. 2, second and third year students have generally learned more successful reflective practice applications than the novice first year students. Early in their program, most students show evidence of reporting/responding, relating and early reasoning. However later in their program, most students have more evidence and knowledge upon which to draw for more sophisticated reasoning and subsequent reconstruction of their practice.

6 Conclusion

Reflective practice is an integral part of performance and learning to perform. Transformation must ultimately come from within the dancer. However, it has been shown that the teacher can provide ‘triggers’ to enable particular kinds of reflective practice leading towards improved performance. External observations can identify such triggers and the ways in which they prompt particular kinds of multimodal reflection.. The reflections of the teacher/insider have the potential to provide an even more nuanced understanding of the importance of the positive triggers that the teacher provides to prompt physical inscription of effective muscle memory, as well as the development of cognitive and kinaesthetic conceptual understandings. Dance students in these cohorts have demonstrated their corporeal, visual and verbal reflections as they self-consciously improve their practice using input from their teacher, peers and their own sensorimotor observations and physical experiences.

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