



Engaging Dance Audiences: Summary Assessment of Grantees' Engagement Practices

Commissioned by Dance/USA

October 2011

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INTRODUCTION

With support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the James Irvine Foundation, Dance/USA launched Engaging Dance Audiences (EDA) in 2008,¹ a \$2.1 million pilot grant program to assist the dance field in testing, assessing, and learning about new and refined strategies for engaging dance audiences.

This report communicates results of research and assessment work undertaken by the EDA grantees in connection with their project support², and is intended to help share lessons learned from the grantees' experiences with the dance field. The other two components of the EDA initiative were:

- **A Learning Community.** At its core, EDA is a learning initiative for Dance/USA members and the dance field. The core of the learning community was built by joining the grantees through meetings, conference calls, and the use of social media to share challenges, successes, and questions throughout the course of their projects. The full Dance/USA membership was invited to share in the learning through the use of social media, webinars, in-person meetings, reports, and in other ways.
- **A National Survey of Dance Audiences.** Dance/USA commissioned WolfBrown to conduct the first, large-scale study of its kind on dance audiences. The overall purpose of the study was to provide dance presenters and producers with new information that will help them more effectively engage their audiences. The study was conducted in the summer of 2010 with the help of 42 partners³ who sent a standardized survey to their dance ticket buyers.

Grantee Research and Assessment

EDA grantees worked with WolfBrown to design and conduct a plan of research on their own audience engagement practices, with their own audiences. The purposes of this research were:

- To provide grantees with useful information that could improve their projects
- To generate data across the grantees that will inform and advance the field's knowledge of engagement practices

The original call for proposals invited a broad range of project ideas. Ultimately, nine diverse projects were supported. The nine projects were wide-ranging in their approaches and specific aims, but shared the common goal of engaging dance audiences more deeply in the art form. The project-specific EDA assessment research was designed in partnership with each grantee following an iterative assessment process from which learnings about audience engagement could be incorporated into future project activities. WolfBrown provided technical assistance to the grantees by honing research questions, designing data collection methods and tools, and providing assistance to execute

¹ To access all of the materials produced from the Engaging Dance Audiences initiative, please visit <http://www.danceusa.org/engagingdanceaudiences>

² From a highly competitive field of applicants, nine Dance/USA members were funded to implement and assess new or refined audience engagement practices and share their discoveries with the dance field. To learn more about each of the nine grantees' projects, please visit <http://www.danceusa.org/engagingdanceaudiencesgrantees>

³ For the list of study partners, please visit <http://www.danceusa.org/edastudypartners>



the data collection. Dance/USA has archived the interim data analyses and grantee reflections on the data online at <https://eda.groupsite.com>. This report communicates the overall results of the grantees' research and assessment efforts; it is not an evaluation of grantees' projects. For more information about each of the grantees' projects, please visit their project profiles on the Dance/USA website at <http://www.danceusa.org/profilesofthegrantees>

MEASURING ENGAGEMENT

Arts groups of all disciplines devote a great deal of energy these days to assisting visitors and audiences in having deeper, more meaningful arts experiences. A wide variety of methods are being developed, including pre-event contextualization, interpretive assistance, and post-event discussions. These programs are presumed to heighten anticipation and magnify impact of the arts experience on audience members, although empirical research is scarce. Within the budgetary limitations of the initiative, this report provides a first step towards objectively assessing the extent to which the EDA-supported programs affected audiences' experiences.⁴

The data collection tools—which included a range of audience surveys, and focus group and interview protocols developed specifically for each of the EDA grantees' projects—utilized constructs measuring the impact of arts experiences first developed by WolfBrown in *Assessing the Intrinsic Impacts of a Live Performance*.⁵ The measurement constructs are:

- **Captivation:** The extent to which the audience member was absorbed in the performance. Captivation is the linchpin of impact—if an audience member is captivated, then other impacts are likely to happen, whereas if he is not captivated (or worse, if he snoozes through the program), other impacts are less likely to happen.
 - Example: *Did you lose track of time and forget about everything else during the performance?*
- **Intellectual Stimulation:** The degree to which the performance triggered thinking about the art, issues, or topics, or caused critical reflection.
 - Example: *Afterwards, did you discuss the performance with others who attended? If so, was this a casual exchange or an intense exchange?*

⁴ Several researchers have conceived models for the audience experience. These include the Australia Council's model for "the arts attendance journey" (Australia Council for the Arts, *Arts audiences online: How Australian audiences are connecting with the arts online*, 2011), which spans from the moment an audience member learns about an event to the period of time after an event during which any number of meaning-making activities might occur. At a recent Chicago workshop presented by the Arts Engagement Exchange in partnership with Illinois Institute of Technology's Institute of Design, participants were taught about "the Five Es of Experience Design" and encouraged to conceptualize the audience experience in terms of five processes: Entice, Enter, Experience, Exit, and Extend (conceived by Ben Jacobson of Conifer Research, based on the Compelling Experiences Framework created by the Dublin Group).

We think more in terms of an 'arc of engagement'—different for every audience member—referring to a series of interactions and experiences leading up to, extending after, and including the arts program itself. This virtuous cycle extends, sustains and reinforces an audience member's relationship with the presenter, and builds excitement for future arts experiences. For more perspective, see *Making Sense of Audience Engagement*, by Rebecca Ratzkin and Alan S. Brown, released by the San Francisco Foundation and WolfBrown in November 2011.

⁵ Brown, Alan S. and Jennifer L. Novak, *Assessing the Intrinsic Impacts of a Live Performance*, WolfBrown, 2007. Available at: www.wolfbrown.com/mup



- **Emotional Resonance:** The extent to which the audience member experienced a heightened emotional state during or after the performance.
 - Examples: *What was your emotional response to the performance?* (scale: 1=weak, 5=strong); *To what extent did you feel a bond with one or more of the dancers?*
- **Aesthetic Enrichment:** The extent to which the audience member was exposed to a new style, type of dance, or artist (growing the audience member's own aesthetic awareness), and also the extent to which the experience served to validate and celebrate familiar forms of dance (validating the audience member's aesthetic taste).
 - Example: *Did this performance expose you to a style or type of dance with which you were unfamiliar?*
- **Social Bridging and Bonding:** Connectedness with the rest of the audience, new insight into one's own culture or a culture outside of one's life experience, or new perspective on human relationships or social issues.
 - Example: *Did you feel a sense of connectedness with the rest of the audience?*

It is not reasonable to expect that a live arts experience would engage an audience member across each impact construct. The underlying goal of this research is to understand what the differences are in impact between audience members who do and those who do not participate in the engagement activities supported by the EDA initiative.

EMERGENT THEMES

Dance/USA, WolfBrown, and the nine grantees set forth on the pilot EDA round with a mindset for experimentation. What would emerge as promising or as common characteristics of these varied efforts to further engage dance audiences? What aspects of the projects and their implementation could be generalized in order to share learning with the dance field?

Based on the research conducted with the EDA grantees, we have identified three overarching themes using a grounded theory approach. Looking across the research conducted on each of the grantees' projects and considering the grantees' own reflections on their projects, the three crosscutting themes that seemed to gain real traction are:

1. The power of peer-to-peer meaning making.
2. Transmission of "curatorial insight."
3. Leveraging technology to connect people around dance experiences.

1. The power of peer-to-peer meaning making

Traditionally, audiences have relied on critics, artists, and artistic directors—or "experts"—to relay the meaning of the dance. The practice of allowing "experts" to shed interpretive light has been especially prevalent in the dance field. Many dance organizations offer these expert resources in an effort to "demystify" the dance for the audience.

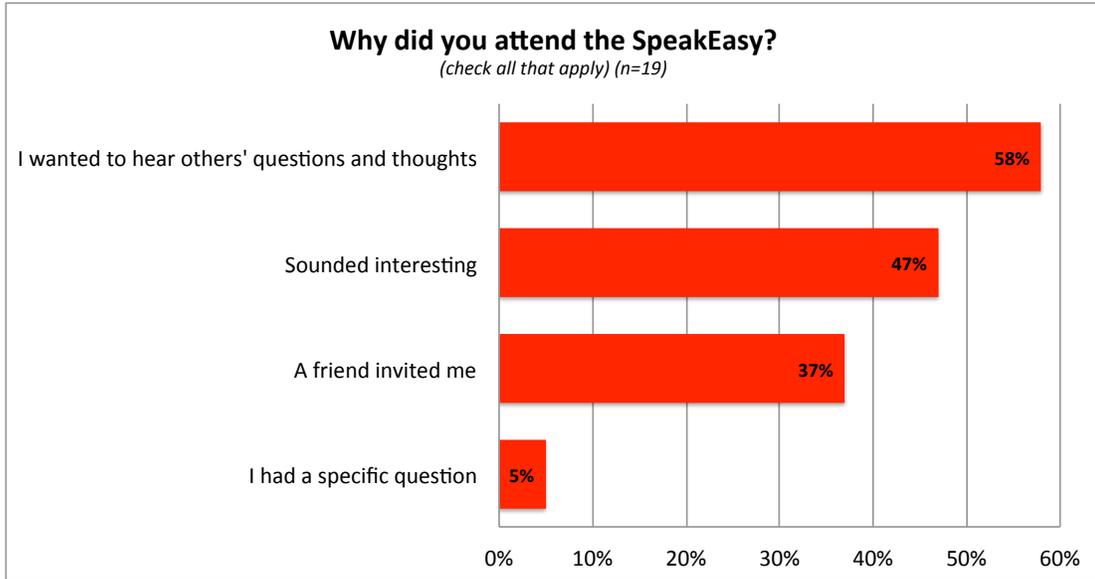
The EDA project-based research revealed that audiences place value on hearing, and being heard by, *peers* (i.e., other audience members), to make meaning of dance performances. Specifically, the two



peer-to-peer meaning-making models tested were Walker Art Center's *SpeakEasy* and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts' (YBCA) *Dance Savvy*. While the *SpeakEasy* model focused exclusively on post-performance peer-exchange, the *Dance Savvy* model utilized both a pre-performance preparation for viewing the performance, complemented by post-performance peer exchange.

When participants were asked "Why did you attend the *SpeakEasy*?" the most common reason given was "I wanted to hear others' questions and thoughts" (58%), as illustrated in the chart below. Notably, only 5% said that they attended because they had a specific question in mind.

Figure 2: Walker Art Center – Reasons for Attending the *SpeakEasy*



A culminating focus group discussion with YBCA's *Dance Savvy* participants revealed that participants attach a great deal of value to hearing the "deeply honest" opinions of other audience members. In general, participants emphasized the value of the insight gained from these semi-structured post-performance discussions.

We surmise that the power of peer-to-peer exchange regarding dance is an extension and focusing of broader social and cultural changes like the flattening of information exchange and the evolution of community formation. This type of exchange helps to personalize an arts experience and extends the experience itself.⁶

Logistical lessons:

- Both of these peer-to-peer exchange models used light facilitation to bring focus and order to the conversations, but the facilitators were not dance experts and played only a minor role in directing the conversation.

⁶ In some ways this dynamic is a realization of technology's influence on people's lives. New media scholars describe this phenomenon in different ways. Lawrence Lessig describes the shift from "Read-Only" culture to "Read-Write" culture. Joe Karaganis articulates the difference as a shift from "one-to-many" to "many-to-many" transmission. In *Macrowikinomic: Rebooting Business and the World*, Don Tapscott describes a new pedagogical approach to teaching, transitioning from a broadcast style to a collaborative peer-to-peer style of teaching and learning.

- The dynamics of the peer-to-peer exchange (and room set-up) need to allow for those who prefer to be “lurkers” (i.e., those who prefer to absorb the conversation being had by others, but who may not be ready to contribute or able to articulate their own questions or viewpoints). Lack of verbal engagement does not mean lack of engagement.
- Group size can influence the quality of the exchange. Both Walker and YBCA’s post-performance peer-exchanges were approximately 15-20 attendees.

Questions that emerge:

- How can meaning making be achieved at scale?
- Who makes the best facilitator?
- Must the peer-to-peer exchange occur in controlled environments? How can dance organizations help foster this exchange in ‘uncontrolled’ environments (e.g., on the way home or via social media)? While these forms of engagement are not new, arts organizations are re-thinking how to amplify and draw greater direct connections to these existing, relevant forms of engagement (e.g., handing patrons a list of questions to ask each other on the way home).

2. Transmission of curatorial insight

Audiences look to choreographers, dancers, and artistic directors to provide “behind the scenes” information about upcoming dance programs. They are looking not necessarily for descriptive information about the program (which is typically the focus of marketing messages), but for more about the “why” behind a program or a piece. Increasingly, audiences want to look (or just peek) “under the hood” of the program in order to understand a bit about how choices were made—how the piece fits into a choreographer’s or curator’s aesthetic arc—to get some insight as to the curatorial impulse behind the creation or programming of the work. We call this “the moment of curatorial insight”—the moment when an audience member absorbs this information and gains clarity and context on a piece they are about to see.

Several EDA-supported projects included aspects of “transmission of curatorial insight” to audience members. The Oberlin Dance Collective’s (ODC) *I Speak Dance* four-part curriculum for college-aged students included an interactive *Unplugged* program, which involved a discussion and viewing of a work-in-progress. Forty-four percent of participating students reported that *Unplugged* was their favorite part of the curriculum.⁷

Among the engagement activities undertaken by the Trey McIntyre Project (TMP), a subset was aimed at providing access to curatorial insights. These activities included behind-the-scenes open rehearsals, pre-performance talks by TMP’s artistic staff and dancers, and informal post-show “café” conversations. Our analyses suggest that TMP audience members who participated in the ‘curatorial insight’ activities tended to report stronger intrinsic impacts than individuals who participated in demonstration- or performance-oriented activities.

Please tell us why (Unplugged/Immediate Dance) was your favorite component:

- *It was nice to see behind the scenes of the piece.*

- *Because I wasn't just sitting & watching*

- *After learning about dance and participating I felt like I was better able to understand and enjoy the final performance.*

- Student Feedback

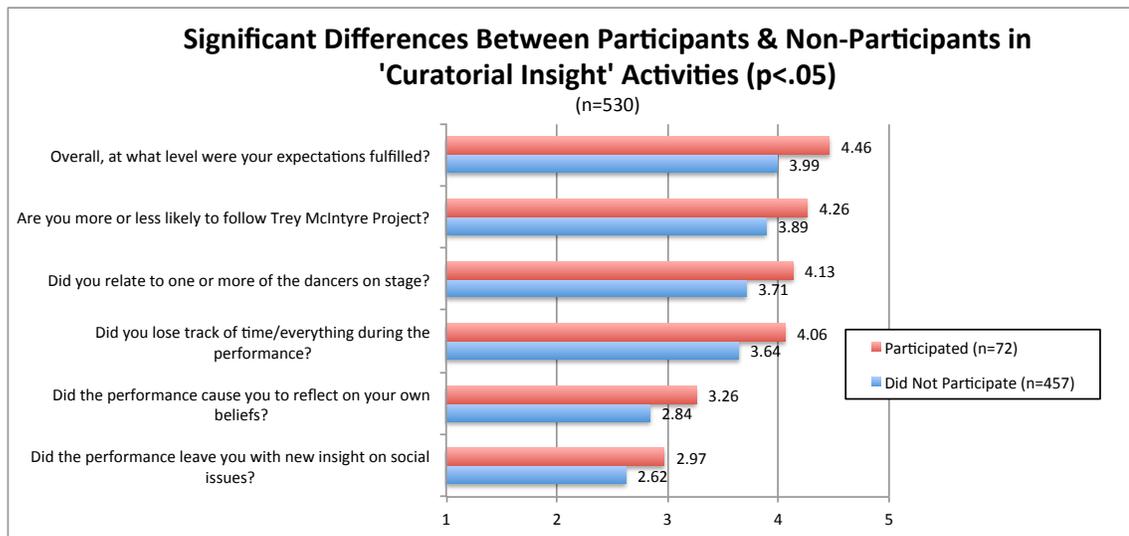
⁷ Students also reported the *Immediate Dance* component to be highly engaging.



Respondents who participated in *any* of TMP's engagement activities⁸ reported significantly stronger emotional engagement than non-participants. However, respondents who participated in 'curatorial insight' activities reported significantly stronger engagement across a wider range of measures as demonstrated in Figure 3.⁹

While it is not possible from this modest experiment to conclude that transmission of curatorial insight *causes* higher impacts (there may be additional factors), there is a positive correlation that merits further investigation.

Figure 3: Trey McIntyre Project – Significant Differences Between Engagement Activity Participants & Non-Participants



Logistical lessons:

- Curatorial insight can be transmitted online or in person.
- The “moment of curatorial insight” might last for 30 minutes or 30 seconds.
- Content should focus on the “why” of the program.

Questions that emerge:

- Who, in terms of prior dance experience and attendance behavior, is most likely to attend activities that provide curatorial insight?
- How can dance presenters increase the likelihood that most (or all) audience members will have a moment of curatorial insight before or after a performance?
- Do artists and curators have an implicit obligation to explain their creative choices?
- Are open rehearsals a potential mechanism for transmitting curatorial insight?

⁸ 'Curatorial insight' activities for TMP included open rehearsals, lectures given by Trey McIntyre or TMP's Executive Director, and post-show opportunities to speak with the dancers. Other engagement activities included TMP's *SpUrban*s (spontaneous urban performances), half-time shows, master classes, and visits to schools, hospitals and other community venues.

⁹ Participants in non-“curatorial insight” activities reported significantly higher levels of “feeling a bond” with TMP compared to those who did not participate in these engagement offerings.

3. Leveraging technology to connect people around dance experiences

Technology allows for the sharing of arts experiences between people who are geographically dispersed but aligned in interest and willing to exchange energy around an artist or program. STREB's two-way remote broadcast generated palpable energy and enthusiasm in two separate locales for and within the same show. Simultaneous video connections in both locations transmitted not just the art, but conveyed the larger experience, including the audience dynamics at both locations.

With funding assistance from EDA, On the Boards recorded live, in-venue performances and posted the resulting full-length, high-quality, multiple-angle videos to their *OntheBoards.tv* (*OtBTV*) website. Much of the work performed at On the Boards is scarce in many parts of the country and not accessible except by those who live in (or are able to travel to) Seattle. *OtBTV* provides a widely accessible means of sharing unique dance works with a broader audience. Through nine interviews with individuals who had purchased dance videos through the *OtBTV* website, we learned that some viewers used *OtBTV* to connect to the avant-garde dance scene fostered by On the Boards, while others used it to share the scene with friends who were unable to travel to the live performance. On the Boards TV allows the unique aesthetic to travel further and more broadly than the live local audiences.

Misnomer's *Audience Engagement Platform* (*AEP*), another EDA-funded project, also sought to create a social dynamic between artists and audiences. Due to the extension of Misnomer's project timeline, detailed research on this project is not included in this report. However, research on *AEP* is being conducted by Dance/USA and will become available.

Logistical lessons:

- While the EDA-supported examples involved significant research and development costs, that learning is now available for the field to learn and build from.
- Humans have a natural tendency to share meaningful experiences. That communication does not need to be heavily mediated, but it can be facilitated through technology in an artistic way. Streaming video technology holds the potential to connect audiences in multiple locations around a shared experience in real time. Finding the right place—safe, comfortable spaces (both virtual and physical) for the sharing of dance experiences—effects the quality of exchange.
- At present, the paying audience for digitally recorded dance experiences appears to be quite limited. However, the value of this content has yet to be fully explored.

Questions that emerge:

- How can the visceral, live energy of dance be portrayed in the intermix of virtual and live connections?
- How can other dance companies and presenters connect into the technology platforms that are already in place and being developed?
- Could digital recordings of dance be shown in cinemas and theaters to live audiences who then discuss the work afterwards?
- Can digital recordings be used more effectively as audience engagement tools (e.g., a digital download is included in the price of a ticket)?



INDIVIDUAL GRANTEE RESULTS

American Dance Festival

The American Dance Festival (ADF) was funded to explore how audiences perceive and remember dance performances. The funded project itself was a research program under the direction of Professor Ruth Day at Duke University. The EDA research component, conducted by WolfBrown, was done separately from ADF's and Professor Day's research design, and sought to understand how audience members' engagement with a dance performance differs when they have participated in the Audience Memory Program offered through Professor Day's research.

Methods

Paper surveys were randomly distributed to audience members as they entered the performance venue. In an effort to capture as many participants who participated in the Audience Memory Program as possible, program participants planning to attend one of the surveyed performances were asked to pick up their survey from a designated table in the venue lobby. Surveys were administered at two performances, Paul Taylor Dance Company (July 16, 2010) and Shen Wei Dance Arts (July 24, 2010). To boost response rates, ADF held a raffle for free tickets (open to those who completed and returned their surveys) and made an announcement about the survey from the stage prior to the performance. The surveys were to be completed after the performance, preferably within 24 hours, and returned via post in the accompanying pre-paid business reply envelopes.

Results

In total, 374 surveys were completed, an approximate 37% response rate. Two survey administrations were conducted, though due to the low number of Audience Memory Program participants captured in the sample, the data from both survey administrations were combined and weighted¹⁰ to account for the influence of the performance's content.

	Paul Taylor (July 16, 2010)		Shen Wei (July 24, 2010)	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
Audience Size:	846		884	
Number of surveys distributed:	500		500	
Number of surveys picked up by patrons:	481	96%	470	94%
Number of completed surveys returned:	198	41%	176	37%

Of the aggregate response pool, 39% had heard of the Audience Memory Program (i.e. 61% reported not having heard of the Audience Memory Program). [The Audience Memory Program is comprised of several different components](#), the workshop being the most intense of the program's elements.

¹⁰ See later footnote for weighting details.



Almost 13% of respondents participated in the Audience Memory Program in some capacity. The greatest participation reported was in the Workshop, in which 10% of the respondents participated.

10.	Did you participate in any of the following Audience Memory Program events during the current ADF season? (<i>check all that apply</i>)
	<u>Entire Audience</u>
	10.2% Audience Memory Workshop (n=38)
	5.4% Dance Perception Quiz (on the ADF website) (n=20)
	3.5% Memory Lab Visit (a visit to the lab for perception & memory studies) (n=13)
	3.5% Performance Check-Ups (you answered questions about performances you saw, either online or by phone) (n=13); How many Check-Ups have you done? 1 (n=6), 2 (n=3), 3 (n=2)

To detect the program's influence on respondents' engagement with the performances, we assessed the differences between responses given by those who had participated in the Audience Memory Program¹¹ to those who had never heard of the Audience Memory Program.

- 37% of respondents who participated in the Audience Memory program reported “intensely” discussing the meaning or merits of the performance with others who attended, while 25% of respondents not aware of the program reported doing so. The difference is significant at $p=.10$ ¹²
- 75% of respondents who participated in the Audience Memory program reported leaving with unanswered questions, while 54% of respondents not aware of the program reported doing so. The difference is significant at $p=.01$

Considered together, the data captured by these two questions suggest that people who experienced the Audience Memory program report higher levels of intellectual engagement with a performance than those who were unaware of the program and did not participate in it. However, no conclusions regarding causality can be made.

We also find that participants in the Audience Memory Program are more likely than non-participants to be taking some type of dance lessons or training, be it informal or formal. Among all respondents, 13% reported that they were currently active dancers, while 28% of the Audience Memory Program participants reported being current active dancers. Other than this result, the data are inconclusive with respect to other distinctions between Audience Memory Program participants and non-participants, largely due to a small sample size.

Learning for the Field

Participation in the Audience Memory Program is associated with deeper intellectual engagement with a performance. While we cannot draw conclusions on causality about the program, it may be that people more inclined to be intellectually engaged are the ones who self-select to attend the Audience Memory Program, but regardless, the Audience Memory Program serves as a mechanism to amplify intellectual (if not other forms of) engagement with dance performances.

¹¹ Compound weights were calculated according to the intensity of treatment, or experience with the Audience Memory, (1(Quiz) + 3(Workshop) + 2(LabVisit) + 1(CheckUp)) and the portion of survey respondents, by show (Shen Wei and Paul Taylor) that participated in the Audience Memory program.

¹² The smaller the p-value, the more robust the conclusion of statistical difference. For example, $p=.01$ is a more robust conclusion of significant statistical differences than $p=.10$.



Cowles Center for Dance & The Performing Arts

The Cowles Center for Dance & The Performing Arts' EDA project addressed three constituencies: (1) dance companies who partnered with the Cowles Center to develop a dance consortium, whose activities included Guest Appearances, (2) individual "dance enthusiasts" who participated in a new docent program, and (3) dance patrons in the Twin Cities. After discussions with the Cowles Center, WolfBrown focused its assessment efforts on helping them to survey audience reactions to guest appearances, and to document and reflect on the evolution of the core dance consortium partners.

Guest Appearances

Methods

Paper surveys were randomly pre-set on audience members' seats in the venue. The Cowles Center conducted 5 successful audience surveys¹³ in an effort to gauge audience response to the concept of guest appearances and how this format affected audience engagement. On average, the surveys yielded an approximate 31% response rate. To boost response rates, the Cowles Center held raffles for free tickets (open to those who completed and returned their surveys) and made announcements about the survey from the stage prior to the performances. The surveys were to be completed after the performance, preferably within 24 hours, and returned via post in the accompanying pre-paid business reply envelopes.

Results

For the shows surveyed, the vast majority (85% or more) of the audience was unaware prior to arriving at the performance that there would be a guest appearance. Up to approximately 70% of the audience had never even heard of the dance company giving the guest appearance; therefore **the guest appearance served as first-time exposure for the majority of the audience to the guest performance dance company.** The audiences most familiar with each company's work attended the performances given by Zenon Dance and James Sewell Ballet, where only 16% of the audience had not heard of the other before.

On average, 58% of respondents reported that the guest appearance enhanced their experience at the performances, while 13% found it at least somewhat distracting. The audience members reporting the guest appearance as the most distracting were also those reporting that they were unaware that the guest appearance would occur. **On average, 52% of the audience reported that they were more likely to follow the work of the guest appearance company as a result of seeing them perform,** 39% reported no difference, and about 10% reported they were less likely to follow the work of the guest appearance company as a result of seeing them perform. Not only did the guest appearances expose audiences to new dance companies, but also, on average, 30% of audiences reported being introduced to a new style or type of dance through the guest appearances.

Respondents provided rich, largely positive feedback when asked what they thought of seeing a guest appearance by a second company prior to a main performance by another company. People saw it as a great means of seeing something new, of adding value to their ticket price, and appreciated the 'bonus' nature of the guest appearance. Some offered the caveat that the piece be kept short to keep it from distracting from their main purpose for attending. Some audience members questioned whether the style and content of the guest appearance made sense with the main program. For

¹³ An additional survey was conducted, but due to a survey administration error the quantitative data could not be used in our analyses.



example, a few audience members suggested that seeing a balletic guest appearance distracted a bit from the overall experience they had anticipated, given that they were only expecting to see the main performance by an ethnic dance company. Some respondents were averse to the 'commercial' feel of the appearance.

Learning for the Field

Overall, the Guest Appearances appear to be a promising systematic model for aesthetic exposure. Not all audience members are interested in this 'bonus' feature, so offering Guest Appearances on certain, advertised nights may be the best way to communicate to audiences that the Guest Appearance will be occurring and permit them to select which night to attend.

While scheduling opportunities drove the Cowles Center's pilot undertaking of this program, greater curatorial oversight for matching aesthetics—not only of companies, but of specific pieces to be performed—may result in audience members sensing a greater cohesion to the overall program, and drawing a direct connection to another experience they may like. In essence, Guest Appearances can serve as a live version of the now ubiquitous "you might also like..." links we find online.

Dance Consortium

One component of the Cowles Center's Engaging Dance Audiences grant project was to develop a consortium among eight dance companies, of varying genre, aesthetic, and size, in the Twin Cities—an experiment in building a collaborative "dance community" among companies who share a potential market base. A case study providing a full account of the Cowles Center's experience with building a dance consortium is included in the Technical Appendix; here we provide a synopsis:

Consortium members originally had unclear or minimal expectations of what would come from it, but felt that the idea was good and their goals coincided with what they understood to be the general goals of the grant and the consortium group. However, not until members were in the same room with each other did questions about the group's goals and activities truly arise—including the feasibility of the activities and whether all consortium members agreed to participate in them. While some of our interviewees from the consortium membership seemed excited by this *carte blanche* approach, others strongly preferred that a clear agenda be laid out for the consortium before they decided whether to participate.

Early on the consortium organized itself into two subcommittees: one to address marketing and artistic issues, and the other to address issues related to administration, management, and personnel issues (e.g., health insurance). WolfBrown tracked consortium efforts around marketing and artistic issues given their relevance to the EDA grant. Activities ultimately undertaken by the consortium were a joint advertising program insert, two workshops, and, most significantly, piloting Guest Appearances. Interviewees cited "opportunity to connect with colleagues in the field" as the main benefit of their involvement in the consortium.

Observing its evolution at a distance, WolfBrown saw that a key challenge facing the consortium's development was its interconnectedness with the dynamics unfolding around the opening of the Cowles Center itself. The lead-up to the opening of the building provided a window of opportunity to bring the dance companies together, but ultimately the multiple layers of objectives left the consortium befuddled. In addition, the consortium was challenged by a turnover in leadership at the Cowles Center and changes in the Center's staffing. More predictable challenges were also faced, including how to overcome the competitive nature of companies in the same market space.



Learning for the Field

Vital elements for forming any group are: 1) understanding (potential) members' benefits and motivations for being involved, and 2) having a mutual understanding of the purpose for forming the affinity. The real challenges come up in how to approach these elements. These questions arose from Cowles' initial experience and may be helpful for others in the field contemplating local or regional consortia:

- Which should come first, a convening of consortium members who then generate projects and mission, or a clear mission to which members ascribe themselves?
- How much pre-planning can be done before everyone is in the room together?
- Do projects need to rise organically from the group or can they come from the convener? Does a democratic idea-generation process lead to stalling? Do directives from a convener provide focus and galvanize energy?
- Undoubtedly, the EDA grant provided an incentive for dance companies' participation in the consortium. What can be started, and sustained, without committed funding? Is a consortium really possible without a pot of new money attached to it, or without a means of collecting money from its members, or from a "dance tax" (i.e., a surcharge on all dance tickets that would fund the consortium)?
- If fractionalism is inevitable, then how can involvement in the consortium be designed for different levels of commitment or leadership?
- How can all consortium members share in the collective opportunity?



Oberlin Dance Collective (ODC)¹⁴

ODC implemented a four-part sequence of engagement activities, titled *I Speak Dance*, for over 200 Bay Area college students in 2010-11. Two cycles were implemented, one in the fall of 2010, and another in the winter of 2011 (though our research was limited to the first cycle). The program consisted of four structured activities, representing a mix of dance and non-dance classes:

1. Introductory Film (media based introductory experience)
2. *Immediate Dance* (participatory dance event, choreographic/performance workshop)
3. *Unplugged* (discussion and viewing of work in progress at ODC)
4. Audience experience (observation of live dance performance)

On a macro level, the experiment explored whether exposure and interaction with dance at this critical age of transition into adulthood can cultivate an appreciation for dance that will lead to continued engagement with the art form. On a micro-level, the experiment tested the hypothesis that students' attitudes and inclinations towards dance will change as a result of experiencing ODC's multi-layered engagement program. The purpose of the pilot project was to see which of the four activities were most successful in engaging students, and which types of students would be most likely to engage with which kinds of activities.

Methods

Pre- and post-program online surveys were utilized to assess the extent to which students' attitudes and inclinations towards dance changed by virtue of participating in *I Speak Dance*. Due to school policies, ODC could not directly email students, so survey links were provided to students through their instructors. When various concerns arose around school email policies, ODC made efforts to distribute hardcopy paper surveys to the students. Ultimately, a 77% response rate was achieved for the pre-questionnaire and a 61% response rate for the post-questionnaire.¹⁵

Results

On average, students reported being most engaged by the *Immediate Dance* component, which was a participatory dance experience, and overall, students reported the *Unplugged* component as their favorite. Both of these program components allowed and encouraged more than just observational modes of participation in dance, and underscored the need to engage younger adults in interactive and participatory activities as part of their early dance experience.

While many students reported appreciating the experience and gaining a more favorable impression of modern dance (see table on this page), they also reported higher interest levels in consuming dance in the future (especially ODC), and in exploring their own creative process (see following graph).

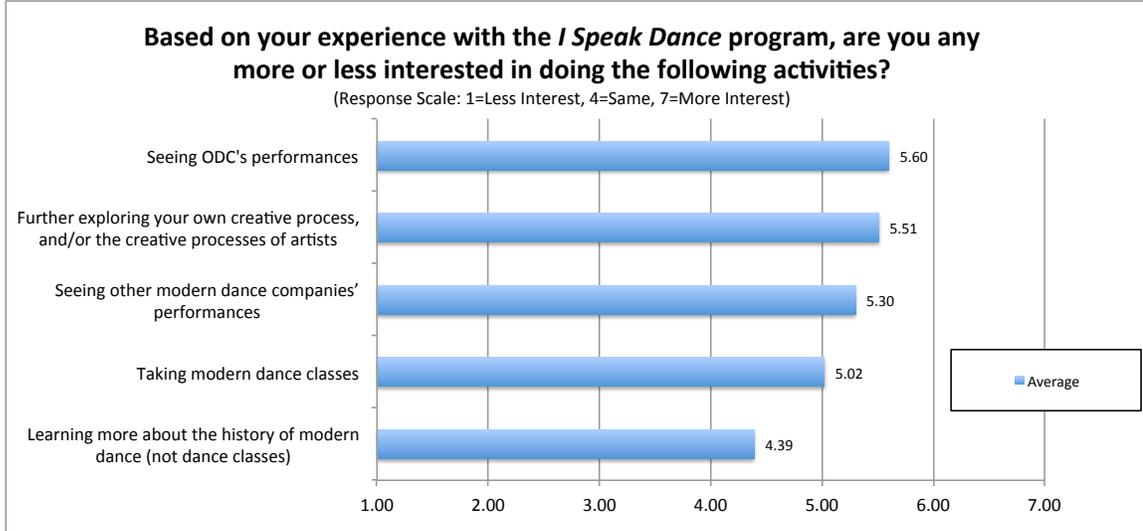
Do you feel that your involvement in ODC's <i>I Speak Dance</i> program changed your perception of modern dance in anyway?	Total Sample
No change	33%
Yes - less favorable impression of modern dance	4%
Yes - more favorable impression of modern dance	64%

¹⁴ For more research regarding this project conducted by ODC, please see: <http://www.danceusa.org/odc>

¹⁵ Only 17 students provided adequate information enabling a matching between pre- and post-responses. Based on these 17 responses, there was no discernable differences between pre- and post-responses to the following questions included on both questionnaires: "If you went to a live performance by a modern dance company next week, how much do you think you'd like it?"; "How true is the following statement: People like me go to modern dance performances."; and "When you think of "modern dance," what words come to mind?"



Figure 4: ODC – Based on your experience with the *I Speak Dance* program, are you more or less interested in dance-related activities? [Note: scores above 4 indicate increased interest, while scores below 4 indicate decreased interest.]



Of course, it is not possible from this limited experiment to understand how participation in the *I Speak Dance* program will influence the students' long-term relationship with dance, or their creative process in general.¹⁶

Learning for the Field

Most young adults have had a good deal of exposure to dance through music videos and television, but often feel like foreigners at a live dance performance. During their college years, young adults are in a learning and questioning mode and open to new experiences. ODC's program involved a menu of activities, the most popular of which, and those reported to be most engaging, involved students' own participation—the *Unplugged* and the *Immediate Dance* components—and allowed them to learn about and participate in a creative process.

There are many potential connections to dance in the academic environment (e.g., history, philosophy, health), and building partnerships with colleges and universities is a good strategy for long-term audience development. Opportunities for young adults to actively engage in an exchange about the creative process help grab their attention. While the ultimate goal may be to build ticket-buying audiences, young adults are more likely to be drawn in through multi-layered "active arts" experiences that allow them to draw direct relevance to their own experience.

¹⁶ Students participating in *I Speak Dance* were asked "Based on your experience with the *I Speak Dance* program, are you any more or less interested in doing the following activities?" where "Further exploring your own creative process, and/or the creative processes of artists," was a response category. Students responded that they had a heightened interest in exploring their creative process at the conclusion of their participation in the *I Speak Dance* program.

On the Boards

A key question posed by On the Boards' EDA project is how or whether live audiences' experiences differ from those of an audience viewing a video of the same piece created for On the Boards TV. Their audience engagement research included data collection from live audiences and from online audiences in an effort to learn about and compare audience experiences' of live and online work of the same artists.

Methods

Paper surveys were pre-set on audience members' seats in the OtB performance space. In total, OtB surveyed six live audiences: two performances for each of three artists—Christian Rizzo, Pat Graney, and Ralph Lemon—in late 2010.

	Christian Rizzo (10/7,9/10)		Pat Graney Co. (10/21,23/10)		Ralph Lemon (11/18,20/10)	
	<u>Count</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Audience size:	393		511		495	
Number of surveys distributed:	287		408		419	
Number of surveys picked up:	169	59%	231	57%	232	55%
Number of completed surveys returned:	116	69%	132	57%	70	28%

To boost response rates, OtB held three raffles, one for each artist's performances, each for a \$75 gift certificate to a local restaurant. The surveys were to be completed after the performance, preferably within 24 hours, and returned via post in in the accompanying pre-paid business reply envelopes.

In spring 2011, we took stock of the number of streams and downloads by non-OtBTV subscribers¹⁷ of the Rizzo, Graney, and Lemon pieces. Realizing the numbers were too low to conduct a survey, OtB made efforts to increase the number of people eligible to take the survey, but ultimately there were too few people for a robust survey sample. Therefore, WolfBrown revised its data collection strategy and conducted qualitative interviews. WolfBrown contacted 21 OtBTV non-subscriber users who had streamed or downloaded the dance videos by Christian Rizzo, Pat Graney, or Ralph Lemon. Nine individuals accepted our request for an interviews, and WolfBrown completed nine semi-structured interviews. Four of the nine interviewees had also seen the online piece live at OtB. Of the nine interviewees, two were professional dancers or performance artists, and two had significant others with a strong interest in dance or danced themselves.

Results

All interviewees were enthusiastic about the quality of OtBTV and about having such cutting-edge contemporary works easily and affordably available. Interviewees commented the "care and attention to the documented experience that is respectful of [the viewer's] position as someone watching it on video" (regarding the multiple camera perspectives on the piece). However, several interviewees commented on the limited perspective that the video allowed, and felt those choices were being made for the viewer, but they also realized the practical limitations of video. Some interviewees

¹⁷ Non-OtBTV subscribers were used because at the time, OtB's software did not permit them to identify which of their subscribers viewed which videos. WolfBrown and OtB decided to contact only non-subscribers for interviews because it was possible to identify which videos they had paid to view.



understood the videos to be separate artistic works unto themselves, specifically created for online viewing, as opposed to an alternative mode of attendance or documentation of the live performance. Of the interviewees, only one reported watching the piece in its entirety during a single viewing.

Interviewees who had not seen the performance live greatly appreciated the unique opportunity to see artists who otherwise do not perform near them. Some interviewees were familiar with such boundary-pushing artists as those who perform at On the Boards and so found OtBTV through this standing interest; other interviewees were introduced to this type of art by their peers and mentors using the videos available on OtBTV. Of the interviewees who had not seen the works live, many watched the videos in two or more sessions.

Learning for the Field – Live vs. Online Viewing and Engagement

Interviewees who also saw the piece performed live reported watching the video with a technical, analytical perspective, revisiting and more closely looking at artistic choices. Interviewees who had seen both the live performance and the video tended to think of the video as a separate artwork unto itself, not as a substitute for the live performance-audience experience. Interviewees commented on the collective energy and experience shared between themselves, artists, and other audience members—the immersive experience—that was absent when watching the video. These interviewees reported using the video to recapture sentimentality or emotion they experienced during the live performance. Boiling down the differences between the live and video experiences, interviewees suggested a more intellectual experience when watching the video and a more emotional experience when watching the live performance. Of those who saw the live performance, none watched the video in its entirety, but rather purposefully revisited specific excerpts from the piece.

How does the availability of OtB's videos add value to the dance landscape? Three uses, or value propositions, were described in the interviews: 1) pedagogical value both for students and other dance artists who want to analyze the work, 2) audience engagement purposes (i.e., revisiting works previously seen, in order to deepen the meaning, or for use in connection with pre-performance workshops), and 3) archival purposes, for broadening the scope of artistic works available to people who are unable to attend a live performance and documenting an otherwise ephemeral artistic creation for posterity.

Based on these interviews, it seems that either viewers' attention spans or the logistics of watching these works in the video medium is not conducive to seeing a full-length work. In general, those who had seen the performance live used the video to re-watch specific excerpts of the piece, while those who had not seen the piece live tended to watch the piece in at least two parts. Future videos might need to be packaged in shorter segments.

A pervasive comment regarding the difference between experiencing a live performance and watching a video is the absence of the collective experience and energy. Could other presenters and performing artists groups show these videos in a theatrical setting (i.e., with high definition video projection onto a large screen), and sell tickets at maybe \$5 or \$10, as a means of creating a social situation around digital content? In fact, one interviewee mentioned an interest in holding such an event. We suggest this merits further experimentation.



STREB

SLAM REMOTE, STREB's EDA project, was designed to engage two live audiences and performers at both sites. One audience was in STREB's home performance space in Brooklyn, NY, and one was in an off-site location connected through a simulcast. The simulcast enabled STREB to perform in Brooklyn and be seen off-site, and enabled participants in the off-site location to perform for the Brooklyn-based audience.

Methods

The initial SLAM REMOTE, held in April 2010, met serious challenges.¹⁸ The accompanying audience and residency participant data were compiled and are not included in this report. The second SLAM REMOTE (December 4, 2010) was a fully realized version of the intended program and data collection was successfully implemented. Paper surveys were administered to audience members in both locations (Brooklyn and New Jersey), who completed them on site post-show, during which time the New Jersey State Theater hosted an open reception. Audience members were invited onstage to participate in POP ACTION with STREB company members, creating opportunities and an environment for audience members to stay after the performance. The audience survey investigated the nature of engagement and intrinsic impact, and included specific questions about the remote format. The underlying research question explored how audiences engage when experiencing a live-performance from an off-site location.

The Brooklyn-based audience members were surveyed to gain an understanding of home audiences' engagement levels with the SLAM REMOTE performance. This was done two ways:

- 1) By comparing Brooklyn-based and off-site audiences' experiences for SLAM REMOTE performances
- 2) By comparing Brooklyn-based SLAM REMOTE audiences with Brooklyn-based audiences for non-SLAM REMOTE performances

Approach (1) addressed the question: do home audiences have a different engagement experience with SLAM REMOTE compared to the off-site audiences? If so, how do they differ? For approach (2), this required surveying two non-SLAM REMOTE performances. This effort would answer the question: do home audiences have different engagement experiences with SLAM REMOTE compared to other STREB show formats? If so, how are they different?

	12/3 & 12/5 Brooklyn (Control)		12/4 - Brooklyn SLAM REMOTE		12/4 - New Jersey SLAM REMOTE	
	<u>Count</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Number of surveys distributed:	114		63		84	
Number of completed surveys returned:	99	87%	62	98%	72	86%

¹⁸ The challenges are discussed here <https://eda.grouppsite.com/post/slam-remote-update>



Results

The New Jersey audience reported the same levels of captivation as the Brooklyn SLAM¹⁹ audience (control), while the Brooklyn SLAM REMOTE audience reported slightly higher levels of captivation.

	To what degree were you <u>absorbed</u> in the performance? (circle a number)					
	<u>Not at All</u>				<u>Completely</u>	
	1	2	3	4	5	
Brooklyn (Control)	1%	3%	11%	37%	47%	Mean: 4.27
Brooklyn SLAM REMOTE	0%	0%	13%	34%	53%	Mean: 4.40
New Jersey SLAM REMOTE	0%	0%	18%	36%	47%	Mean: 4.29

All three audiences reported high overall levels of captivation, suggesting that seeing the SLAM performers via broadcast did not adversely affect audience members' engagement with the performance.

The New Jersey audience reported higher levels of social bonding, compared to the Brooklyn audience. What was it about the atmosphere or the program itself that brought the audience together?

	Did you feel you were connected with the rest of the audience? (circle a number)					
	<u>Not at All</u>				<u>A Great Deal</u>	
	1	2	3	4	5	
Brooklyn (Control)	4%	10%	33%	32%	21%	Mean: 3.55
Brooklyn SLAM REMOTE	3%	8%	35%	37%	18%	Mean: 3.57
New Jersey SLAM REMOTE	2%	7%	21%	29%	41%	Mean: 4.01

A vital question for STREB was whether people would pay for a broadcast performance. On average, New Jersey audience members reported that they would pay \$13 for a ticket to see a live broadcast.

Learning for the Field

- Audiences in remote locations can share in the same excitement and energy of a live performance without being the same physical space as the performance. This represents a potential structural breakthrough in the presentation of dance. While STREB's satellite broadcast model may be too expensive for many dance companies, the dynamic exchange might be accomplished through less costly emerging video streaming technologies.
- Planning and coordinating simultaneous remote broadcasts is time intensive, technically demanding, and requires a different mindset than producing a live performance. STREB used storyboards to map out, step-by-step, the sequence and timing of activities and camera angles in both locations to ensure one seamless event.
- Remote broadcasting can be a means of integrating educational and community outreach programs with mainstage performances, and thereby provides mainstage audiences with a fuller picture of the company or presenter.

¹⁹ SLAM was STREB's regular performance, without simulcast.



- Audience members at the SLAM REMOTE residency performance in New Jersey felt a stronger social bond than either Brooklyn-based audience. How does participatory involvement prior to, or as part of the show, amplify and deepen audience members' engagement with a performance?



Trey McIntyre Project

Trey McIntyre Project (TMP) offers multiple means of individual engagement, advancing their artistic offerings beyond the format of a traditional performance. TMP's engagement activities include less common formats, such as SpUrbans, as well as formats more familiar to the dance field, such as holding open rehearsals and offering master classes. Of specific interest to TMP was to better understand individuals' sense of involvement with, and feelings of ownership of, the Trey McIntyre Project. To some extent, TMP is performance-based in the traditional sense, but experiments with the idea of audience ownership in a broader sense.

For the EDA research component, the key research questions were: what are audiences' notions of 'ownership' of and 'involvement' with TMP, and how does that vary between a live experience and an online relationship with the artists?

Methods

TMP's EDA research included two approaches for data collection:

1. Live audience surveys at selected TMP tour performances (Boise, ID, TMP's hometown (2/13/10); Milwaukee, WI (3/9/10); Long Beach, CA (5/22/10); and Fayetteville, AR (11/5/10)). The different engagement activities carried out at each residency site are detailed in the Technical Appendix. The key research question here: is participation in engagement activities associated with deeper engagement with the TMP performance? The audience surveys were pre-set on seats and mailed back post performance using the business-reply envelopes provided. Response rates were boosted by raffles for TMP gear and season passes (for the Boise audience).

	Boise		Milwaukee		Long Beach		Fayetteville	
	<u>Count</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Audience size:	1,900		665		479		950	
Number of surveys distributed:	500		350		290		500	
Number of surveys picked up:	464	93%	265	76%	158	54%	446	89%
Number of completed surveys returned:	215	46%	89	34%	99	63%	162	36%

2. An online survey to explore how individuals who engage with TMP online (e.g., via their website, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) describe a sense of ownership of TMP in relation to their history with TMP. While the audience survey was a random sample of audience members, the online survey was a convenience sample (i.e., self-selecting).

Online Survey Administration	<u>Count</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Weblink	21	5%
Twitter	6	2%
Facebook	98	25%
Email Newsletter	275	69%



Results

Across all respondents from TMP's four surveyed performances, 25% reported participating in at least one engagement activity offered by TMP. Compared to those who did not participate in any engagement activity, these individuals reported significantly higher averages for:

- level of their expectations for the performance being fulfilled (4.34 vs. 3.96).
- level of captivation for the performance (3.92 v. 3.62)
- level of reflecting on their opinions and beliefs (3.19 v. 2.81)
- level of emotional and spiritual response (4.15 v. 3.76, and 2.92 v. 2.60 respectively)
- level of relating to performers on stage (4.06 v. 3.67)
- level of having new insight on human relationships or social issues, or a new perspective on life (2.95 v. 2.58)
- level of being more likely than before the performance to follow the work of Trey McIntyre Project (4.19 v. 3.86)
- level of a lingering impression being made (4.18 v. 3.76)
- feelings of allegiance or bond with Trey McIntyre Project (3.73 v. 3.35)

Participation in an engagement activity cannot be interpreted to have *caused* differences in impact, because individuals self-selected whether to participate in an engagement activity, meaning those individuals are inherently different than those who did not participate. The differences between these groups are evidenced in the survey results. Individuals reporting participation in engagement activities self-report being significantly more knowledgeable, in general, about dance than those who did not participate (on a 1-5 scale, 1=not at all knowledgeable and 5=very knowledgeable; average of 3.25 vs. 2.97).²⁰

Among the range of engagement activities undertaken by the Trey McIntyre Project, a subset of these activities was aimed at providing audience members with context and insight. These activities included behind the scenes open rehearsals, pre-performance talks by TMP's artistic staff and dancers, and informal post-show cafes/conversations. Survey results suggest that audience members who participated in the 'curatorial insight' activities tended to report stronger intrinsic impacts than individuals who participated in demonstration- or performance-oriented activities such as SpUrbans.

Respondents who participated in *any* of TMP's engagement activities reported significantly stronger emotional engagement than non-participants. However, respondents who participated in 'curatorial insight' activities reported significantly stronger engagement across a wider range of indicators.

Regardless of differences in dance knowledge, both those who participated in an engagement activity and those who did not reported having similarly high levels of confidence that they would enjoy the experience prior to the performance.

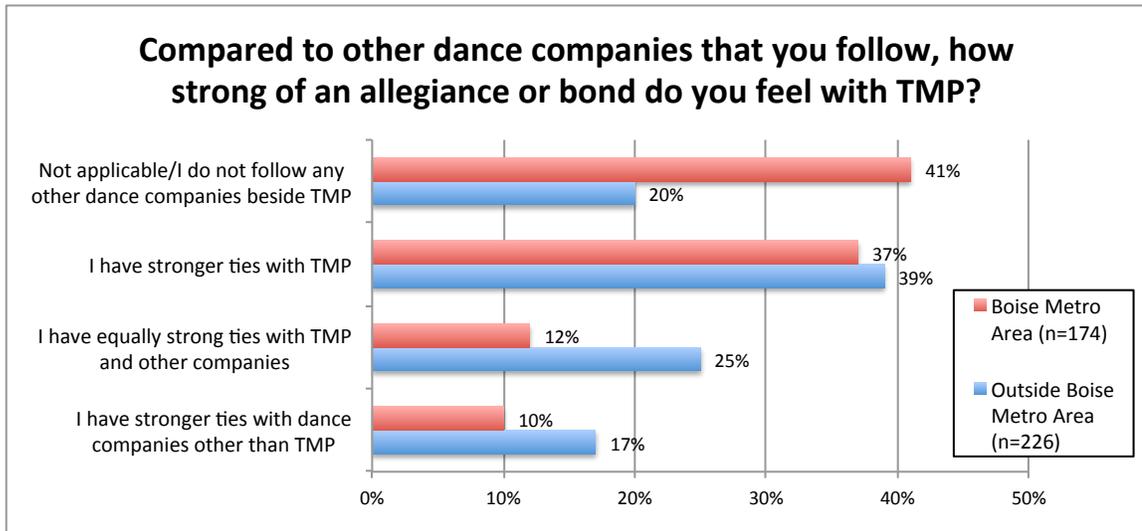
Almost 45% of the online survey respondents live within the Boise metro area. While the majority of respondents have seen TMP perform live multiple times, 20% of respondents from outside the Boise metro area have never seen TMP perform live, yet follow them online. Unfortunately, we have nothing to compare this to, so we cannot say if this is higher or lower than other dance companies.

In brief, the data from the online survey suggests that people from Boise are indeed "loyal" to TMP, more so than people outside of the Boise area, as many of the respondents from Boise do not follow any other dance companies (41%).

²⁰ All scaled responses use a 5-point scale. Please refer to the Technical Appendix for specific scale labels. All significances were examined at p-value of .05 or less. Levels of significant differences are detailed in the following pages.



Figure 4: TMP – How strong of an allegiance or bond do you feel with TMP? [source: online survey of TMP email subscribers, website visitors, Facebook fans and Twitter followers]



Learning for the Field

- TMP’s relentless focus on engaging its audiences and community has paid dividends in terms of generating a loyal local audience and a base of online followers.
- Increasing an audience’s sense of ownership seems to be more possible in a company’s hometown, where more engagement opportunities are possible, than on the road.
- The decision to locate the company in Boise generated a substantial amount of publicity for the company. One might speculate that locating a contemporary dance company in a small city can create significant opportunities, but this is only true if the company is outwardly focused and highly involved in the community.
- TMP’s survey results provide another example of the correlation between engagement activities and higher impacts. The company has gained notoriety for its unusual community activities (e.g., SpUrbans). While these engagement activities might generate publicity and boost attendance, the post-performance survey data suggests that other types of engagement activities (i.e., those designed to transmit context and insight) have a greater effect on impacts.
- Ultimately, we cannot conclude anything from the research about the TMP audience’s sense of ownership in comparison to other companies, because we did not study that attribute in other companies. The one data point we do have is that four in ten of TMP’s online and social media followers report a stronger relationship with TMP than any other dance company.
- Overall, this experiment raises many interesting questions about the construction of loyalty and ownership, and how dance companies can create sustained bonds with audiences and followers both local and non-local (when presenters liaise between the company and the audience).



Walker Art Center

The Walker Art Center planned multiple programs and initiatives to broaden and deepen their connections with existing dance audiences and to engage patrons involved with visual arts. Given the multitude of EDA-funded activities that the Walker undertook, two components were selected for research and assessment. One thrust of the research was the Walker's *SpeakEasy* program, and the other was a series of audience surveys to broadly inquire about patrons' experiences with the range of offered engagement activities.

The *SpeakEasy* is a lightly facilitated post-performance discussion aimed to help dance novices discuss a dance program and learn from peers in a relaxed environment. Visual arts docents were recruited and trained to facilitate. The Walker's research focused on the *SpeakEasy* program in order to provide staff with good information about how to improve the program. The audience surveys investigated what engagement activities audience members had been exposed to or utilized prior to attending the performance, and what effect (if any) that had on their engagement with the live performance.

SpeakEasy

Methods

Online questionnaires were used to capture feedback on participants' experiences of the *SpeakEasy* format. At each *SpeakEasy*, a Walker staff member asked attendees to provide feedback on the program, and if they consented, collected their email addresses. On the Monday following the Saturday evening *SpeakEasy*, while the program was still fresh in their minds, a link to the online questionnaire was sent to participants. In total, the Walker collected data from participants at three *SpeakEasys*, following the performances given by Bruno Beltrao (Feb 13, 2010), Morgan Thorson/Low (March 6, 2010) and Saburo Teshigawara (April 24, 2010). To boost response rates, the Walker held a raffle for free tickets to upcoming performances.

Results

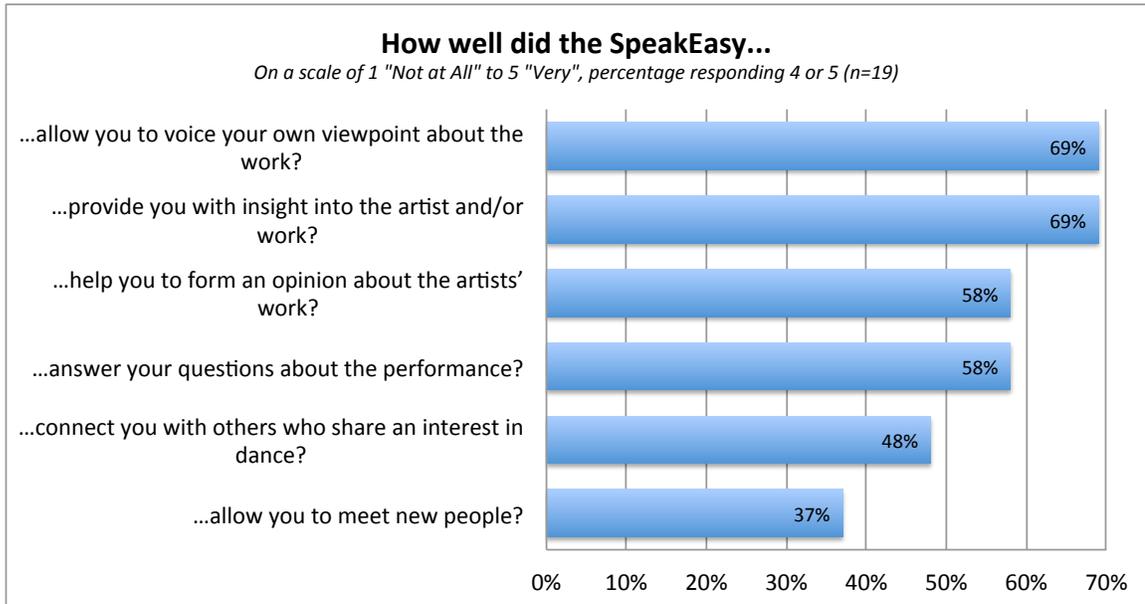
Participants' feedback about the *SpeakEasy* suggests that the peer-exchange format enabled an engaging post-performance conversation. **When asked why they attended the *SpeakEasy*, their most common response was that they wanted to**

Total attendance:	82
No. of email addresses collected:	32
No. of survey responses received:	19
Email response rate:	59%

hear others' questions and thoughts about the piece. When asked which aspect of the *SpeakEasy* they enjoyed the most, however, respondents were most likely to cite the opportunity to voice their own point of view about the performance. Here we see an essential duality of some post-performance discussion formats: they involve a balance of giving and taking, and different people like to play different roles. Managing this balance is one of the central challenges of the practice, for which the Walker provided an orientation for its facilitators.



Figure 5: Walker Art Center – Outcomes and Benefits of Participation in the *SpeakEasy*



The feedback suggests that the dynamic created by the *SpeakEasy* format truly engaged people in peer exchange about the performance they had just attended.

Audience Surveys Methods

Paper surveys were randomly pre-set on audience members' seats prior to the show. Surveys were administered at three performances for each of three artists—John Jasperse (May 20-22, 2010), Ralph Lemon (September 23-25, 2010) and Lucinda Childs (April 7-9, 2011). To boost response rates, raffles were held for the Walker's onsite restaurant.

	<u>John Jasperse</u>		<u>Ralph Lemon</u>		<u>Lucinda Childs</u>	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
Audience size:	439		540		870	
No. of surveys distributed:	387		459		695	
No. of surveys picked up by patrons:	242	63%	282	61%	487	70%
No. of completed surveys returned:	115	48%	179	63%	134	28%

On average, 55% of respondents reported that they had participated in at least one of the many engagement activities offered by the Walker. For the purpose of analysis, Walker's activities roughly divided into three types: post-performance programs, online offerings, and social/learning opportunities.

Walker Art Center's Offered Engagement Activities		
Post-Performance Program	Online	Social/Learning Opportunities
- SpeakEasy (post-performance conversations following certain dance programs)	- Read about, or comment on, a dance performance in the Walker blog	- Social gatherings around dance events (e.g, pre-show Think and a Drink, artist led gallery tours)
- Post performance discussions with dance artists	- Watch video or audio content <u>about dance artists</u> on the Walker Channel - Listen to Talk Dance podcast interviews on the Walker website - Read or comment on preview articles or other online content links (expanded program notes, general articles about dance) available prior to performances	- A workshop or class with visiting dance artists

Even after controlling for self-reported knowledge level of dance, participation in engagement activities—particularly post-performance, or a combination of post-performance and online activity—resulted in significantly stronger reports of impact (captivation, feeling challenged, emotional and spiritual resonance, connecting with the dancers on stage, connecting with the audience, and the impression left by the performance)²¹ compared to those who did not participate in any engagement activities.

Learning for the Field

- Walker’s post-performance *SpeakEasy* serves as a primary model for fostering peer-to-peer meaning making and is one of the programs that resulted in noticeably stronger reports of impact. What elements of the *SpeakEasy* can be replicated at other venues?
- The Walker offers a whole portfolio of engagement activities for its dance audiences, described in detail in its publication *A Recipe Book for Engaging Dance Audiences*. How much engagement is too much? At what point does a dance presenter encounter “declining returns” on its investments? What are the best investments? If the Walker could only offer two or three engagement activities, which should they choose?
- The Walker’s other post-performance program was more traditional in that it involved dance artists in post-show discussions. This raises interesting questions about the nature and quality of discussion that happens with and without artists in the room. While this was not a focus of our research, we did hear some focus group comments to the effect that “it is a completely different discussion” without the artist.
- In combination with the post-performance opportunity to make meaning, presenters and companies need to think about creating an arc of engagement for the audience that extends beyond the performance and likely beyond the time the audience spends in the venue. Using live performance as a centerpiece of the arc, how can audience members’ engagement with a piece be extended?

²¹ Regression output available upon request.



Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) conducted two phases of research as part of its EDA-funded *Dance Savvy* project. Initially, the first phase dually served to gain a baseline understanding of existing film and visual arts visitors' interest in dance and to recruit participants into the *Dance Savvy* pilot program. The purpose of the second phase of data collection was to capture *Dance Savvy* participants' feedback on the program for YBCA to incorporate into future iterations of the program. The program is comprised of three components: a workshop, a live performance, and a post-performance discussion. Participant feedback was captured on four *Dance Savvy* iterations with varying component order and timing. For the last two iterations, the three components occurred on the same day, making for a lengthy and intensive experience.

Methods

In March–April 2010, YBCA distributed canvass cards to visitors to its galleries and screening room. Visitors were given the cards when they purchased their tickets, and were asked to complete and return the cards prior to their departure. This method is used on a regular basis at YBCA, so the box office staff was already comfortable with this method, and mechanisms are in place for YBCA to implement. In addition, an online survey went to “core patrons,” identified as those who attended some combination of at least two films or exhibitions within the previous year. To boost response rates, YBCA offered discounts for future visits to those who completed the canvass card and held a raffle drawing for complimentary memberships for online survey respondents.

Immediately following each *Dance Savvy* program, participants were asked to provide their feedback via an online questionnaire. In addition to answering closed-ended questions, the participants provided extensive qualitative feedback, which was absorbed by YBCA and used to inform the next iteration of the *Dance Savvy* pilot curriculum.

Ralph Lemon <i>Dance Savvy</i> Workshop	October 5, 2010	N= 14
Sankai Juku <i>Dance Savvy</i> Workshop	November 16, 2010	N= 12
Jess Curtis/Gravity <i>Dance Savvy</i> Workshop	February 5, 2011	N= 17
Lemi Ponifasio/MAU	April 9, 2011	N=11

Results

Participants in the *Dance Savvy* programs consistently responded that “hearing others’ opinions” was a favorite aspect of the program (Sankai Juku 33%, Jess Curtis 47%, Lemi Ponifasio 36%).²² Participants also consistently reported that “Creating movement yourself” was their least favorite aspect of the program, though opinions varied.

Throughout the iterative *Dance Savvy* curriculum, participants, on average, reported increased ability to appreciate contemporary dance.

I was amazed at the range of opinions and perspectives. It deepened my understanding of the performances.

– Sankai Juku *Dance Savvy* Participant

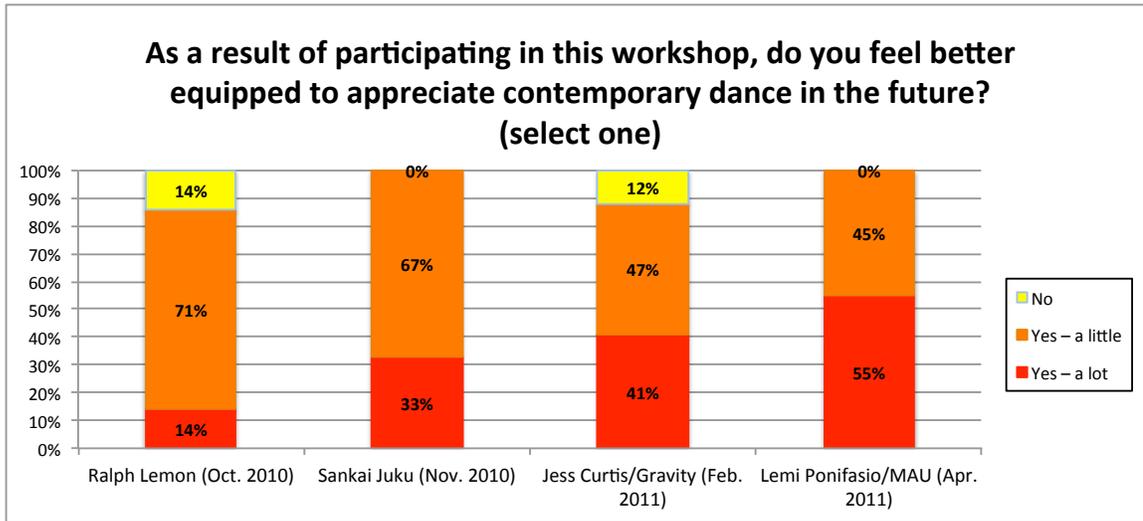
I am curious about those who see very different things than I.

– Sankai Juku *Dance Savvy* Participant

²² The only exception to this was at the Sankai Juku *Dance Savvy* program when participants responded “Listening to the instructors ideas and strategies about engaging with dance” (50%) as their most favorite program element.



Figure 6: YBCA – Change in Attitudes about Contemporary Dance



Learning for the Field

As is evidenced in the aggregated topline report include in the Technical Appendix, the *Dance Savvy* participants provided rich, thoughtful feedback—that seemed to become richer over the course of the program. The simple act of eliciting feedback from audiences and program participants engages them in reflection and processing of their arts experience, extending their experience of the arts event itself. Participants also knew that YBCA valued their feedback highly and incorporated it into improvements in the *Dance Savvy* program. How can dance companies and presenters elicit feedback to enrich audiences' experience of the dance performance? How can dance companies and presenters make use of this feedback, and demonstrate that to their audiences?

Dance Savvy was designed as a performance-specific pedagogical experience, as opposed to the *Dance 101* format we proposed earlier in this report. How are participants engaged differently when the program is developed for a specific artist or performance compared to a more general *Dance 101* model? What are the tradeoffs between potential additional participant benefit and the additional costs of developing and implementing tailored programs?

A key aspect of YBCA's Download program, which was YBCA's brand for their post-performance discussion, is providing a space for people to hear and learn from others' points of views on a piece, which parallels the Walker Art Center's *SpeakEasy* model. What other models (live or virtual) can help foster peer exchange and meaning making? How do extended, iterative engagement programs (as opposed to one-time experiences) develop a networked community of those curious about dance? Do these networks take on a life of their own? How can dance companies and presenters serve as the catalyst for such networks without having to take on the responsibility for curating and facilitating such groups? How can they empower such groups and serve as a resource to get them going and to thrive?

Misnomer Dance Theatre

The timeline of Misnomer's project was extended due to unforeseen circumstances and hence it was not possible for WolfBrown to execute the audience engagement assessment plan originally conceived for the Audience Engagement Platform (AEP) project. Further discussion with Dance/USA allowed for Ron Evans, an independent contractor with Groupofminds, to conduct interviews of AEP beta-users. At the time this report was written, Evans' research was ongoing.



TECHNICAL APPENDIX

Contents:

American Dance Festival

- a) Topline Report, by Performance
- b) Topline Report, by level of involvement in Audience Memory Program

Cowles Center for Dance & The Performing Arts

- a) Topline Report, by Performance
- b) Case Study on the Evolution of the Dance Consortium

ODC

- a) Topline Report, Pre-Program Student Questionnaire
- b) Topline Report, Post-Program Student Questionnaire

On the Boards

- a) Topline Report, by Performance
- b) Synthesis of OtBTV-User Interviews

STREB

- a) Topline Survey Report (December 2010 residency), by Performance
- b) Site Visit Report by Suzanne Callahan, EDA Program Manager

Trey McIntyre Project

- a) Audience Survey Topline Report, by Residency Site
- b) Audience Survey Topline Report, by Participation in Engagement Activities
- b) Online Questionnaire Topline Report

Walker Art Center

- a) *SpeakEasy* Aggregated Topline Report
- b) Audience Survey Topline Report, by Type of Engagement Activity Participation

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

- a) Topline Report, by *Dance Savvy* event
- b) *Dance Savvy* Focus Group Debriefing

Note: Additional interim analyses and grantees' reflections on those analyses may be found online on Dance/USA's Engaging Dance Audiences Groups site webpages: <https://eda.groupsites.com/main/summary>

