

Creative Performance Collaboration:  
Methodologies for Working Successfully Together  
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**Abstract**

This project examines specific methodologies connected to successful creative performance collaborations in dance. It addresses the following questions in pursuit of that central purpose, success: How important is working with the right people? How important is a supportive environment? How important is the integrity and scope of the project itself? There were four creative performance collaborative projects researched within the timeframe of one year. Data collected included field notes from participatory observation, personal reflections from participants, research from other experts in the field of dance, education, and business about collaboration, and survey responses from target focus groups consisting of lead collaborators, dancers, students, colleagues, institutional administrators, and audience viewers all with experience in creative collaborations.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

People working together = Collaboration. Webster's dictionary defines collaboration as working with another person or group to achieve or do something. I define creative performance collaboration much the same way, as two or more people coming together to create more than they could have achieved on their own.

Sometimes we make a purposeful choice to collaborate, sometimes not. Either way, successful collaborations do not happen by accident. The goal is to achieve more with the group than could have been achieved by the most talented individual on his or her own.

Collaboration has been around since the beginning of time. My creative nature and desire to see beyond myself predispose me toward performance collaboration opportunities on a regular basis. Bouncing ideas around with other artists is a great way to jumpstart creativity, and sometimes including another's unique expertise gets the job done better and faster. Whatever the reason, seeking out partnership with others builds community and balances our proclivity toward self-absorption. I enjoy playing with creative people. That being said, I am picky about whom I work with, the environment I work in, and the projects I choose to collaborate on. This realization prompted investigation into what others look for specifically in people, environments, and projects when considering a collaborative opportunity. What characteristics and skills do certain people possess that draw them to work together collaboratively? What makes an environment supportive and conducive to creative collaborative endeavors? What makes someone say yes to one collaborative project

and no to another? And as dance educators, how do we engender these quality skills to students?

This paper addresses issues and methodologies specifically tied to creative performance collaborations that involve the world of dance, but you don't have to be a dancer or know anything about dance to make comparable connections to other situations. Experience and empirical evidence played a vital role in the research. This first chapter presents the background for the study and specifies the problem addressed. Procedures and methods used involved empirical evidence gathered from experiential participation, observation, and reflection from specific collaborative projects; survey results from target focus groups; and academic research from other experts in the fields of dance, education, and business. This chapter will conclude by noting delimitations and limitations to the study and address teaching and applying collaborative skills to students in dance education.

### **Background of the Study**

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor.

- Ecclesiastes 4:9

I am a dance artist, teacher, choreographer and career collaborator. I have been engaged in creative performance collaborations for much of my life in studios, classrooms, communities, and educational institutions. I came to the realization that while many of my creative endeavors start in isolation usually inside my head, they rarely remain there. My creativity may begin in solitude but it quickly and consistently gravitates toward others. I seek out other creative minds to work with, search for environments that support group creativity, and involve myself in projects

that for me have meaning, value, and sustainability. This lead me to look closely and deeply at specific factors that make collaborations successful and what successful collaborators do to inspire, share, create, and problem solve when faced with conflict among group members.

### **The Problem Statement**

This study addresses three issues that surface when we engage in creative performance collaborations: the people we work with, the environment we work in, and project value and sustainability. Issues were examined in regard to the following three questions:

1. When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working with the right people?
2. When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working in a supportive environment?
3. When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is integrity, sustainability, and length of time spent on the project?

Successful creative performance collaborations require people who like working with people more than they pride their individuality. Social intelligence as it relates to leadership and working with others is studied. Building an environment that supports and nurtures creativity and innovation is critical. Creating a collaborative infrastructure within the community of people working together not only provides support to those involved but also fosters efficiency alongside creativity. The project itself must be valuable to all and link those involved with a shared purpose. Unique individuals come together with a common goal or idea to advance the project



together. The research will show how these combined elements help to create successful creative performance collaborative journeys.

### **Professional Significance of the Study**

Collaboration has become an extension of my own learning, creative process, and work. This study supports my personal belief that successful collaborative experiences positively impact the lives and communities of all involved. Collaborating successfully requires a high level of social intelligence among the people working together. Instilling and educating people in the art of social intelligence through collaboration not only leads to successful project outcomes, but also transfers over into other disciplines and life encounters. Socially smart people work to create environments that support creativity and innovation. Choosing projects with integrity and sustainability creates a unified goal and designates purpose and a sense of importance. Defining and describing researched methodologies toward successful creative performance collaboration in the dance arts and education will have a positive impact on future professional endeavors and the direction of educational study within the performing arts. Teaching young student artists how to collaborate successfully will fuel creative exploration and expand innovation in dance while also providing them with valuable tools to navigate in and through life. We set the stage for magic to occur when creative minds understand how to work in harmony together.

### **Overview of Methodology**

Research methods employed included active participation and observation in four creative performance collaborations of varying lengths throughout the year, a

qualitative survey delivered to target focus groups involved in performance collaborations, and academic research surrounding multiple viewpoints on collaboration from experts in varying fields of study.

Data was collected through observation as a participant in the following studies: State of the College Address Collaboration (institutional), Off Center Dance/Boise Art Museum Collaboration (company and community), Magic Mud Collaboration (interdisciplinary, colleague, and student), and the Inspirata Dance Project Stage Door Collaboration (company, community, and institutional). Additional data was collected electronically through both closed and open-ended qualitative survey questions directed to specific focus groups (dancers, choreographers, institutional teachers and leaders, students, and audience members). Literatures from experts in varying fields of study centered on collaboration were included to add the value of previous research, depth and scope to the study.

### **Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The results of this study are limited by the author's dual roles as both participant and observer in the four creative performance collaboration projects. It was a challenge to work inside the experience while also studying and reporting over it. This was however, an intentional decision that allowed for direct involvement and reflection to take place.

For practical purposes the study was delimited to the four projects over the period of one year and a survey sampling from target focus groups who were chosen for their involvement and experience with the aforementioned projects either as lead collaborators, group members, educators, or viewers. The projects and people were

not randomly chosen. They involved people, environments, and projects the author believed represent issues addressed in this study. Delimitations were also established through research of literatures that focused on varying aspects surrounding the topics of collaboration, creativity, leadership, and conflict resolution.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

“Never underestimate the power of a small dedicated group of people to change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead

Collaboration is inclusive...curious...confident...humble...diverse...and it never presumes to have all the answers. Modeling defining characteristics associated with successful collaboration is the start to building a collaborative community within the classroom and must start with its leader, the teacher. Social intelligence skills can be taught, learned, and applied through creative collaboration opportunities in the learning environment. This study concludes by addressing the positive impact collaboration has on student learning, communication, self-efficacy, and leadership skills.

## Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

The review of related literature is divided into three issues that surface when we engage in creative performance collaboration: the people we work with, the environment we work in, and project value and sustainability. It concludes with a brief look at collaboration in the classroom. The purpose was to investigate prior research from experts in varying fields of study centered on collaboration, creativity, leadership, and conflict resolution lending the value of previous inquiry to the study.

### The People We Collaborate With

“Stifle your inner control freak!” - Twyla Tharp

Surround yourself with the most talented, hard working people you can find and then work with them again and again and again. When you find a great creative fit, use it over and over. Successful collaborations are the result of smart, creative minds working together. Dancer, choreographer, and author Twyla Tharp (2009), posits her definition of collaboration in her book, *The Collaborative Habit: Life Lessons for Working Together* like this,

I define collaboration as people working together – sometimes by choice, sometimes not. Sometimes we collaborate to jump-start creativity; other times the focus is simply on getting things done. In each case, people in a good collaboration accomplish more than the group’s most talented members could achieve on their own. (p.3)

But behind every successful group genius is a strong leader that understands how to see through the eyes of the other artists he/she is collaborating with. A strong collaborative leader knows how and when to lead and how and when to follow. They see conflict as a road to creativity and navigate the land minds of discord with dexterity and calm that transmits to other members in the group. Good lead

collaborators also grasp the importance of finding the right people to work with and how to develop and lead those people into a strong group with a unified goal.

Daniel Goleman and Richard Boyatzis (2013), authors of *Social Intelligence and the Biology of Leadership*, believe the emerging field of social neuroscience – what happens in the brain when people interact with each other – reveals emerging truths about neural circuitry, social competencies, and strong leadership.

Leading effectively is, in other words, less about mastering situations – or even mastering social skill sets – than about developing a genuine interest in and talent for fostering positive feelings in the people whose cooperation and support you need. (p. 16)

Good collaborations require smart, talented people working together toward a common goal. They also require a strong collaborative leader with the genuine interest and skills that enable them to create an environment where people not only can collaborate, but want to collaborate.

Great leaders exhibit very specific skills that set them apart. Herminia Ibarra and Morten T. Hansen (2013) address four skills that good leaders possess in their article, *Are You a Collaborative Leader*,

- Playing the role of connector
- Attracting diverse talent
- Modeling collaboration at the top
- Showing a strong hand to keep teams from getting mired in debate (p. 3)

Connecting with others in the collaborative group requires an investment of self and time. You are building bridges between yourself and group members and helping group members make those connections as well. Spending time with collaborative members sends the message that they matter and the project matters too. Diverse talent can come from within and without. Great leaders are aware and open to others

that may contribute in remarkable ways to the project. Leaders also set the tone for the group. They lead by example and model collaboration from the top down.

“Collaborative efforts are highly fluid.” (Ibarra and Hansen, 2013, p. 13) Strong leaders understand the difference between loosening control and losing control. They give responsibility to all members of the group, turn disagreement into the newest innovative idea, and aren’t afraid to end discussion when necessary and make the final call. These leaders build connections rather than commanding them and use influence over authority to move projects forward (Ibarra and Hansen, 2013).

These four skill sets couple with the idea that strong collaborators are overall socially intelligent people. Goleman and Boyatzis (2013) study emotional intelligence and leadership and ask the question, “What makes a leader?” They identify seven social intelligence skills present in strong collaborative leaders:

- Empathy
  - Understanding what motivates others and being sensitive to their needs
- Attunement
  - Active listening and being attuned to others’ feelings and moods
- Organizational awareness
  - Appreciate the organizational culture and values of your group
- Influence
  - Ability to persuade others and engage everyone in discussion, appeal to others’ interests
- Developing others
  - Mentor others with compassion, invest time and energy in other people, and give constructive feedback that helps others and the group
- Inspiration
  - Articulate the vision, foster a positive emotional tone/mood, lead by bringing out the best in others
- Teamwork
  - Support all members in the group, foster cooperation (p.18)

Effective leaders are genuinely interested in others. They have mastered the art of developing positive feelings in the people they work with and fostering relationships that inspire those people to be creative and productive.

Along with social intelligence good leaders understand the effect mood has on those around them. Italian neuroscientists recently discovered neurons in the brain that mimic or mirror what another person does. Behavior neurosciences have identified these widely dispersed neurons as mirror neurons. “When we consciously or unconsciously detect someone else’s emotions through their actions, our mirror neurons reproduce those emotions. Collectively, these neurons create an instant sense of shared experience.” (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2013, p. 17) How do these findings impact creative collaboration? If leaders want to foster positive behavior and emotions within the group it must start with them, at the top. Great leaders listen actively, share ideas, and ask good questions. They are understated, careful, thoughtful, and curious. They use the pronoun “we” instead of “I” whenever they speak of the group’s efforts, creations, and breakthroughs. In a nutshell, they model the type of behaviors and emotions they want to see in all members of the collaborative group. “Collaboration is the natural by-product of leaders who are passionately curious, modestly confident, and mildly obsessed,” according to John Abele (2013), author of *Bringing Minds Together* (p. 39). A great leader will lead with the behaviors and emotions he/she wants the group to emulate or mirror.

Persuasive research from several investigations (Thompson, 2013, pp.108-110) showed correlations between positive mood and increased creativity. Leigh Thompson (2013), Professor of Dispute Resolution and Organizations at the Kellogg

School of Management and author of *Creative Conspiracy: The New Rules of Breakthrough Collaboration* states, “There is a strong, positive linear relationship between positive mood and creativity.” (pp. 107-108) Good leaders are aware of how their personal mood and state of mind affect those working with and around them. They cultivate a positive environment, which directly correlates to creative production. Thompson (2013) states,

The implications for creative collaboration are pretty dramatic: mood undeniably affects mental processing, and our moods have a measurable impact on others. Further, the more power, status, and influence we have, the more contagious we are with regard to our mood.” (p. 108)

This is critical when we consider performance feedback and how leaders deliver it. Studies have shown that how we deliver feedback may be more impactful than the actual feedback itself. Thompson (2013) states, “Cognitive-neural pathways stimulated by mood last for over forty-eight hours. Stated another way: if you are in a positive mood on Monday, you might fully expect to have a creative breakthrough on Wednesday!” (p. 109) We want the members of the collaborative group to bring their best creativity to the table each and every time. Feedback is a part of the collaborative process and when leaders deliver feedback the presentation matters. Negative feedback delivered with a smile and the positive intent to make one better or enhance productivity of the group is better-received than positive feedback delivered in a disgruntled half-hearted fashion.

Finally, you must ask yourself if you are up to the collaborative challenge. Be honest.

Before you begin any collaboration, you must ask: Am I up to this? Do I have the physical stamina, the core strength? This is often the hardest question to answer, given our capacity for self-deception. Of course I can do this! Why



would anyone think otherwise? Got to be objective here – if the leader falters, the enterprise fails. (Tharp, 2009, p. 136)

This is one of the most difficult questions you will face. In the end commitment to the collaboration connects you to the project and the people involved giving you the opportunity to develop something new and real that includes a little of you and a little of each person you've worked with.

### **The Supportive Environment - Creating a Collaborative Culture**

“Community building begins with convincing people who don't need to work together that they should.” – John Abele

Successful collaboration requires the right people working together in the right environment. The right environment supports and nurtures creativity and innovation where each member of the team is equal leader and follower. Paul Adler, Charles Heckscher, and Laurence Prusak (2013), authors of *Building a Collaborative Enterprise*, name four organizational efforts that successful collaborative environments require:

- Defining and building a shared purpose
- Cultivating an ethic of contribution
- Developing processes that enable people to work together in flexible but disciplined projects
- Creating an infrastructure in which collaboration is valued and rewarded (p. 46)

Defining and building a shared purpose brings everyone onto the same collective page. This requires clearly stated goals that are both challenging and attainable.

Encouraging people in the group to continually and consistently bring their unique ideas and talents to the table creates an atmosphere of community where all voices are heard and valued, an ethic of contribution. “Collaborative communities encourage

people to continually apply their unique talents to group projects – and to become motivated by a collective mission, not just personal gain or the intrinsic pleasures of autonomous creativity.” (Adler, Heckscher, and Prusak, 2013, p. 46) Providing immediate feedback to contributions values the individual voice and rewards the collective group allowing them to focus on the present and move forward toward a collective creative purpose.

When we actively listen and value other voices and ideas in the group we create an environment conducive to collaboration, one where we don't assume to have all the answers. “In any collaboration, there is no one way. Go with whatever works.” (Tharp, 2009, p. 60) Once we realize there is more than one answer to a problem we are on our way to successful creative collaboration. Respect the ideas and people you work with and they will return that respect back to you.

Belief in the group is paramount. Adler, Heckscher, and Prusak (2013) believe, “Trust in collaborative communities arises from the degree to which each member believes the other members of the group are able and willing to further the shared purpose.” (p. 50) We must create an environment of trust and respect where members of the group believe in one another and feel open with a willing desire to share and grow with others. Healthy environments allow good collaborations to extend the strengths of each member (Tharp, 2009). This includes finding the proper balance of structure and rules to support the innovation through collaboration so creativity can emerge. We need structure and a common goal but must be careful not to smother creativity with too many regulations. There should be a shared understanding between group members of specific rules associated to the craft

coupled with communication skills that enable them to respond mutually to one another. High-pressure work environments with stringent rules are not proven to simulate or enhance creativity. Teresa Amabile, director of research at Harvard University, has found that creativity is associated with low-pressure work environments – even though people may think they are more creative when they work under high pressure (Sawyer, 2007, p. 48). Finding flexibility within structure and giving people time enables them to work creatively together. AT&T's legendary Bell Labs, credited for inventing the transistor and laser, were on the right track with their official corporate philosophy: "Big ideas take time." (Sawyer, 2007, p. 167) An environment that allows time for ideas to emerge respects the idea that creativity can't be rushed.

Successful collaborative communities align horizontally. This idea brings us back to leading and following. Members in a collaborative group must create an environment of interdependence where ideas are shared, listened to, and considered equally. "For people to work creatively, they need a supportive environment, and caring about the welfare of others in that environment is critical for long-term success." (Thompson, 2013, p. 73) Remember to appreciate all contributions and contributors in the group. Validating others' work is a strong intrinsic motivator for them to continue to produce quality work for the group. Collaboration also requires specific and precise communication. You must learn to say the right thing at the right time to the right people, and know when to be silent. We all become frustrated, even angry at times but when this happens take the advice of Twyla Tharp (2009), "If you

feel you are about to yell, retreat.” (p. 119) Sound advice not only for creative collaborations but life as well.

### **Project Integrity and Purpose – To Collaborate or Not to Collaborate**

“A clearly stated and consciously shared purpose is the foundation of great collaborations.” – Twyla Tharp

Knowing when to and when not to collaborate involves differentiating between projects that will produce greater results from working together versus those projects that are more productive left to solo efforts. You must ask yourself, “Will collaboration on this project create or destroy value? In fact, to collaborate well is to know when not to do it.” (Hansen, 2013, p. 126) As an artist I enjoy working with other artists on creative projects. They stimulate my own thinking and creativity but the bottom line is, will the final product or show be better if I include others in the process? “Never forget that the goal of collaboration is not collaboration but, rather, business results that would be impossible without it.” (Hansen, 2013, p. 131) In the case of creative performance collaboration the business results are most often a new original work for the stage or show. While there is growth and learning in the collaborative process the bottom line is you must put a product out there eventually, and will it be a better one with collaboration or not? “Collaboration should be the exception, not the norm. When collaboration becomes the exception, then it is thoughtful and deliberate – it becomes a craft – and the conspiracy can flourish.” (Thompson, 2013, p. 65) Collaboration creates mindful and purposeful connections requiring commitments of time, energy, and self. Once you have determined collaboration is the path, be ready and willing to work and experience the unexpected.

Is the project worth the risk? Creative innovation and failure go hand in hand. You have to be willing to fail for creativity and innovation to flourish. Keith Sawyer (2007), Associate Professor of Education and Psychology at Washington University in St. Louis and author of *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration* reminds us,

But research shows us over and over again that the twin sibling of innovation is frequent failure. There's no creativity without failure, and there's no group flow without the risk of failure. Since group flow is often what produces the most significant innovations, these two common research findings go hand in hand. (p. 56)

Sawyer defines *group flow* as a peak experience for the group when they are performing at their top level together. (2007, p. 43) This circles us back to the people we work with in collaborations and the level of trust and respect we have for each member of the group. We are trusting that the people we work with will hold up their end of the bargain. That they will come ready to share, contribute, and work. We put a piece of our integrity and reputation into their hands each time we gather to collaborate. Is the project worth the risk?

We must also know what we need from the start to make the project successful and can those needs and resources be realistically met. Be clear from the beginning about your needs, resources, and boundaries. Be accountable to your work and be able and ready to defend your choices and most importantly remember "there is no ownership in a successful collaboration." (Tharp, 2009, p. 127) We work with and in opposition to the people on our collaborative team all to reach a unified goal. When in opposition we are wise to remember there is also great power in the words "Thank you" and learning how to accept suggestions and ideas gratefully is an

important part of the dance. When discipline and commitment to the project are honored by all; when everyone shows up to work and things get done; when a schedule is set and honored even when it is inconvenient and you stay at in spite of all the ups and downs; you know you have something special and lasting. You have successful creative collaboration.

### **Education – Teaching Collaborative Skills to Our Future Generations**

The efficacy model of development rooted in the work of social learning theorists like Albert Bandura posit that intelligence is learned rather than innate (Shapiro & Livingston, 2000). The first building block in learning is self-efficacy. According to Shapiro (2000), self-efficacy can be cultivated in learning environments that are “inclusive, offer relevant academic tasks and learning experiences, engage students in challenging work and supportive relationships, and ensure competency-by providing students with skills, abilities, and requisite feedback on their planning for successful learning outcomes.” (p. 179). To collaborate, we must acquire the necessary and specific skills that enable us to work successfully alongside others through the process. Goleman and Boyatzis (2013) believe, like Bandura, these skills can be taught if the learner is open and willing.

Strengthening social intelligence skills in the classroom not only makes for successful student learning collaborations but it prepares our students for future endeavors in real world and work situations. The Center for Teaching Excellence at Cornell University (2012) offers research based programs and services to support teaching and reflective practice. Their research on collaborative practice states,

Educational experiences that are active, social, contextual, engaging, and student-owned lead to deeper learning. The benefits of collaborative learning include:

- Development of higher-level thinking, oral communication, self-management, and leadership skills
- Promotion of student-faculty interaction
- Increased student retention, self-esteem, and responsibility
- Exposure to and an increase in understanding of diverse perspectives

So how do we sharpen those social intelligence skills so our collaborative classroom learning experiences yield successes? We begin by modeling these skills in the classroom and explaining everything as we go. Dr. William Glasser (1998), psychologist and author of *The Quality School: Managing Students Without Coercion* states, “We should explain much more than we do now...about why we teach the things we do. Then we should break down what we teach into recognizable parts.” (p. 122) Part of that explanation and breaking everything down includes connecting the learning and process to the real world. How will this help my students today, tomorrow, and into the future? Make it relevant, personal, and applicable to life.

We do not always have the luxury of choosing with whom we collaborate. This is most often the case in the classroom environment, but it can be ideal for learning how to work cooperatively with others. Glasser (1998) makes a strong point about power and influence when he states, “The real power comes from students’ perceptions of the teacher as competent to do the job, which is to show and model what is to be done and to create a good environment in which to work.” (p. 57) If we want our students to show empathy and attunement to others we must demonstrate this in our daily actions with our students. Want your students to be aware and understanding of diverse cultural norms and social networks? Bring the conversation into the classroom and practice this both in and out of the classroom yourself. Engage

students in discussion and mentor them toward compassion for others by showing them compassion. “Have respect for their interests. Talk to them and try to find out what interests them and then try to tailor your teaching to their interests.” (Glasser, 1998, p. 54) Value your students’ voices, backgrounds, and interests. Show and model respect.

Teaching our students how to articulate their vision or idea requires involving them in conversation with you and each other, every day. This is one skill we learn by doing. If we want our students to be active listeners and articulate speakers then we practice, show, and encourage active listening and articulate speech, all the time. We must model the use of speaking with proper grammar and clarity and give our students opportunity after opportunity to practice. Engage each other in articulate, meaningful conversation whenever possible. This segues nicely into teamwork. We model encouragement and support, fostering cooperation.

As students improve their personal social intelligence skills this builds community and an environment conducive and supportive to collaboration. Creating a warm supportive classroom environment provides the model for creating warm supportive creative performance collaborations. “Above all there must be trust: They must all believe that the others have their welfare in mind. Without this trust, neither students nor teachers will make the effort needed to do quality work.” (Glasser, 1998, p. 18) Quality work in this case is an innovative end product produced through successful creative collaboration. Creating an inclusive, safe learning environment where students can analyze and reflect engages them as active participants in their learning. This encourages them to focus attentions on critical elements, question,



listen, and contribute abstract ideas to the process leading to more critical and creative thought. Critical thinkers employ self-regulation through their moral value system, metacognitive ability, and divergent problem solving. They come to the understanding there is more than one answer to a question or problem, a key to successful collaboration.

Problems will arise when working in a group. Teaching students to focus their attentions on finding a solution rather than pointing fingers and finding fault is imperative. It is important that they understand from the start that collaboration will force them to view possibilities from many perspectives and there is more than one right answer to every problem. We must accept the differences in our partners for this is what brings diversity, change, and innovation to the equation. As Twyla Tharp (2009) reminds us so well,

Collaboration guarantees change because it makes us accommodate the reality of our partners – and accept all the ways they're not like us. And those differences are important. The more we can draw upon our partner's strengths and avoid approving our partner's weaknesses, the better the partnership will be. (p. 36)

For students to accept their partners' differences they must be willing to let their own ego go. You sacrifice a bit of your individuality to work successfully, creatively, and constructively in a group. The focus is not on the individual but the group and the goal of the project.

Focusing students on a unified and purposeful goal is paramount to collaborative success. They need to be working diversely but all on the same page. A shared goal gives direction and sets pliable boundaries for students to bounce ideas around. Austin Kleon (2012), artist and author of *Steal Like An Artist: 10 Things*

*Nobody Told You About Being Creative* says, “Your job is to collect good ideas. The more good ideas you collect the more you can choose from to be influenced by.” (p. 13) This gives them a framework to start bouncing ideas around and for influencing each other toward a project with integrity and sustainability.

Cooperative learning in the form of creative collaborations is good education. Paul Thomas (1999), author of *Critical Thinking Instruction in Selected Greater Los Angeles Area High Schools*, a doctoral dissertation states,

Good education does not just reproduce knowledge; it produces knowledge. Good education engages the students. Good education always emerges from students making meaning out of their discoveries, and good education often enriches itself when the students leave the classroom. (p. 130).

Do it right and creative collaboration in the classroom will engage students, enhance learning and understanding, and will leave your students enriched, carrying newfound knowledge and understanding with them into real world scenarios. I believe socially smart people working in a supportive environment on the right project make a difference, in each other, their communities, and the world.

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

This creative performance collaboration project investigated issues and methodologies tied to successful processes and outcomes in collaborations, specifically tied to people, environment, and project value. A qualitative research approach was chosen allowing the researcher to enter and observe participants in natural and established settings. Concept sampling was used to select projects, sites, and participants that would help the researcher generate specific knowledge and understanding surrounding the three issues raised during the study:

1. When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working with the right people?
2. When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working in a supportive environment?
3. When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is integrity, sustainability, and length of time spent on the project?

A qualitative survey was administered to target focus groups to confirm and/or disconfirm accuracy of findings discovered throughout the study.

#### **Description of General Methodology and Instruments Used**

A qualitative perspective was employed when approaching methods used for research. “A qualitative perspective emphasizes a phenomenological view in which reality inheres in the perceptions of individuals.” (Joyner, Rouse, and Glatthorn, 2013, p. 73) Instruments utilized for data collection included observation, responses gathered from surveys, and documentation collected during the study including field notes, samples of participant writing, media, and audio-visual materials. Observation,

surveys, and documents are research methods typically used in educational research (Joyner, Rouse, and Glatthorn, 2013). Participatory observation allowed the researcher to enter collaborative scenarios in real time to determine what was occurring and what participants were doing while the administered survey assessed perceptions and attitudes surrounding issues in collaboration. Triangulation was implemented as a means of validating the accuracy of qualitative research and findings (Creswell, 2012).

Qualitative inquirers triangulate among different data sources to enhance the accuracy of a study. Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals (e.g., a principal and a student), types of data (e.g. observational field notes and interviews), or methods of data collection (e.g. documents and interviews) in descriptions and themes in qualitative research. (p. 259)

Multiple sources of information in the form of field notes, participatory writing, survey responses, and visual materials combined to provide the researcher with varying perspectives and data sources establishing triangulation. Descriptions of sources used for data collection follow.

### **Observation Data Collection**

- *Observing while spending time as an active participant in the project*

This method was used with the first collaborative project, The State of the College Address collaboration. The researcher was the lead collaborator alongside the President of the college and worked directly inside the project while also observing and taking field notes to record observations and thoughts. This method was also employed for the Off Center Dance/Boise Art Museum (OCD/BAM) project.

- *Spending time first as an observer, then as an active participant in the setting while simultaneously observing*

The Magic Mud and Inspirata Dance Project (IDP)/Stage Door Series

collaborations allowed the researcher opportunity to first observe and then join as an active participant and observer.

- *Field notes*

Field notes in the form of objective observations and personal reflections were recorded for all four projects allowing the researcher to capture conversations, behaviors, and reactions in real life settings.

### **Survey Data Collection**

- *Closed-ended responses*

Closed-ended formats using multiple choice or Likert scale questions allow the participant to select or rate a response for each question that can later be tabulated for percentages. (Babione, 2015) Closed-ended responses were collected through an electronic questionnaire administered to target focus groups all with collaborative experiences.

- *Open-ended responses*

“Open-ended surveys consist of prompts for participants to add their own perspectives or additional information.” (Babione, 2015, p. 124) Open-ended responses were collected through an electronic questionnaire administered to target focus groups all with collaborative experiences.

### **Document and Audio/Visual Data Collection**

- *Participant journal entries and notes*

Journal entries from participants with the time and willingness to do so were collected for reflection capturing multiple perspectives from individuals involved in the projects.

- *Portfolios and informal student work during the study*

This documentation was majorly supplied during the Magic Mud Collaboration as that project involved student participation that also coupled with a current running course. Students kept a reflective journal to record interpretations, impressions, and relational aspects during the process of the project and to organize thoughts for group discussion.

- *Photos and video*

This documentation was included for the final requirement in the Magic Mud Project. There are also limited photo documentations for the other three projects.

### **Research Context/Site and Participants**

Purposeful sampling was used when choosing projects, sites, and participants to intentionally explore the phenomenon of successful creative performance collaborations. The following projects, sites, and participants were chosen for their “information rich” (Creswell, 2012) conditions (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

*Projects, sites, and participants studied*

COLLABORATIVE CREATIVE PROJECTS	SITES	PARTICIPANTS
State of the College Address	Dinner ☺, community college campus in dance and art studio classrooms, and theatre stage	President of the college, colleagues, student dancers (9 participants)
Off Center Dance/Boise Art Museum (OCD/BAM)	Dance studio and art museum	Company director and dancers, musician, fine artist, costume artist, art museum administration (10 participants)
Magic Mud	Dance studio/classroom, ceramic studio/classroom, theatre stage, computer lab, gala held in student union building on campus	Two modern dance students, ceramic artists (6 participants)
Inspirata Dance Project (IDP) “Inside Tweaked” – Stage Door Series	Breakfast ☺, dance studio and community college campus auditorium stage	Company choreographers and dancers, Stage door directors, community members, photographer, videographer (15+ participants)

**Procedures for Data Collection**

Multiple perspectives and sources surrounding creative performance collaboration were studied to provide triangulation. Participants were studied through participatory observation in the context of working collaboratively in four separate settings on four different projects over the period of one year. Some participants worked in multiple projects. Field notes provided an opportunity to reflect and formatively evaluate the projects as they were evolving. This provided opportunity for adjustments when necessary to improve process and outcome of the projects. Documentation was collected and analyzed from journal entries and notes, photos,

video, and other media. A select focus group comprised of dancers, choreographers, institutional teachers and leaders, students, and audience members was chosen to complete a qualitative survey to confirm and/or disconfirm salient questions generated during the project. Closed-ended responses were tabulated for percentages and open-ended responses were recorded and interpreted for recurring themes that emerged. Table 3.2 aligns methods used with specific projects.

Table 3.2

*Data Collection Used in Four Collaborative Projects*

Projects	Methods						
	Active Participant Observer-Field Notes	Observer then Active Participant-Field Notes	Survey	Participant Journal Entries and Notes	Informal Student Work	Other Media	Video and Photos
State of the College Collaboration	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Off Center Dance/Boise Art Museum Collaboration	✓		✓			✓	✓
Magic Mud Collaboration		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Inspirata Dance Project/Stage Door Collaboration		✓	✓	✓			✓

**Field Notes**

Notes from participant observation, also known as field notes, allow the researcher to document informal and spontaneous interactions that occur while in the field actively participating in a study (Mack et al., 2005). Field notes were used to



compile various observations and reflections concerning the process of creative performance collaboration in this study. Field notes impacted the research and lead to the final three issues focused on in the study.

### **Survey Questions**

Ten survey questions were formulated to gather information from target focus groups to confirm and/or disconfirm salient questions that arose during the study. (See Appendix A1) Delivering the survey to a target population was purposeful and intended to focus on the specific knowledge, language, and definitions specific to those familiar with collaborative endeavors. Care was taken when formulating questions to keep them interrogative, avoid bias, and maintain reliability. Assumptive questions were avoided and clear, straightforward language was used whenever possible. Unipolar word scales were used in place of numbers for all Likert Scale questions. Likert-type or frequency scales use fixed choice response formats and are designed to measure attitudes or opinions on a continuum (Bowling, 2001, p.13). These ordinal scales were used to measure an attitude of importance or unimportance toward perspectives surrounding different issues in creative performance collaborations. This allowed respondents a degree of opinion on the survey.

Five basic questions at the start of the survey established participant demographic and experience with creative collaborations while still maintaining anonymity. Questions six-eight were closed-ended with five predetermined response categories pertinent to the study followed up with an open-ended question for participants to give reasons behind their response. The last two questions of the

survey were both open-ended questions regarding personal likes and dislikes from creative performance collaboration experiences. Analyzing the open-ended responses required looking for overlapping themes and counting the number of different themes and times participants answered or mentioned those themes (Creswell, 2012).

### **Documents**

Valuable information was obtained from participant journal entries, side notes, and audio-visual footage. Documents provide useful information about participants and project sites helpful to researchers trying to understand central phenomena in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2012). Documents used in the first project, The State of the College Address, included the portion of the college President's speech we were representing with movement, and media news clippings including interviews with participants about the process and context of the project. The Off Center Dance Project involved photographs of artwork being used as inspiration for movement, sound bites from the musician involved in the work, and sessions with the costume designer. The Magic Mud Project utilized journal entries from the two dance students directly involved in the project, photos, and video footage shot throughout the collaboration and later used for the final films created. The Inspirata Dance Project involved group notes, journal entries, photos, and film footage.

### **Data Analysis Made**

Data collected in qualitative studies is relational, interpretive, subjective, and complex allowing the researcher to describe the "richness of a social or human problem" (Babione, 2015) from varying perspectives. Perspectives collected from

field notes, journal entries, and other forms of documentation were organized, analyzed, and transcribed to build a complex picture surrounding issues in creative performance collaborations (see Table 3.2). Participatory observation allowed the researcher to capture conversations, behaviors, and reactions necessary to the study in natural settings. Survey responses collected from a small specific number of participants were tallied and data reduced and interpreted based on overarching and recurring themes that emerged. Themes were categorized within the main issues being studied.

### **Summary**

This chapter conveyed qualitative methods used in the study exploring issues that arise in successful creative performance collaborations. Qualitative methods were chosen as the best means of research to fit the purpose of the study, which was relational in nature. “Qualitative research explains factors underlying relationships.” (Babione, 2015, p. 123) The subsequent chapter will explain results obtained from these methods.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **Overview**

This study addresses three issues that surface when we engage in creative performance collaborations: the people we work with, the environment we work in, and project value and sustainability. This chapter begins with a description of the four collaborative projects analyzed for the study, presents results from the focus group survey, and is then organized in terms of the three questions addressed. Field note data from the researcher serving as an active participant observer was collected, recorded, and analyzed from the four collaborative projects; focus group survey questions were recorded, coded, and analyzed; and informal writing from participants was analyzed for emerging themes.

### **Description of four collaborative projects**

#### **A. STATE OF THE COLLEGE ADDRESS COLLABORATION**

This creative performance collaboration involved participants within the infrastructure of an institution, a local community college. The idea manifested itself over a summer dinner conversation with the President and researcher. The unified goal of the project was to produce a collaborative performance that represented a portion of the President's state of the college address launching a new grant available to collegiate members campus wide. The President wanted a live visual on stage to enhance and represent his ideas. The dance would replace the traditional Power Point presentation typically employed. The original discussion was centered on dancers creating movement representational to spoken words and meanings being delivered

simultaneously in the speech. The collaboration progressed to include musicians, vocalists, technicians, and ceramic artists in the process.

When working with an institution that is grounded in history and tradition it is important to be clear about expectations and the necessary resources needed for success. “Before I start any collaboration, I list exactly what resources I’ll require to do the job and then try to find out if the institution is prepared to provide them.” (Tharp, 2009, p. 82) This would have been an immense obstacle to overcome had the President himself not been directly involved. He systematically and diplomatically removed roadblocks concerning scheduling and space availability to ensure the project’s successful completion.

#### B. OFF CENTER DANCE / BOISE ART MUSEUM COLLABORATION

The Off Center Dance / Boise Art Museum (OCD/BAM) creative performance collaboration involved a local professional dance company, musician, costume artist, and the city art museum. The unified goal of the project was to create an original dance work drawing parallels between a current fine artist’s installation, *Angle of Repose* (an exhibit in the museum), and that of modern dancers. The creation of the new work took place in a large open studio space with no mirrors or music. While all the collaborators involved had a shared purpose each entity (dancers, musician, costume designer, museum administration) worked independently of the other and came together at the end for a remarkable collaborative product. The researcher was an active participant and observer in this project.

#### C. MAGIC MUD COLLABORATION

This interdisciplinary, colleague, student collaboration was born from a single idea, movement and media, which lead again to a conversation. The researcher posed the idea of movement and media in discussion with a fellow art colleague who introduced the idea of using ceramic artists in collaboration with dance. This project was a true collaboration brought about through experimentation and play that resulted in a final product that surpassed original expectations. The end goal for this project was to complete a short dance film that encapsulated discoveries made by the artists involving movement, art, and media throughout the collaborative process. The collaborators in the project included the researcher (also the dance instructor), two modern dance students, two ceramic artists (also instructors at the college), and an additional art student. The researcher was both instructor and observer at the beginning of the project, than an active participant observer in the final stages of the project.

#### D. INSPIRATA DANCE PROJECT / STAGE DOOR COLLABORATION

Inspirata Dance Project (IDP) is a professional dance company in residence with the local community college. The company consists of professional dancers in the community and promising young dancers from the college serving in apprenticeship roles. The Stage Door Series is an organization that highlights performances designed to be thought-provoking and a little out of the ordinary in different ways (Stage Door, 2014). They work with college fine arts academic programs, guest artists, artists from the community, and the best of the best students to present unique performances in an intimate setting (viewers sit on the stage with the performers). Participants in this project included the two organizations, the

researcher in the capacity of IDP artistic director, two company choreographers, dancers, and additional community members. The goal of this collaboration was to produce a performance showing the creative process at work. Audience goers were treated to an inside look at the creative collaborative process for IDP's upcoming show, "Tweaked". The inside look at "Tweaked" allowed viewers to see finished works alongside works in progress and provided a question and answer session with company members at the end of the show to discuss collaboration and creative process in dance making. The researcher was both observer and active participant in this project.

## **Presentation of Results**

### **Focus Group Survey Results**

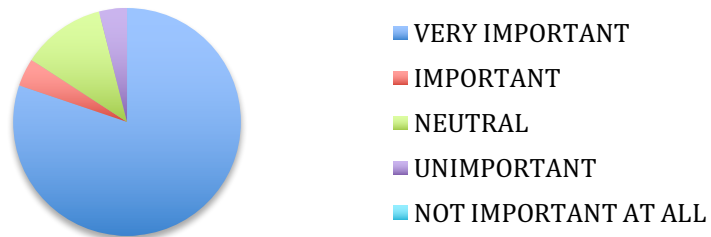
The focus group survey was given to 26 participants with knowledge and experience in creative performance collaborations in varying roles and of varying ages. The majority of respondents were female (92% female, 8% male) holding positions in the field of education as classroom teachers, dance educators, musicians, and roles in administration. Teaching artists made up the largest role of respondents at 42% with dance students making up the second largest unit at approximately 27%.

A Likert 5-point continuum scale ranging from very important to not important at all was used to measure respondent attitudes toward issues addressed in creative performance collaborations. On a continuum scale ranging from very important to not important at all nearly 81% felt working with the right people in creative performance collaboration was very important. A supportive environment was very important for 77% of respondents and 23% felt the integrity and

sustainability of the project was very important with 54% rating the project as important. (See Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3)

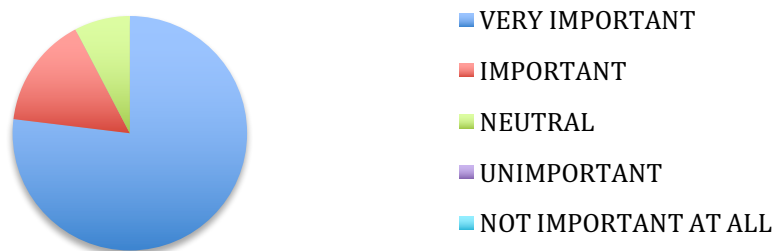
**Figure 4.1 Likert Continuum Scale Results**

**Question 1: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working with the right people?**

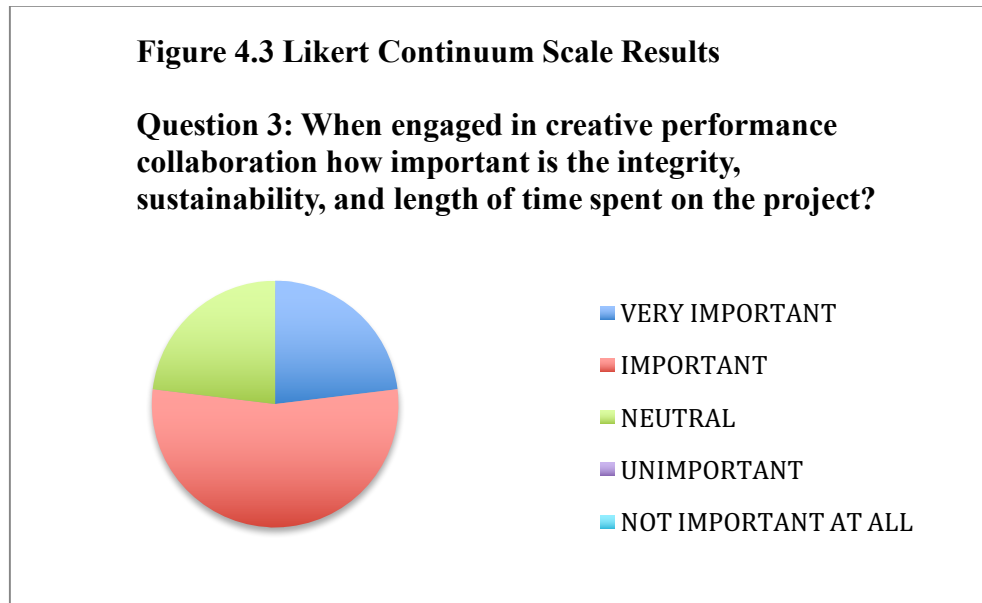


**Figure 4.2 Likert Continuum Scale Results**

**Question 2: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working in a supportive environment?**







The final two questions of the survey were open-ended response questions. Text analysis was used to determine word frequency and emerging themes. When asked what they liked most about creative performance collaboration, themes that emerged included: ideas; the 4 P’s, people, process, project, and product; learning something different and new; and creativity. (See Figure 4.4)

**Figure 4.4 Text Analysis Results Showing What People Like Most About Collaborations**

Text Analysis Using Word Frequency

Emerging Themes	Ideas	Learning	Different & New	Creative	The 4 P’s: People Process Project Product	Total Key Words
Response - #	14	9	7	5	11	46
Response - %	30.44%	19.57%	15.22%	10.87%	23.92%	100%

When asked what they liked least about creative performance collaboration, themes that emerged included: difficult environments; oversensitive, competitive, unreliable people; wasted time; and lack of commitment. (See Figure 4.5)

**Figure 4.5 Text Analysis Results Showing What People Like Least About Collaborations**

Text Analysis Using Word Frequency

Emerging Themes	Difficult Environment	Over-Sensitive, Competitive, Unreliable People	Time Wasted	Lack of Commitment	Total Key Words
Response - #	8	6	7	6	27
Response - %	29.63%	22.22%	25.93%	22.22%	100%

**Question 1: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working with the right people?**

***Observation Field Notes and Participant Responses***

Observation is an important method in all qualitative inquiry used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). The researcher's participant-observer role in all four collaborative project settings provided first hand involvement and opportunity to witness recurring patterns in behavior. "This immersion offers the researcher the opportunity to learn directly from his own experience." (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p. 100) Working directly inside each project permitted the researcher to see, hear, and experience the realities of working alongside others.

Successful collaborators showed recurring patterns in behavior as noted repeatedly in personal reflections integral to the analysis of the projects. Goleman and

Boyatzis's (2013) seven social intelligence skills were apparent in many of the collaborators involved in the four projects. Skills that were evident in all four projects included: empathy, attunement, organizational awareness, influence, developing others, inspiration, and teamwork (p.18). While the majority of those involved showed highly evolved social skills there were instances when these skills were put to the test. During the State of the College Collaboration there were some roadblocks concerning scheduling and access to space involving power dynamics with one individual. The researcher repeatedly delivered requests for space and outlined the significance of the project only to be told there would be no access to the space. This was one instance where delivery and the person making the delivery were actually more important than the message itself.

I found it necessary on this occasion to include other team members involved in the collaboration in order to move forward. Subject A was not responding favorably to any of my requests for use of space and the presentation itself.

When I cc'd other key players in the collaboration in the e-mail (including the President (whom the project centered around) things suddenly started getting done. Subject A was suddenly on the bandwagon and wanting to "help out in any way I can". I found this frustrating and eye opening at the same time.

Working with the right people in this case mattered very much. (Field Notes, August 2014)

Recurring behaviors observed that promoted successful collaboration also included active listening, valuing ideas, and non-competitive natures. The team players in this collaboration were respectful and actively listened and valued each idea that was

presented. The end result was not one that could have been imagined had only one person been calling all the shots.

The dancers in the Off Center Dance/Boise Art Museum (OCD/BAM) collaboration had the luxury of having worked together before. The company is very open in the studio whether learning pre-planned choreography or working collaboratively alongside a choreographer. This project required a higher level of teamwork and collective ideas to produce a successful result. The dancers, musician, and costume designer all spent time researching the art work and discussing ideas for movement, music, and costumes putting all artists on the same collective page while still working within their expert fields of study. The result was a unique production that each player had a hand in creating.

The Magic Mud Collaboration involved intuitive individuals that possessed a high level of social intelligence. The participants saw the experience as an opportunity for learning, growth, and discovery.

Magic Mud was a lovely collaboration of dance, music, video making, projection, and pottery with some amazing individuals. I was challenged to think outside of the box with improv, projection of movement onto different material receivers, and the making of the final video. (Student 1, Journal Entry, November 2014)

One attribute that stood out in observations was the openness each participant possessed. Every person involved was willing to try new things, open to varying possibilities and not afraid to share ideas as they presented themselves in the creative process. We discovered early on that all ideas were valuable and valid

even if they didn't make it into the final product because each idea brought us closer to our final destination.

The participants in the Inspirata Dance Project (IDP) / Stage Door collaboration also had the luxury of knowing each other and having worked together before. The group is highly selective when it comes to adding new members. While moving well is definitely a priority the group also looks for dancers with social intelligence and a propensity toward working well with others. IDP's creative process is highly collaborative in nature so personal attributes such as openness, willingness to share and try new ideas, and attunement to others' emotions is paramount. This results in group-work that is productive and innovative in nature. They also appear on observation to enjoy their time working creatively together. There is a lot of laughter mixed in with the serious business of creating a new work with a deadline looming in the near future.

#### *Focus group survey*

Question 6 of the focus group survey addressed the first issue of study: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working with the right people. Participants were given a Likert Scale continuum ranging from very important to not important at all as to their attitude or beliefs about working with the right people in collaboration. This was followed up with an open-ended question for participants to give reasons for their response. The biggest percentage of respondents felt working with the right people was very important for successful collaboration.

(See Figure 4.6) Out of the 26 people questioned 80.77% of respondents felt working with the right people was very important.

**Figure 4.6 Likert Scale Responses Measuring Importance of Working with the Right People in Collaboration**

Likert Scale Response

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Not Important At All	Total	Weighted Average
%	80.77%	3.85%	11.54%	3.85%	0.00%		
#	21	1	3	1	0	26	1.38

Text analysis was used to interpret common emerging themes allowing the researcher to categorize open-ended survey responses. The top five themes that emerged from the focus group survey concerning working with the right people in collaborations included people that are: willing, open, share, bring ideas, and contribute. (See Figure 4.7)

**Figure 4.7 Emerging Themes from Text Analysis Concerning Working with the Right People in Collaboration**

Text Analysis using word frequency

Emerging Themes	Ideas	Willing	Open	Share	Contribute	Total
%	27.78%	22.22%	19.44%	16.67%	13.89%	
#	10	8	7	6	5	36

**Question 2: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working in a supportive environment?**

*Observation Field Notes and Participant Responses*

The State of the College collaboration took place on a community college campus in art and dance studios and on the theatre stage. Gaining access to the physical environment was important to the success of the project. This was

achieved through open and on-going communication with the people involved. A meeting with the President and key players was held early on to create a calendar for rehearsal sessions based on space availability and everyone's busy and varied schedules. Participants that committed to the project were respectful of the time and space and worked with focused attention to complete the project in the time allotted. The artists involved understood the goal and sacrificed any competitive nature based on individual prowess for the sake of group success. This created an environment of mutual respect and openness that allowed creativity and ideas to flow. All ideas were actively listened to and valued even if they didn't eventually make it into the final piece. The environment was collegial, fun, and stimulating.

The founder and artistic director for OCD is a highly creative and socially smart leader. She knows how to engage people in her vision and inspire them to work toward a common goal. The project was collaborative but lead with clear authority by the artistic director of the company. This style of leadership created an environment that allowed diverse ideas to be shared, considered, and played with in the space leading to a unique work that would not have been achieved in isolation by only one or two creative minds. The researcher never once observed any power struggles or competitive natures rearing their heads. This lead to contemplation to the role leadership plays in the environment.

Watching and working with the OCD Artistic Director is always a joy and adventure. This collaborative work is highly fluid. She has a way of pulling creativity out of you. Even when you are mentally or physically

tired there is always something great processed and produced before leaving the space. How does she do that? (Field Notes, October 2014)

The director collaborates from the top down (Ibarra and Hansen, 2013) sharing goals and responsibilities with the rest of the company members creating an environment where all want to contribute and share.

The environment for Magic Mud was a college dance studio/classroom environment. This particular collaborative environment included the teacher student dynamic. Care was taken by the researcher to establish healthy teacher student relationships early on in the term to create an environment where students would feel free to take creative risks and make mistakes and discoveries. Attention was paid in presentation and delivery in the classroom generating opportunities for students to get to know the teacher and for the teacher to know the students.

I find myself emulating mentors that have had a significant impact on my own learning. They showed an interest in me, asked questions, got to know me a little and made me want to work harder and better when around them. This is the relational environment I seek to create with my students. It is exciting when I actually see it unfolding before my eyes.  
(Field notes, October 2014)

This created an open environment where new ideas and explorations could take place and be considered.

No one was wrong and everything imagined was of use! (Student 2, Journal Entry, October 2014)



The group worked under the assumption that there were no wrong answers giving them an environment to work in where all ideas were considered and valued. Contribution levels from each group member were high making the working environment creative and flexible.

The company dancers with IDP walk into their environment ready to work and create together. Rehearsal schedules are set in advance for the duration of the work and honored by the entire group. This means they start and end on time regardless of work completed or not. This honoring of time seems to instill a strong work ethic in members and an environment that results in a high level of productivity within the working time frame. There is a sense of urgency, responsibility, and focused energy that permeates the group. This was both positive and challenging, at times leading to feelings of crisis under pressure which stretched some emotions past points of comfort.

At times I found I struggled with the idea of collaboration and what it meant for me to pull my weight efficiently and with balance in this particular situation. (Company Member, Journal Entry, January 2015)

The researcher observed a sense of obligation among company members to equally maintain an environment of high creative process and productivity that also honored each member's voice. When it became obvious some were struggling in the environment, care was taken to openly communicate, find the point of frustration and problem solve together.

### *Focus Group Survey*

Question 7 of the focus group survey addressed the second issue of study: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working in a supportive environment. Participants were given a Likert Scale continuum ranging from very important to not important at all as to their attitude or beliefs about the role a supportive environment plays in collaboration. This was followed up with an open-ended question for participants to give reasons for their response. The biggest percentage of respondents felt working in a supportive environment was very important for successful collaboration. (See Figure 4.8) Out of the 26 people questioned 76.92% of respondents felt working in a supportive environment was very important.

**Figure 4.8 Likert Scale Response Measuring Importance of Working in a Supportive Environment in Collaboration**

Likert Scale Response

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Not Important At All	Total	Weighted Average
%	76.92%	15.38%	7.69%	0.00%	0.00%		
#	20	4	2	0	0	26	1.31

Text analysis was used to interpret common emerging themes allowing the researcher to categorize open-ended survey responses. The top five themes that emerged from the focus group survey concerning working in a supportive environment in collaborations included: people, safe space, working successfully toward a common goal, open, and positive. The most frequent theme mentioned as contributing to a supportive environment was people at 30.56%. (See Figure 4.9)

**Figure 4.9 Emerging Themes from Text Analysis Concerning Supportive Environments in Collaboration**

Text Analysis using word frequency

Emerging Themes	People	Safe Space	Working (Successfully-Toward common goal)	Open	Positive	Total
%	30.56%	22.22%	22.22%	13.89%	11.11%	
#	11	8	8	5	4	36

**Question 3: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is the integrity, sustainability, and time spent on the project?**

***Observation Field Notes and Participant Responses***

The researcher observed from the start that the State of the College collaboration project ranked high in importance for project integrity among the working artists. The current President of the college was newly elected and greatly respected by many. Involvement in the project was an honor and there was a collective feeling of responsibility to do the job well. The unified goal from the start was to create a visual performance representative of the language being presented in the speech. Care was taken to bring the same integrity through movement and sound to the work that the spoken words already held thus enhancing the speech through the mode of presentation. Time spent on this project was important and tight. There was a limited amount of time available for all the artists to work together. This required the collaborative leader and researcher to spend a significant amount of time pre-planning so time could be maximized when all the players came together.

The unified project goal for the OCD/BAM collaboration was to create a movement piece that embodied the work of art installed in the museum and draw

parallels between the working methods of the fine artist and modern dancers. A secondary project goal explored the creative process and involved the audience in a question and answer session before and after the performance. These unified goals also unified the collaborators as they worked together to create the piece. The researcher observed focused intent and an obligation to create a piece that would honor the work already created. It was important that the end result imbue the character and integrity of the art piece and the dancers.

Project integrity and sustainability for the Magic Mud collaboration again required focused attention toward the final goal. The dancers and ceramic artists explored many possibilities throughout the duration of the project, but the end goal of the project was always to create a film based on the collaborative process. This made time an important element during the process and required that the group ultimately come to a consensus on final decisions.

Once the project was laid out and started team members committed to the process. The project was deemed worthy of everyone's time and energy.

The project started small and grew with each idea stimulating the next. We had prepared little choreography and had a pretty general idea of where we wanted to take this experiment, but the outcomes became far more than I had expected and were worth the time and effort it would take to complete. (Student 1, Journal Entry, November 2014)

The integrity of the project was important for people to "buy in" to the process.

The IDP/Stage Door collaboration started with a conversation that led to a new idea.

Our “tweaked” journey started at a quaint little breakfast café (The Buffalo Café). We met to discuss our ideas we had come up with that week. We had planned some original pieces that were themed kind of all over the place, which I believe was why the show was originally called “tweaked” in the first place because we were going to incorporate different choreographers and different ideas into one show for a showcase of sort. After we presented the variations of themes we had come up with for our pieces one even including a fan, one with socks, a door, drinks, etc.... we presented my thought of doing a Steam-punk themed circus and the director loved it and just said well, with that one idea you have an entire show so let’s do that.” (Company Member 1, Journal Entry, August 2014)

The project presented itself to company members through careful thought and a sharing of ideas. In a true collaborative sense members were willing to share multiple ideas, value them all, and come to a final decision on the one idea they felt worked best. The minute a unified project goal was chosen the discussion around the table automatically shifted to ideas and thoughts to make the project a success. All the players were on the same creative, collaborative page moving toward the same end result.

### *Focus Group Survey*

Question 8 of the focus group survey addressed the third issue of study: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is the integrity, sustainability, and length of time spent on a project. Participants were given a Likert

Scale continuum ranging from very important to not important at all as to their attitude or beliefs about the role the project itself plays in collaboration. This was followed up with an open-ended question for participants to give reasons for their response. Out of the 26 people questioned 23% felt project integrity, sustainability, and time was very important for successful collaboration, nearly 54% felt it was important, and 23% were neutral. (See Figure 4.10)

**Figure 4.10 Likert Scale Response Measuring Importance of Project Integrity, Sustainability, and Time in Collaboration**

Likert Scale Response

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Not Important At All	Total	Weighted Average
%	23.08%	53.85%	23.08%	0.00%	0.00%		
#	6	14	6	0	0	26	2.00

Text analysis was used to interpret common emerging themes allowing the researcher to categorize open-ended survey responses. The top five themes that emerged from the focus group survey concerning project integrity, sustainability, and time in collaborations included: time (used wisely); goal (expectations and outcome); value; passion (belief in project); and sharing. The most frequent theme mentioned surrounding project importance was using time wisely at nearly 45%. (See Figure 4.11)

**Figure 4.11 Emerging Themes from Text Analysis Concerning Project Integrity and Sustainability in Collaboration**

Text Analysis Using Word Frequency

Emerging Themes	Time (Used wisely)	Goal (Expectations and outcome)	Value	Passion (Belief in the project)	Share	Total Key Words
%	44.83%	20.69%	13.79%	13.79%	6.9%	
#	13	6	4	4	2	29

**Summary**

The results presented in this chapter indicate the collective importance of the three issues addressed in the study of creative performance collaboration: people, environment, and project. While the four projects analyzed were vastly different in terms of project scope, type of environment, and people involved they all remained constant in several areas. All four projects employed socially intelligent individuals that focused more on the group than their individuality. This resulted in teams building community and creating environments conducive to collaborative work. All four collaborations had a unified goal and participants valued the project work.

Results from the qualitative survey supported the issues addressed. Working with the right people and within a supportive environment were ranked higher on a continuum scale of importance, but integrity of the project was still an important factor for many throughout the study. The researcher repeatedly observed all three issues working synergistically together to create a coherent whole. A more detailed summary and discussion of the results follow in chapter five.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions**

As previously noted, this study was conducted to address issues and methodologies specifically tied to successful creative performance collaborations. This final chapter restates issues of the study and reviews methods used. This chapter will summarize those results and discuss practical significance and implications regarding methodologies for collaborative practice in the field of dance and dance education ending with recommendations for application and further inquiry.

### **Problem Statement and Methodological Review**

This study addressed three issues that surface when we engage in creative performance collaborations: the people we work with, the environment we work in, and project value and sustainability. Issues were examined in regard to the following three questions:

1. When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working with the right people?
2. When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working in a supportive environment?
3. When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is integrity, sustainability, and length of time spent on the project?

Research gathered from multiple methods showed how these elements worked synergistically to create successful creative performance collaborations.

Research methods were qualitative in nature allowing data to be collected from multiple people in various real life collaborative scenarios. Data collection involved active participation and observation in four creative performance



collaboration projects of varying lengths over the period of one year, a qualitative survey delivered to target focus groups familiar with creative performance collaboration (See Appendix A), and academic research surrounding viewpoints on collaboration from experts in varying fields of study. The study relied heavily on empirical evidence gathered through participatory observation in the four projects in the form of field notes from the researcher, journal entries from participants, and closed and open-ended survey responses analyzed for emerging themes from the target focus groups.

### **Summary of Results**

Chapter 4 details the relevant findings from this study beginning with descriptions of the four collaborative projects in which the researcher was an active participant and observer. Results from the focus group qualitative survey were analyzed and presented with the remaining data being organized in terms of the 3 questions addressed. The following summary presents an overview of the results from the survey, observation field notes, and journal entries from participants.

#### **Focus Group Survey Results**

The qualitative survey was given to 26 participants of varying ages and educational backgrounds all with knowledge and experience with creative performance collaborations. On a continuum scale ranging from very important to not important at all results showed 81% of respondents believed working with the right people in creative performance collaborations was very important, 77% felt a supportive environment very important, 23% felt project integrity and sustainability very important, with 54% rating it as important. Responses from the qualitative

survey supported issues addressed in the study that determine success in collaborative practice: people, environment, and project value. (See Appendix B)

### **Observation Field Notes and Participant Response Results**

Results from researcher field notes and participant reflections supported the theory that people, environment, and project value all contribute to the success of collaborative processes and outcomes. While evidence gathered leaned more heavily toward the people we work with and the environment we work in, the integrity and sustainability of the project itself still factored in to successful outcomes perspectives.

#### ***Question 1: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working with the right people?***

Similar traits and skills were observed in the people involved that enabled them to work well with others and contribute to the overall success of each venture. Observable traits included those found in Goleman and Boyatzis's (2013) seven skills for social intelligence: empathy, attunement, organizational awareness, influence, developing others, inspiration, and teamwork (p. 18). These recurring behaviors among group members created observable levels of trust and respect that provided opportunities for high levels of creativity and innovation to emerge.

Attunement to others, a highly evolved social skill, was observed in members of all groups. Awareness outside of self was common to see in the form of active listening and engagement when group members presented new ideas during the creative process. The State of the College collaboration was a good example of highly attuned individuals paying attention to one another to create something new.

When the music professor introduced the idea of voice as another vehicle of representation to the piece I was at first surprised because the thought had not once entered my mind. But once the suggestion was made and the idea planted it began to take root and seemed to make perfect sense. Why hadn't I thought of that before? (Field Notes, August 2014)

Individuals, who actively listened and were, attuned to one another, also it seemed inspired one another. There seemed to be a recurring theme of reciprocal contribution. Attunement and empathy led to inspiration, influence, and development of others, which encouraged appreciation for organizational awareness and teamwork.

***Question 2: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working in a supportive environment?***

The supportive environment observed in all four projects started with a defined and shared purpose among all members of each group. There was a unified goal from the start that was clearly defined in each group project. This seemingly provided a sense of direction and stability that cultivated an environment where people started on the same page and felt safe and free to contribute new ideas. Each project was disciplined but allowed wiggle room for creativity and innovation. Environments were structured to value individual voices all while keeping the project end goal and deadlines in sight.

***Question 3: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is integrity, sustainability, and the length of time spent on the project?***

Project integrity and sustainability was grounded in the foundation of a shared purpose or goal much the same way as the supportive environment. There was a direct correlation to the integrity and sustainability of a project and the environment and people involved. When people believed in and valued the project they seemed to willingly accept the risk of possible failure that comes with creating something new while working in cooperation with others. While these collaborations may have started with presentations of projects full of integrity and sustainability people could believe in, the positive and productive end results required the right people working together and supportive environments to bring the projects to fruition. Time played a smaller factor in the successful outcome of projects. People seemed willing to put the necessary time in to complete the project successfully whether the length factored in was brief or extended. The biggest factor with time was how much was required and committing to that from the beginning, with the surety that all would honor the negotiated time factor.

What remains to be discussed is practical significance and implications of this study to the field of dance and dance education. To determine this, the remaining sections will analyze the aforementioned findings according to how they may be interpreted, understood, and applied to future endeavors, education, and life situations.

## **Discussion of Results**

### **Interpretation**

Collaboration is relational. Relationships are complex, subjective, and inductive. The qualitative research in this study surrounding issues in creative

performance collaborations helped explain factors underlying the relationships between people, environment, and projects that produced successful outcomes in all four situations. These factors are common yet not commonplace. Specific factors came together to create a common culture that resulted in successful collaborative outcomes. These factors included attributes and skills that can be taught, learned, understood, and applied to future endeavors and life situations giving this project practical significance.

### **Practical Significance and Implications**

#### ***People can learn to work with people.***

Becoming socially smarter requires a willingness to change and the effort to make it happen. Goleman and Boyatzis (2013) point out, “The only way to develop your social circuitry effectively is to undertake the hard work of changing your behavior.” (p.23) You need to be willing to make a change, be open to new ideas, and then you need to practice. In the classroom social intelligence most often happens from the top down from teacher to student. We listen to our students, share ideas, and ask good questions. We then require the same of them and give ample opportunities to practice, practice, and practice. Teaching students to become socially smarter requires modeling that behavior in classroom and life situations. Providing cooperative opportunities in daily classroom work gives students a structured petri dish in which to practice, make mistakes, learn from those mistakes, and develop the social skills necessary for future endeavors. Creative collaborations in the classroom provide opportunities to practice and hone these important social skills.

Social intelligence not only benefits people in creative collaborative scenarios, it is also important in the work place, and in crisis and problem solving situations. People who understand the “biology of their emotions” (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2013) know they are not immune to stress and use this understanding to manage emotions allowing them to reason and think critically during intense situations. When working alongside others this is a handy skill to have and one that works simultaneously alongside empathy and attunement.

***Environments can be created and nurtured to provide support.***

Improving social intelligence skills aids in building community, which develops environments conducive and supportive to collaboration. Adler, Heckscher, and Prusak (2013) agree that successful collaborative environments require four important efforts:

- Defining and building a shared purpose
- Cultivating an ethic of contribution
- Developing processes that enable people to work together in flexible but disciplined projects
- Creating an infrastructure in which collaboration is valued and rewarded (p. 46)

All of these elements were witnessed in the four collaborative projects studied and none of them are impractical for every day use. Defining and building a shared purpose partners with the issue of project integrity and sustainability. A project idea that the entire group can believe in and sink their creative teeth into gives the environment its first necessary element, a clearly stated goal or unified purpose. A shared purpose puts all players on the same page.

Cultivating an ethic of contribution shares responsibility with those previously stated social intelligence skills. If we want people in the group to continually and

consistently bring unique ideas and talents to the table we need to create an atmosphere where they feel safe doing so. Empathy and attunement are building blocks to trust. Trust creates an atmosphere of community where all voices are heard and valued. No one assumes to have all the right answers and there is always more than one answer to a problem. This provides flexibility for ideas under the structured umbrella of a unified goal and rewards people for contributing ideas to the greater whole. Trust when nurtured allows people to start believing in one another. When this bond is fortified it creates a healthy environment where the collaboration not only produces a unique product, but it also enriches the lives of those involved.

Creating a supportive environment again often works from the top down, teacher to student, lead collaborator to group members, and boss to employee. Good leaders understand the power behind interdependence and horizontal alignments. They are the people with social skills flying out the roof. They are the intentional listeners who are precise and specific with their communication and know how to make people laugh and/or feel valued. Laughter is often used quite adeptly to diffuse tense situations but they also have the skills needed to drop the hammer without damaging a relationship. They know when to lead and when to follow, getting out of the way when necessary and stepping in when critical decisions need to be made. They create environments rich for collaboration and creative innovation among departments and colleagues. If you have one of these people in your midst and you are smart, you will watch them and learn from them whenever, however you can. A good mentor is a gem not to be ignored.

***Projects with a shared purpose create a foundation for successful collaboration.***

To collaborate or not to collaborate is one of the first questions you should ask yourself when considering a cooperative enterprise. Will working with others enhance the value, integrity, and sustainability of the project? Will working with others benefit the people involved? Thoughtful, deliberate collaboration creates mindful and purposeful connections all requiring commitments of time, energy, and self. Clearly stated goals, needs, resources, and boundaries should be stated and set from the start of the project. This creates accountability and paints a realistic picture for collaborators to see allowing them to thoughtfully commit or decline to work on a project. Knowing what to expect walking in gives group members the freedom to be creative within the boundaries that have been specifically set with the unified goal in mind.

This one issue can make or break the collaborative effort. When survey respondents were asked what they liked least about creative performance collaboration the following themes emerged: a difficult work environment; oversensitive, competitive, and unreliable people; processes that wasted time; and lack of commitment. Many of these obstacles however, are preventable with advance preparation and thoughtful planning. The environment includes both the physical space you work in and the people you work with. A supportive environment will provide all the resources you need for project success and support and reward the collaborative efforts of the people involved.



Recall the discussion about working with the right people and ask yourself if the team you have assembled have the attributes and skills necessary for collaborative success. Do they value the project idea? Will they value the time commitment to complete the collaboration? Creating a schedule at the beginning and sticking to it is necessary. Once the schedule is set it is important that it be honored by all even when it is inconvenient to do so. This means starting and ending on time, whether you are finished or not. This means everyone shows up to work and things get done. This means in spite of the ups and downs you will have discipline and the commitment needed for project success.

People involved in the four collaborative studies benefited from their work with others. Evidence from the qualitative survey, participant writings, and researcher field notes reflect positive growth and change as a result of collaborative involvement. Comments from survey respondents included statements like,

‘Working with others provides opportunity to learn new things’; ‘what you learn from other people. Skills that can be beneficial in everyday life can be learned through collaboration’; and ‘They allow us to see things differently and break out of a mold we have created for ourselves’. (See Appendix C)

People are more willing to take risks if the end benefit, both personal and group, is substantial. Keith Sawyer (2007) states, “There’s no creativity without failure” (p. 55) and often that fear of failure can be a powerful force pushing people to risk creative collaborative endeavors. The findings in this study link social intelligence skills, supportive work environments, and having a unified project goal to successful outcomes and benefits.

### **Recommendations and Application**

*The Jones Method for successful creative performance collaboration*

Collaboration has been around for a very long time. It is something we practice routinely in our daily lives, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. Whenever we work in a collaborative environment whether by chance or design, issues surface that must be addressed. Collaboration is important to me. My personal method for successful collaborations has developed over time through many successful and dysfunctional life experiences and is still evolving. What follows is my personal method for recognizing projects worthy of collaboration, people that are good to work with, and environments that allow you to build successful collaborations.

*Project integrity and sustainability – Fulfilling your needs and resources*

All projects begin with an idea. The first thing to do with that idea is ask yourself, is this a collaborative idea or a solo idea. If the answer is collaborative then you begin the process of searching for the right team of people and creating the supportive environment that will allow creativity and innovation to push that single idea to a unified end goal and product.

Consider the resources you will need to successfully complete the project. Make sure if you are working with an institution they are willing and able to provide you with the resources you have requested and the time you need to complete the work. If you are working with an independent company or private group, do you have access to the supplies and space you need to work? Consider the time commitment you and your team will need to complete the project. Be very open and organized about time from the start. When your resource list is met then the next step is forming your team.

*Finding the right People*

This may be the most important step in the process. The people you work with will have an impact on the project process and outcome and on you and others involved. You will be working alongside these people for the duration of the project. You need to want to work with them. Be prepared, this list is long but not unrealistic. The right people are: curious, open, creative, non-competitive, attuned to others, show empathy, are reliable, humble, they contribute and inspire others (no wall flowers here or whiners), they have emotional control, and most of all they are a team player. These people know how to use the words “I am sorry” when they forget one of the above-mentioned skills, but the words are rarely needed. These people are socially adept, value the diverse ideas and talents of others, and enjoy working cooperatively. They understand valuing the project whole over individual ideas.

*Creating the environment*

This begins with the right people, which if you are smart, you have already assembled. Create a schedule. This must be set before the project begins and maintained throughout the duration of the project. Honor the timetable you set even when it is inconvenient to do so. This means start on time, end on time, and use all the time in-between wisely. Show up on time and work. Expect this of everyone. Everyone’s time is valuable. Do not waste your time or the time of the other members in your group. You have already defined and built a shared purpose. This was addressed when people were asked to join the collaborative team. Now it is time to establish that ethic of contribution (Adler, Heckscher, and Prusak, 2013). Be prepared

to be flexible with your original idea. There are new minds contributing to the whole. The original idea, while still the unified goal, may shift and change direction due to different perspectives floating through the space. Honor all of them.

*Socially Intelligent Lead Collaborators*

Finally, it is important to lead by example. The lead collaborator of any project must be socially intelligent, modeling attunement, empathy, and emotional control while contributing and inspiring members of the group to share ideas and work toward that unified goal. They must be curious, passionate and humble, not assuming to have all the answers. They will be instrumental in creating an environment where people want to work together, share ideas, and create. (See Figure 5.1)

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the results of this study were limited by the researcher's dual roles as both participant and observer in the four creative performance collaboration projects. This intentional research decision allowed the author to work inside the experience and capture conversations, behaviors, and reactions that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. If recreating or adding to this research in the future, I would employ this method again. Participatory observation allowed the researcher to fit the methodology to the purpose of the study and the qualitative nature helped explain factors underlying relationships, (Babione, 2015) which encapsulated the basis for this collaborative study.

Interesting and significant factors emerged from analyzed data in the research worthy of additional study. Behaviors that positively and/or negatively impact group work arose. A study looking at participant strengths and weaknesses on the social

intelligence scale would hold merit. Results from the creative performance collaboration study supported the theory that working with the right people, in a supportive environment, with a unified vision positions projects for success. There is however, more to be explored. The relational aspect of collaborative work, how it affects and has the ability to deepen and strengthen relationships, learning, and outcomes is worthy of further study.

**Figure 5.1**  
**Checklist for the Jones Method for Successful Creative Performance Collaboration**

**Project Integrity and Sustainability-Fulfilling Your Needs and Resources**

*Project Idea – To Collaborate or Not to Collaborate*

- Collaboration will add value to this idea/project  
 Collaboration will produce better results than independent work

*Resources*

- The institution/group we are working with are willing and able to provide all our requested resources/needs  
 We have the time needed to complete the project successfully

**Finding the Right People**

*Commitment*

- The people assembled for the team are aware of and committed to the project and work schedule for the duration of the collaboration

*Social Intelligence*

- The people assembled for the team are socially intelligent exhibiting the following traits and skills:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curious           | <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open              | <input type="checkbox"/> Humble          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative          | <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Competitive   | <input type="checkbox"/> Actively Listen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attuned to Others | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspire Others  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Show empathy      | <input type="checkbox"/> Team Player     |

**Creating the Supportive Environment**

*Create a Schedule*

- A work schedule is set at the onset of the project and will be maintained consistently throughout the project  
 The group is committed to start and end on time and use all time in-between wisely

*Commitment and Contribution*

- The group defined and is committed to a unified goal for the project  
 The group actively listens to and honors all ideas  
 People were willing to look beyond themselves in order to further the shared purpose of the group  
 Horizontal relationships are created and maintained  
 Structure and clarity are provided while also allowing for creative flexibility

**Social Intelligence and Leadership**

*Lead by Example*

- The group leader exhibits all of the social intelligence qualities/skills listed under finding the right people  
 The group leader has control of his/her emotions  
 The group leader does not assume to have all the answers  
 The group leader inspires others to want to work together, share ideas, and create  
 The group leader knows when to lead and when to follow  
 The group leader understands conflict leads to creativity but also knows when to step in and make difficult decisions when necessary without damaging relationships in the process always moving the project forward

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## Appendix A

### Focus Group Survey Questions

#### **Creative Performance Collaboration short survey**

Creative Performance Collaboration Methodologies

My name is Cindy Jones and I am a dance artist, educator, and graduate student. I am currently involved in detailed research and study surrounding methodologies connected to successful collaboration in creative performance and dance education. Data collected from this survey will be used to analyze current methodologies being studied and employed in creative performance collaboration scenarios. Your detailed thoughts on the subject will greatly support my research. The survey will take about ten minutes to complete. Thank you for taking the time to participate and answer all the questions.

My Best,  
Cindy

**1. What is your age?**

- 18-20
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

**2. Are you male or female?**

- Male
- Female

**3. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?**

- Less than high school degree
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor degree
- Graduate degree

**4. Describe your current profession and the amount of time spent working in your field.**

What is your current profession?

How long have you been working in your field?

**5. Which of the following best describes your current role as you experience or participate in collaborative practice?**

Dancer/Student	Teaching Artist/ Colleague	Project Lead Collaborator	Audience Member/ Observer	Other
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Other (Please specify)**

**6. When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working with the right people?**

Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Not important at all
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Briefly describe what you think the right people look like and/or act like in collaborative practice.

**7. When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working in a supportive environment?**

Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Not important at all
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Briefly describe what you think a supportive environment looks like and/or provides in collaborative practice.

**8. When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is the integrity, sustainability, and time spent on the project?**

Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Not important at all
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Briefly describe what a project of value and sustainability looks like to you.

**9. What do you like most about creative performance collaborations? Briefly describe why.**

**10. What do you like least about creative performance collaborations?  
Briefly describe why.**

## Appendix B

### Focus Group Survey Results Creative Performance Collaboration Short Survey

#### Q1: What is your age?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses - #	Responses - %
18-20	3	11.54%
21-29	8	30.77%
30-39	5	19.23%
40-49	4	15.38%
50-59	5	19.23%
60 or older	1	3.85%
Total	26	

#### Q2: Are you male or female?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses - #	Responses - %
Male	2	7.69%
Female	24	92.31%
Total	26	

#### Q3: What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses - #	Responses - %
Less than high school degree	1	3.85%
High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)	0	0%
Some college but no degree	5	19.23%
Associate degree	4	15.38%
Bachelor degree	9	34.62%
Graduate degree	7	26.92%

#### Q4: Describe your current profession and the amount of time spent working in your field.

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

*What is your current profession?*

Answer Choices	Dance Teacher	Teacher	Administrator Education	Student	Other	Total
Response - #	13	4	2	4	3	26
Response - %	50%	15.38%	7.69%	15.38%	11.54%	100%

***How long have you been working in your field?***

Answer Choice	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	21+ Years	N/A	Total
Response - #	7	9	3	1	5	1	26
Response - %	26.92%	34.62%	11.54%	3.85%	19.23%	3.85%	100%

**Q5: Which of the following best describes your current role as you experience or participate in collaborative practice?**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Dancer/ Student	Teaching Artist/ Colleague	Project lead collaborator	Audience Member/ Observer	Other (see below)	Total	Weighted Average
Response - #	7	11	3	1	4	26	
Response - %	26.92%	42.31%	11.54%	3.85%	15.38%	100%	2.38

**Other Responses**

1 – I am a student/dancer as well as a teacher

2 – Advising others in collaboration

3 – Former dance coach

4 – Often times a musician or actor for collaborations

**Q6: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working with the right people?**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

**Likert Scale Response**

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Not Important At All	Total	Weighted Average
%	80.77%	3.85%	11.54%	3.85%	0.00%		

#	21	1	3	1	0	26	1.38
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**Briefly describe what you think the right people look like and/or act like in collaborative practice.**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

Text Analysis using word frequency

Emerging Themes	Ideas	Willing	Open	Share	Contribute	Total
%	27.78%	22.22%	19.44%	16.67%	13.89%	
#	10	8	7	6	5	36

**Q7: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is working in a supportive environment?**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

Likert Scale Response

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Not Important At All	Total	Weighted Average
%	76.92%	15.38%	7.69%	0.00%	0.00%		
#	20	4	2	0	0	26	1.31

**Briefly describe what you think a supportive environment looks like and/or provides in collaborative practice.**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

Text Analysis using word frequency

Emerging Themes	People	Safe Space	Working (Successfully-Toward common goal)	Open	Positive	Total
%	30.56%	22.22%	22.22%	13.89%	11.11%	
#	11	8	8	5	4	36

**Q8: When engaged in creative performance collaboration how important is the integrity, sustainability, and length of time spent on the project?**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

## Likert Scale Response

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Not Important At All	Total	Weighted Average
%	23.08%	53.85%	23.08%	0.00%	0.00%		
#	6	14	6	0	0	26	2.00

**Briefly describe what a project of value and sustainability looks like to you.**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

## Text Analysis Using Word Frequency

Emerging Themes	Time (Used wisely)	Goal (Expectations and outcome)	Value	Passion (Belief in the project)	Share	Total Key Words
%	44.83%	20.69%	13.79%	13.79%	6.9%	
#	13	6	4	4	2	29

**Q9: What do you like most about creative performance collaborations? Briefly describe why.**

## Text Analysis Using Word Frequency

Emerging Themes	Ideas	Learning	Different & New	Creative	The 4 P's: People Process Project Product	Total Key Words
Response - #	14	9	7	5	11	46
Response - %	30.44%	19.57%	15.22%	10.87%	23.92%	100%

**Q10: What do you like least about creative performance collaborations? Briefly describe why.**

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

## Text Analysis Using Word Frequency

Emerging Themes	Difficult Environment	Over-Sensitive, Competitive, Unreliable	Time Wasted	Lack of Commitment	Total Key Words
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		People			
Response - #	8	6	7	6	27
Response - %	29.63%	22.22%	25.93%	22.22%	100%

## Appendix C

### Survey Open-Ended Responses Questions 6-10

**Q6: Briefly describe what you think the right people look like and/or act like in collaborative practice.**

Answered: 26

Skipped: 0

1. Respectful, open, honest, similar goals on the project
2. People who are willing to have an open dialog or in other words, people who are more interested in the final outcome than their specific interests.
3. People who are patient and take direction well.
4. Open, flexible and able to communicate
5. I think you can collaborate with anyone as long as everyone involved is willing to contribute.
6. Reliable, humble, good listeners, flexible, experienced
7. I believe having positive people along side you as you work creatively is an extremely important factor in the creation of work. I also love when I can have people who not only push me as creatively but as a person. It allows me to try things and see things that I might not just by myself.
8. Very active fit people with open minds
9. They should be professional in nature and open to suggestions and opinions.
10. Act as part of the team and offer ideas and are reliable and work hard.
11. caring, engaging, creative, thoughtful, respectful, fun, reliable
12. Helpful. Everyone contributing to the project. Not being negative. Supporting each other's ideas.
13. After 26 years in public education, I am surprised every day by who I enjoy in collaborative practice.
14. People who share the vision and passion for collaboration. Also those who recognize its value in education.
15. Committed, having a willingness to share and learn with others.
16. Open minded, engaging, collegial
17. I believe that the right people are willing to not only to give and/or take direction well, but also receptive and willing to work with a team.
18. A collaborative team expresses ideas without fear of rejection, allows their own work to take a backseat if another idea prevails, and knows and trusts that the overall outcome is stronger because they worked together.
19. The right people: flexible, unselfish, cooperative, caring, creative, willing to share
20. Idea has focus with all members contributing and developing final product.
21. Willing participants that equally share the workload. Gives ideas, listens and appreciates the thoughts and ideas of other group members.

22. Those with similar passions who are willing to contribute and share but not overwhelm the process.
23. Everyone brings something unexpected to the table. Anyone could be the "right person" Mostly, I think, members must be open minded, listen, and get along.
24. They are open to others opinions they are also reliable and committed.
25. Contribute ideas but doesn't ignore others ideas.
26. They share thoughts, ideas and experiences. Together they help each other to strive to show their best and provide input and work toward a mutual goal

**Q7: Briefly describe what you think a supportive environment looks like and/or provides in collaborative practice.**

Answered: 26

Skipped: 0

1. Consideration and respect, equality of voice
2. An environment where you feel safe and listened to and appreciated for what you bring to the project.
3. People with open minds willing to try new things.
4. Supportive environment extends to the dancers and musicians working with you - important to get anything done. Again, being open, flexible and able to communicate is very important for a great product, safe experience for the dancers.
5. It's easier to collaborate in a nurturing environment, but any environment is possible.
6. A calm environment where there is space to try new things and revise ideas
7. -positive people that uplift you -people that allow you to see things from a new perspective -people that you can laugh and cry with throughout the creative process -people that push the limits -people that dream and aspire to new heights -passionate
8. All ideas are expressed and everyone is listened to. When a decision is made it is stuck to
9. Answering questions is an example of a supportive behavior. Support provides a safe and comfortable atmosphere for everyone to work in.
10. You need all otherside around you to support in a positive way for things to be the most productive
11. encouraging, positive, problem solvers, supportive, imaginative, active
12. A non judge mental group of people.
13. A supportive environment includes the administration and fellow teachers as well as cooperative students.
14. An environment that fosters creativity and allows for the freedom of expression.
15. People who respect others and are able to work towards the same goals.
16. Positive environment free from judgement is paramount for success

17. I believe a supportive environment hinges on the ideas similar to working with the right people, but feeling safe is of primary concern. If one feels relatively safe, he or she can open up to perform more effectively.
18. A supportive environment does not mean that every idea can be executed, but it does mean that the team members honor the creative thought.
19. A supportive environment is where everyone is working toward the same goal and are willing to give and take. This creates cooperation and makes all involved feel included and successful.
20. Space, time to work successfully.
21. People willing to offer assistance, facilities or necessary resources needed to complete project.
22. A physical space that is comfortable with a decent floor...the opportunity to experiment, without judgment.
23. When people around you are open minded and engaging. An ease of resources within the process.
24. Working with those who encourage you.
25. Help each other when struggling.
26. It is important to have support and advice from the people commissioning the work as well as those involved in producing it. It maybe monetary, time, space, opinion or words to encourage.

**Q8: Briefly describe what a project of value and sustainability looks like to you.**

Answered: 21

Skipped: 5

1. Value is anything that I believe in artistically, sustainability is a more practical scheduling and availability negotiation
2. A project where everyone is aware of what is required and does what they say they are going to do.
3. All reach the same goal in the end.
4. This is difficult to answer - integrity is very important, but length of time might not be, depending on the specific project. Passion project might mean that things take longer, but its all about communication with collaborators to set up a realistic vision. Nothing I hate more than changing expectations as working together impacts many lives. This question has too many sub-questions to answer properly for your study.
5. Depends on your end goal.
6. Not sure what this question is looking for
7. Any time I am deeply involved in something it is a huge piece of me. I want it to show that and inspire others so it can live on. In order to do so I believe it has to be full of passion from the others involved and something new that makes people think.
8. Trust. That we all will do our part in making the piece wonderful
9. The appropriate amount of time and dedication need spent on the project to get the desired outcome

10. performed or enacted in a receptive environment with engaged performers and a receptive audience - transformative experiences for all
11. Something you have a genuine passion about.
12. Time is very important in public education especially since the introduction of standard six and proving growth in our students. I feel my project value sometimes lacks due to getting the piece done versus having unlimited time to complete a greater piece.
13. Integrity and sustainability are vital. Time is not always in direct correlation to quality and can vary widely depending on the project.
14. Project value and sustainability is often based around performance quality and having a good name in the community. This also relates to how seriously a group takes the activity or performance.
15. I understand that circumstances sometimes change, team members can be called away, and sustainability is compromised. However, barring outside circumstances, sustainability is imperative to success of a project. Sustainability does need to include space for team members not only to be creative, but also take time to rejuvenate their spirits. Creativity cannot flow from a dry well.
16. The value is in the result of the collaboration--did everyone involved feel good about the project? The sustainability is how the collaborators and those who share the experience remember and care about the project. The time spent is not as important, but all should be satisfied when it is finished.
17. Sustained during project yes--over extended period of time ? Not sure
18. Something the collaborators feel is important enough to spend their time on, no matter how little or much of their time it takes. Something you would still do if you knew you were going to die tomorrow. Something that would still be on your mind if you chose not to pursue it. Something that weighs on you and you feel is important to share.
19. Something every member has pride and commitment in.
20. Attending each practice on time.
21. A set and realistic time frame with scheduled time deadlines allows for planning and for expectations to be set and met. Keeping a schedule of rehearsals, costuming, publicity etc is a must for success.

**Q9: What do you like most about creative performance collaborations? Briefly describe why.**

Answered: 26

Skipped: 0

1. Outlet for my ideas and a performance venue. Keeps me in touch with my students and with new ideas in the field
2. I like learned from the other artists. It generates new ideas and is inspiring to me. I gain insights into ways that I can improve my own art.
3. different ideas make for more learning opportunities.

4. Ideas that feed off one another are my favorite part. You get the best product when there are more brains helping to cull the material - so long as they are as committed to the project as you are.
5. the surprises
6. An end product that does not reflect this ideas of only an individual; shared responsibility
7. They allow us to see things differently and break out of a mold we have created for ourselves. As tough as new things may be I think it is absolutely critical for us to participate in. It is also so wonderful to share that with others who are passionate about a shared thing. I believe it brings people together and forms a little community.
8. It's a time to get everyone's amazing minds together and create one master piece
9. Receiving and generating new ideas. These ideas can be perpetuated into the future.
10. I like that new ideas are brought to the table with other table
11. I like being engaged with people
12. Seeing it all come together.
13. What I like most about creative performance collaborations is the learning from my students and dance interns.
14. Diverse populations and curriculums coming together to create new performances not possible independent of the collaboration!
15. What you can learn from other people. Skills that can be beneficial in everyday life can be learned through collaboration.
16. Learning and growing from others ideas
17. I thoroughly enjoy the atmosphere it creates, as well as the melding of unique art forms. Collaborations tend to be unique and often take the best of all worlds and create something even better.
18. I love collaboration because every team member brings a different strength to the creative process.
19. I love the creative energy and emotion expressed by each individual. Everyone has the chance to grow with this kind of project if they open their minds to the possibility.
20. End product is an "ours" creation- ideas and process shared
21. Exposure to new ideas. Working with others provides opportunity to learn new things.
22. You get more bang for your buck...double the resources, input.
23. Seeing the world through a different lens. Learning how other people use time, talent, resources, and empathy.
24. Learning what everybody else has to offer and their unique ways of teaching me.
25. Working with different people and sharing ideas.
26. Fresh and new ideas brought together for unexpected results is what I like best.

**Q10: What do you like least about creative performance collaborations? Briefly describe why.**

Answered: 26

Skipped: 0

1. Time consuming, usually no financial benefit
2. Figuring out the time schedules. It is difficult sometimes to find a time that works for everyone in the group.
3. too many chiefs and not enough Indians.
4. When all people are not on board or not willing to flex or communicate - it becomes difficult. My least favorite experience comes when a director has completely disregarded my work after I have delivered exactly what he/she asked for. Non-communicative and flip-flopping his/her own vision is difficult and frustrating, leading to lack of effort on the part of the choreographer and performers.
5. unproductive time
6. Working with people that are unreliable or insist on having their own way all the time
7. It can be difficult to bring different minds together. As creative people I think we get a vision in our mind as to what we want and it can be difficult to have that changed.
8. Sometimes all ideas aren't the most creative or going to be understood by an audience, more openness to opinions would be a big help to the group and person
9. The lack of control that is sometimes found in an unsupported atmosphere. Also, when the project is labeled as collaborative and actually is not, because it is misleading and much less enjoyable.
10. Sometimes it increases the length of getting a project done
11. Relying on others to do their part and to be energetic throughout the experience
12. Negativity.
13. What I like least about creative performance collaborations is lack of time.
14. Participants who insist on doing it "their way" only. Performers, though creative and talented, can be difficult outside of their comfort zones. This poses an instructional challenge that can compromise the production.
15. When people are not committed.
16. Working with overly sensitive or competitive people
17. Depending on the people one is working with, there can be issues of compatibility (i.e. acting as if one is the prima donna in an opera during a group number, or not taking and applying direction).
18. I don't like counting on a team member when I feel they may not follow through....especially if they have talked a big game :)
19. Coordination and lack can be the most difficult.. when everyone is not willing to put in the energy, time and commitment needed. This can lead to frustration for all involved.

20. Time and organizational differences.
21. Being asked to do something you may not be comfortable with or enjoy is one thing I like least about creative performance collaborations.
22. sometimes you just don't want to share!
23. Creative people tend to butt heads. Especially highly talented creative individuals in the performing arts.
24. It can be difficult to find an entire group of people willing to be open and honest, as well as being reliable.
25. Sometimes the ideas are too diverse and can't come to a compromise.
26. Disorganized, thrown together and no real goal that presents a piece that is not really complete.



