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The Interdisciplinary Nature of Dance Scholarship as Seen Through a Citation Analysis of MFA Theses

By

Scott Stone

The scholarly field of dance studies experienced a major shift from the late 1980s to the early 2000s. In 2010, Janet O’Shea described this change as one in which “dance writers no longer concerned themselves only with the dance work and the artist’s biography but also with how dances engage with their social, historical, political and economic contexts.”¹ Called the “new dance scholarship,” the field grew more interdisciplinary as it began to borrow from other fields that could inform the discipline, while also distinguishing itself from the fields of theatre, music, and physical education, with which it had traditionally been associated.² Yutian Wong and Jens Richard Giersdorf’s 2020 “Introduction” to the third edition of the *Routledge Dance Studies Reader* describes the progression of dance scholarship in the 2010s as “addressing the social, political, cultural, and economic ramifications of globalization in relation to embodiment and choreography” as the “standard discourse in the field.”³

Not surprisingly, supporting this movement in the scholarly dance discourse is a shift in dance pedagogy: what and how dancers are learning. In Karen Bond’s 2010 study examining twenty-five years (1985–2010) of graduate dance education, she points out that “approximately 50 percent of graduate degrees refer to interdisciplinary inquiry” in the official descriptions of MFA programs, going on to describe this as a “notable development in contemporary graduate curriculum design.”⁴ While no similar study

¹Scott Stone is the Research Librarian for Performing Arts at the University of California, Irvine. He wishes to thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments which have served to strengthen this article. He also thanks his friends and colleagues: Ellen Augustiniak, for assistance acquiring data through OCLC Connexion; Madelynn Dickerson, for encouragement throughout the research process; and Emilee Mathews, for the regular brainstorming, encouragement, and being a generally inspirational librarian.

Janet O’Shea, “Roots/Routes of Dance Studies,” in *Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, ed. Alexander Carter and Janet O’Shea, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2010), 1.

² Janet O’Shea, “Roots/Routes,” 1.

³ Yutian Wong and Jens Richard Giersdorf, “Introduction,” in *Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, ed. Yutian Wong and Jens Richard Giersdorf, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2020), 7.

⁴ Karen Bond, “Graduate Dance Education in the United States,” *Journal of Dance Education* 10, no. 4 (2010): 129.

exists to determine how these programs might be represented in 2020, given Wong and Giersdorf's previous remarks about progressions of dance throughout the 2010s, it is reasonable to expect that even more MFA dance programs might specifically incorporate interdisciplinary methods and knowledge into their programs.

Specifically interested in this shift in dance scholarship, I was curious if this increase in interdisciplinary research could be observed through an analysis of citations in MFA dance theses. Why theses? As Parry states, "the thesis is the representation in language of discipline-specific knowledge shaped by the norms and convention of a particular disciplinary culture."⁵ Haycock describes dissertations as "roadmaps to a discipline" that can reveal "trends in the literature of a discipline."⁶ As such, MFA dance theses, as a representation of scholarly dance knowledge, should reflect the continuing change of the field that occurred in the 2010s and present a roadmap to the discipline's scholarly discourse.⁷

This article describes a citation analysis study that examines seventy-five dance MFA theses written in 2010, 2015, and 2020. It examines the type and number of resources cited, as well as analyzes the subject content of the cited materials through an analysis of the main Library of Congress Classification classes to which each item is assigned. Through understanding what type and subject of materials dance scholars engage with, I suggest potential ways for the performing arts librarian to better support dance scholars in their outreach, collection development, teaching, and reference work.

Literature Review

There have been no citation analysis studies focused on the field of dance. In fact, with several infrequent exceptions, the subject of dance has not been substantively addressed in the literature of information and library science—and what does exist primarily examines the information seeking behavior of dance practitioners. Potentially

⁵ Sharon Parry, "Disciplinary Discourse in Doctoral Theses," *Higher Education* 36, no. 3 (1998): 273.

⁶ Laurel Haycock, "Interdisciplinarity in Education Research: The Graduate Student Perspective," *Behavioral and Social Sciences Librarian* 25, no.2 (2007): 80.

⁷ Theses, rather than dissertations, were studied primarily due to the amount of each type of document. There are only four universities in the United States that offer a PhD in Dance—University of California, Riverside; Temple University; Ohio State University; and Texas Woman's University (with a small handful of others that are more broadly based performance studies that could also encompass dance)—versus approximately fifty that offer the MFA. Additionally, the MFA is considered the terminal degree in the field of dance, as seen in statements on many different MFA Dance programs descriptions, such as at Cal State University-Long Beach (<https://www.csulb.edu/academic-senate/policy-statement-91-09-dance-mfa>), University of Texas (<https://theatredance.utexas.edu/graduate-programs/mfa-dance>), Duke (<https://danceprogram.duke.edu/graduate>), and many others.

the earliest notable contribution is Nena Couch's 1994 chapter "Dance Collections" which provides a detailed overview of the materials needed by dance scholars and how the library can best manage them. Although its information is fairly general—to help the librarian become familiar with how libraries can work with dance studies—it still remains an interesting contribution to the literature as it discusses a disciplinary field that is so infrequently centered in library science.⁸ In 1996, Dawn M. Grattino surveyed Ohio dance professionals about their information needs and whether libraries met these needs. Results indicated that this group used many different formats of materials—most frequently books and professional journals—alongside frequently using other periodicals and various types of media, such as videos, music, and broadcasted media. While this group indicated that they used "dance" materials most frequently, they also regularly utilized information from nine other broad subjects: "business, arts and literature, theater, science, body related, social sciences, education, and religion."⁹ After analyzing responses to how well libraries serve dancers' information needs, Grattino concluded that "the dance community is very lukewarm about the level of service they receive from the library" and "something must be done to change [the service] if libraries are to maintain a level of service acceptable to this segment of the public."¹⁰ Twenty years after Grattino's survey, Shannon Marie Robinson's article, based on interviews with dance faculty, explored the information needs of dance scholars. She concluded that—other than information that is dance-focused—these faculty also frequently utilize information from the visual arts, music, language and literature, cultural studies and theory, neuroscience, gender studies, human interactions and relationships, and digital humanities.¹¹ Jennifer Mayer's 2015 study of upper-division performing arts students (including dance) primarily focused on how undergraduate students locate information based on focus group interviews. One key finding for the dance students was the interdisciplinary nature of their research, noting that students regularly engaged with "medical information, kinesiology, social issues in dance, music, pedagogy, emotional and psychological health of dancers, body image, and visual images."¹² Mayer concluded that students needed

⁸ Nena Couch, "Dance Collections," in *Managing Performing Arts Collections in Academic and Public Libraries*, ed. Carolyn A. Sheehy (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 41–72.

⁹ Dawn M. Grattino, "A Survey of the Information-Seeking Practices of Dance Professionals in Ohio" (MLS thesis, Kent State University, 1996), 24.

¹⁰ Grattino, "A Survey of the Information-Seeking Practices," 34.

¹¹ Shannon Marie Robinson, "Artists as Scholars: The Research Behavior of Dance Faculty," *College & Research Libraries* 77, no.6 (2016): 783–84.

¹² Jennifer Mayer, "Serving the Needs of Performing Arts Students: A Case Study," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 15, no.3 (2015): 417

information literacy instruction specifically focused on interdisciplinarity, since so many research topics spread across traditional subject boundaries.¹³

Citation analysis studies have frequently occurred on science and social science subjects, but according to Jordi Ardanuy's overview study of sixty years of citation analysis studies, as of 2010, only eight studies specifically focused on the arts.¹⁴ Of these studies, only one—an analysis of citations in the Arts & Humanities Citation Index from 1994 to 2013—centered on dance.¹⁵ While this presents a somewhat broad overview of dance publishing trends, its inclusion of only eight specific journals and an analysis that focuses on facets like document types (e.g., performance review, article, editorial materials, etc.), publication language, author names, and article titles is a fairly different study from this one which focuses on what types and classification of information dance authors are using and conversing with in their own scholarship.

Of the citation analyses that are focused on the arts, several are more relevant to this study because they study citations in dissertations or theses. Richard Griscom studied the citations of theses and dissertations from the Indiana University School of Music that were submitted from 1975–1980.¹⁶ He found that books were cited at almost twice the rate of periodicals and that a large majority of journal titles were cited by only a single document.¹⁷ He also found that some dissertations, specifically those in the sub-field of music education, frequently made use of non-music journals.¹⁸ More than a decade later, Lois Kuyper-Rushing undertook a similar study, but that studied the citations from music dissertations submitted only during the year 1993 from universities across the United States.¹⁹ Kuyper-Rushing, while specifically interested in attempting to create a list of core music journals that are most frequently cited by scholars, also provided data aligning with the earlier findings of Griscom showing that books were cited significantly more than other formats and that most journal titles were cited by only a single author.²⁰ Katie Greer's study of undergraduate art students' theses again indicates that books are the

¹³ Mayer, "Serving the Needs," 424.

¹⁴ Jordi Ardanuy, "Sixty Years of Citation Analysis Studies in the Humanities (1951–2010)" *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 64, no.8 (2013): 1754.

¹⁵ Huei-Chen Ho and Yuh-Shan Ho, "Publications in Dance Field in Arts & Humanities Citation Index: A Bibliometric Analysis," *Scientometrics* 105 (2015): 1030–1040.

¹⁶ Richard Griscom, "Periodical Use in a University Music Library: A Citation Study of Theses and Dissertations Submitted to the Indiana University School of Music from 1975–1980," *The Serials Librarian* 7, no.3 (Spring 1983): 35–52.

¹⁷ Griscom, "Periodical Use," 39.

¹⁸ Griscom, "Periodical Use," 40.

¹⁹ Lois Kuyper-Rushing, "Identifying Uniform Core Journal Titles for Music Libraries: A Dissertation Citation Study," *College & Research Libraries* 60, no.2 (1999): 153–163.

²⁰ Kuyper-Rushing, "Identifying Uniform Core Journal Titles," 162.

most heavily cited format.²¹ She also analyzes the classification of these citations, unsurprisingly finding that materials from the N class (Fine Arts) are most frequently utilized, with many resources from P (Language and Literature) and B (Philosophy, Psychology, Religion) also appearing in the citations.²² Nazan Özenç Uçak's study of Turkish art theses similarly shows that books are cited considerably more than other formats, but does not analyze the citations' subjects or classification.²³

Many more citation analyses have been conducted on other fields in the humanities, one of which includes two fine art disciplines. Due to the large amount of these studies, they are only selectively mentioned in this literature review. Knievel and Kellsey's study of citations in a year's worth of scholarly journal articles, while not solely focused on the arts, does compare citations in eight humanities fields—including both music and art. A large focus is on the language of sources, but they also examine the format of sources, concluding that music and art, similar to most of the other humanities fields included in the study, predominantly cite books.²⁴ Other relevant studies include those by Martha Adkins, who focused on religion and theological studies,²⁵ Graham Sherriff, who focused on history,²⁶ and Laurel Haycock, who focused on the interdisciplinary aspect of education.²⁷

Methodology

This study examines the citations from seventy-five theses written by dance MFA students in the United States during the years 2010, 2015, and 2020. These were identified using Proquest's Dissertation and Theses Global database using the following parameters: Manuscript type was limited to Master's theses, Department must include

²¹ Katie Greer, "Undergraduate Studio Art Information Use: A Multi-School Citation Analysis," *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 35 (Fall 2016): 230–240.

²² Greer, "Undergraduate Studio Art," 235.

²³ Nazan Özenç Uçak, "Information Use in Art: A Citation Analysis of Sources Used in Art Theses in Turkey," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 37, no.1 (January 2011): 77–81.

²⁴ Jennifer E. Knievel and Charlene Kellsey, "Citation Analysis for Collection Development: A Comparative Study of Eight Humanities Fields," *Library Quarterly* 75, no.2 (2005): 142–168.

²⁵ Martha Adkins, "Recent Researches in Religion: A Citation Analysis," *Theological Librarianship* 11, no.2 (October 2018): 16–26.

²⁶ Graham Sherriff, "Information Use in History Research: A Citation Analysis of Master's Level Theses," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 10, no.2 (April 2010): 165–183.

²⁷ Laurel Haycock, "Interdisciplinarity in Education Research," 79–92.

“Dance,” Subject must include “Dance,” and Language was limited to English.²⁸ There were only twenty-five theses that met these criteria for the year 2010, so all for that year were included. Forty-eight theses met these criteria for the year 2015 and forty-two for the year 2020. To have equal representation for each chosen year, a random number generator was used to choose twenty-five theses for inclusion in this study for the years of 2015 and 2020.

After choosing the seventy-five theses, I examined the Works Cited—or equivalently titled section—to determine the format of each citation. Citations were grouped into the following categories: book; scholarly journal; other periodicals; audio-visual; general web; and other. The book category included citations to complete books, as well as individual book chapters. I used Ulrich’s Periodicals Directory to determine whether a periodical title was a scholarly journal or not. If a title was not found in Ulrich’s, then I searched more generally on the internet to attempt to categorize the periodical; in a few instances, I was still unable to definitively categorize the title, so it was placed into the other category. In addition to these few citations, the other category also included citations to resources like personal interviews, theses and dissertations, and archival documents, along with citations that could not be accurately identified by the information provided by the author. All categories were modality-agnostic, meaning citations to both physical and electronic materials were grouped together (with the obvious exception of the general web category, which by its nature only contained citations to electronic resources).

After categorizing citations, all book, scholarly journal, and other periodical citations were assigned a main class from the Library of Congress Classification (LCC) scheme. OCLC Classify, “an experimental classification web service,” was used to determine the most frequently occurring class for each book or periodical title.²⁹ If the most frequently occurring class for an item was W, then the second most frequently occurring—generally R—was used instead, since W is part of the National Library of Medicine classification scheme, not Library of Congress, and generally only used by hospital libraries or libraries that serve medical schools. Classification was not attempted for any citations in the audio-visual, general web, or other categories.

When analyzing book citations, there was no attempt to differentiate between different versions (e.g., printings or editions) of a book title. All books that were

²⁸ It was necessary to limit by both subject and department because there are multiple instances of departments including dance with other performing arts, such as music or theatre. Similarly, it was necessary to not solely limit by subject since there were occasional instances of theses from students outside of dance departments with theses that were categorized within dance. Part of the purpose of this study was to solely focus on the information habits of dance scholars, not just dance as a subject area.

²⁹ “Classify: An Experimental Classification Web Service,” a project of OCLC Research, last updated June 2022, <http://classify.oclc.org/classify2/>.

obviously the same title, were grouped together for the purposes of analyzing these citations for citation intensity (i.e., how many times a particular citation occurred) across the corpus of theses. Citation intensity was not examined within individual theses (i.e., if a book was cited ten times in a single thesis it was still counted as a single citation by that thesis), with the exception of book chapters from the same title that were cited individually (i.e., if three different chapters from the same book were separately cited by the same author, then that book title was counted three separate times). This method resulted in the Works Cited section as the chief source of information rather than individual footnotes.

Each book was search in Worldcat to gather OCLC numbers—numbers unique to each item contained in Worldcat. These numbers were then batch searched in OCLC Connexion (i.e., all numbers were searched at once in a standard cataloging software program) which resulted in gathering all bibliographic records for these items together into a single spreadsheet, a process significantly easier to do in Connexion than attempting to do the same in Worldcat. This data included the subject headings of all the books included in this study. Subject heading data needed to be cleaned for textual analysis. This included deleting any non-English language headings or repeated headings for the same title, repetition which generally occurred due to the use of different subject thesauri, such as Library of Congress Subject Headings (LSCHE) or Faceted Application of Subject Terminology (FAST) headings. Similar entries (e.g., Modern dance; Modern dance—German—History; and Modern dance—German—American influences) for each record were also retained. This data cleaning process reduced the original 3,891 subject headings to 1,918.

Results

In total, there were 2,225 citations in the seventy-five theses (see Table 1). Across all seventy-five theses, the number of citations varied from zero to 169, with an overall average of 29.67 citation/thesis. The 2010 theses had 888 citations (35.52 per thesis), 2015 theses had 543 citations (21.72 per thesis), and 2020 theses had 794 citations (31.76 per thesis). Three 2015 theses did not include any citations (whereas there was only one from 2010 and none from 2020), which partially accounts for the significantly lower amount of citations in this group, but even if they contained the average number of citations from other theses written this year the total citations (theoretically 608) for this grouping would still be significantly lower than the other two years included in this study.

Theses had an average of 72.8 pages (inclusive of all preliminary pages, works cited pages, and appendices). The page count ranged from a 2015 thesis with only eight pages to a 2010 thesis with 474 pages. Theses averaged 0.41 citations per page, with

several individual theses (those previously mentioned as not having any citations) with zero per page. On the upper side of this scale, a 169-page thesis averaged 1.97 citations per page.

Of the 2,225 citations, books, with 895 citations, were the most frequently utilized type of resource. Scholarly journals (with 388 citations) were next most used, and then in descending order: 318 general web, 294 other, 211 other periodicals, and 119 audio-visual citations. While exact numbers of formats cited fluctuated over the ten-year period, the percentage of formats used during each year of study were fairly consistent across the entire time period. The scholarly journals (101 for 2010; 118 for 2015; 169 for 2020) and audio-visual (26 for 2010; 27 for 2015; 66 for 2020) categories both increased year-over-year. Exceptions to general use trends include a large spike in other citations for the set of 2010 theses, which can mainly be contributed to two theses, one with sixty-eight and the other with twenty-three citations in this category—both of which relied on a large amount of personal interviews for their research. Another abnormality with the 2010 theses, the 130 other periodical citations (compared to 13 for 2015 theses and 68 for 2020 theses), can also primarily be traced to a single thesis that cited seventy-two newspaper articles (see Table 2).

Of the 895 book citations, only 888 were examined for the following analysis; the remaining seven were unable to be found in Worldcat. As a result, these seven books did not have OCLC numbers which meant data for classification and subject analysis could not be gathered. The vast majority (668) of the book citations were for titles that were only cited in a single thesis; eighty-five book titles were cited in more than one thesis, resulting in 220 total citations. There was a total of 753 unique book titles cited in these seventy-five theses. Sondra Horton Fraleigh's *Dance and the Lived Body* was cited by nine different theses, the most of any book title.³⁰ There were five titles cited in all three-year groupings.³¹

As stated previously in the Methodology section, there were 1,918 book subject headings after the data extracted from Connexion was cleaned. These subject headings were only for the 753 unique titles (i.e., titles cited more than once were not included multiple times in the subject analysis). There was an average of 2.55 subject headings per

³⁰ Sondra Horton Fraleigh, *Dance and the Lived Body: A Descriptive Aesthetics* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987).

³¹ Ann Cooper Albright, *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identify in Contemporary Dance* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1997); Peggy Hackney, *Making Connections: Total Body Integration through Bartenieff Fundamentals* (London: Routledge, 1998); Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, *Sensing, Feeling, and Action: The Experimental Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering* (Northampton, MA: Contact Edition, 1993); Sally Banes and Robert Alexander, *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979); and Alexandra Carter, ed., *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader* (London: Routledge: 1998).

book title. There were 1,333 unique subject headings combinations (i.e., including both the subject heading in subfield a, along with various topical terms or subdivisions in additional subfields) and 737 unique subject headings (i.e., the word or phrase in the subfield a, hereafter referred to as the “base” subject heading). The base that occurs most frequently is, not unsurprisingly, Dance (189 occurrences). The following sixteen base LCSH occur ten times or more: Modern dance (49); Ballet (28); Education (28); Performing arts (26); Dancers (25); Choreographers (23); Mind and body (21); African Americans (20); Theater (20); Women (15); Human body (14); African American dance (11); American literature (11); Feminism (11); and Ballet dancers (10). An additional 331 base LCSH occur more than once and 411 occur only once. These LCSH run the range from Ability to Zambia, with unique and interesting stops along the way including subjects like Cranes (Birds), Middle class, Somali poetry, and Military ethics, to name but a few. See Figure 1 for a word cloud of the one hundred most frequently occurring subject headings.

The largest portion (34.5 percent; n=306) of books were part of the G (Geography, Anthropology, Recreation) class, which is expected since dance books are cataloged into GV1580–GV1799.4. After G, the four most frequently occurring classes were B (Philosophy, Psychology, Religion; 16.3 percent; n=145), P (Language and Literature; 10.9 percent; n=97), R (Medicine; 10.3 percent; n=91), and H (Social Sciences; 9 percent; n=80). The remaining 19 percent (n=169) of the books were scattered throughout C, D, E, J, K, L, M, N, Q, T, and U. Across the years of the study, the book classification breakdown remained relatively steady. Books in the G class were most frequently cited in each individual year included in this study, and the other four most frequently overall occurring classes (B, P, R, and H) also occurred most frequently in each of the individual three years. The B class was always clearly second most frequently cited in each year, but the other three classes (P, R, and H) did change order. The largest change occurred for P class books, which in 2010 was fifth most frequently cited (7.2 percent; n=23) and then climbed to fourth in 2015 (10.7 percent; n=29) and then to third in 2020 (15.2 percent; n=45). See Table 3 for all book classification data.

There were 307 different periodical titles cited in these theses. Two hundred twenty-two (72.3 percent) of these titles were scholarly/peer-reviewed journals, and the remaining eighty-five (27.7 percent) titles were newspapers, trade journals, or consumer magazines. Fifty of these periodical titles were cited in more than one thesis and 257 were cited in only a single thesis (see Table 4). *Dance Research Journal*, a scholarly journal, was cited by the most different theses (n=15). Rounding out the top five titles, including ties, cited by different theses were seven periodicals: *Journal of Dance Education* (n=13), *Dance Magazine* (n=12), *New York Times* (n=12), *Dance Teacher* (n=7), *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices* (n=7), and *Research in Dance Education* (n=7).

Dance Research Journal (n=26) was also the periodical title with the most total citations. The *Bay Area Reporter* and *Journal of Dance Education* were tied for second most total citations with twenty each, followed by *Dance Magazine* (n=16), *New York Times* (n=16), and *Research in Dance Education* (n=16) rounding out the top six. See Appendix A for a list of the most frequently cited periodicals.

There were 603 article citations; no attempt was made to track whether any were duplicated in multiple theses as analysis was instead focused on the periodical-title level. The most citations (26.4 percent; n=159) were to articles in periodicals that were part of the G class. Unlike the books previously discussed, articles in periodicals in the A (General Works) class were a strong second (17.2 percent; n=104). This is attributed to the heavy reliance some theses had on newspapers, many of which are classified in A. Mirroring the pattern seen with books, articles in H- and R-classified periodicals were also strongly represented; however, periodicals in the B class were not present to the same extent as seen with books. A complete breakdown of periodical articles is found in Table 5.

Discussion

Similar to other citation analysis studies focused on the arts, these results show that dance scholarship most frequently relies on monographic resources in their research. Over 40 percent of all citations were to monographs, which is extremely similar to the findings of both Kuyper-Rushing's study of music dissertation citations (~41 percent) and Greer's study of undergraduate art theses citations (~42 percent). However, these are all significantly lower than the findings from Griscom's study of music theses and dissertations (58 percent), Uçak's study of Turkish art theses (70 percent), and Knievel and Kellsey's study of citations in journal articles from a variety of humanities disciplines (77 percent for art; 81 percent for music). While all of these disciplines are different from one another, they also align in their humanistic inquiries to artistic processes, so it's surprising to see such a large disparity between these studies. When taking into account the different materials that are being analyzed, all of those that examine citations from dissertations or theses tend to be more closely aligned, with the moderate exception of Griscom's findings and the extreme example of Uçak. Perhaps these two studies are outliers in other ways too? Griscom's study is the oldest of these articles—the early 1980s—and Uçak's focused on Turkish theses (whereas all others were on English-language materials, generally from the United States).³²

Based on personal interactions with many dance MFA students, I was actually a bit surprised at the relatively low proportion of books cited as opposed to other formats.

³² Kuyper-Rushing, "Identifying Uniform Core Journal Titles," 158; Greer, "Undergraduate Studio Art," 234; Griscom, "Periodical Use," 47; Uçak, "Information Use in Art," 79; Knievel and Kellsey, "Citation Analysis for Collection Development," 149.

Many of the students I have regularly worked with frequently express a desire for physical books. A limitation of this study is the lack of studying citation intensity (i.e., accounting for multiple citations to the same source within a single thesis) since citations were pulled from the final bibliography/works cited list. This was a conscious decision—one made by most other citation analysis studies—due to the added complexity and time necessary to analyze the citation intensity, but future studies could attempt to examine this additional factor and determine if the same book is being cited frequently by a single researcher.

With the closure of most physical libraries in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I expected to see an increase in periodical citations in the 2020 theses since periodicals are frequently much easier to access online. There were more scholarly journals cited in 2020 than in other years (2010, n=101; 2015, n=118; 2020, n=169), but as a proportion of all citations it was relatively similar to 2015 (2010, 11.4 percent; 2015, 21.8 percent; 2020, 21.3 percent). The most significant difference was actually in an increased citation of audio-visual in 2020 (8.3 percent; n=66; 2015 = 5.0 percent; 2010 = 2.9 percent). It is possible that the cohort of 2020 scholars—potentially affected by COVID—relied more heavily on audio-visual materials than years past due to the ever-increasing amount and ease of accessing streaming media on the internet, which would certainly align with the increase of streaming media consumption reported on during this same time period.³³ One could also guess that the continued high use of the book format might be traced to the increased availability of ebooks due to COVID-related programs like the HathiTrust Emergency Temporary Access Service, which allowed participating libraries to have access to in-copyright materials that libraries had physical copies of in their collection.³⁴ See Table 6 for a comparison of the percentage of cited formats across the three years of study.

The interdisciplinary nature of dance research is obvious upon analyzing the classification of the books and periodicals. A majority of resources cited in both formats (65.5 percent of books; 73.6 percent of periodicals) are not classified in the standard GV area. A closer examination of how the theses themselves are described in the database Dissertations and Theses Global further illuminates this interdisciplinary nature. Similar to the books and periodicals already discussed in this paper, these theses are also assigned subject terms; however, the authors of the theses assign the subject terms themselves—unlike books and periodicals, which are assigned by cataloging staff in libraries. Twelve of the twenty-five theses submitted in 2010 only use the subject term Dance, whereas in

³³ Ryan Faughnder, “Streaming Milestone: Global Subscriptions Passes 1 Billion Last Year,” *Los Angeles Times* (18 March 2021), <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/business/story/2021-03-18/streaming-milestone-global-subscriptions-passed-1-billion-last-year-mpa-theme-report>, accessed 1 July 2022.

³⁴ “Emergency Temporary Access Service,” HathiTrust, accessed 29 September 2022, <https://www.hathitrust.org/ETAS-Description>.

2015, six theses, and in 2020, four theses, only use this single subject. Over the course of the decade, the authors themselves increasingly describe their work as interdisciplinary with the addition of other terms, such as African American Studies, Cognitive psychology, Environmental management, Latin American studies, Sustainability, and Therapy. See Table 7 for a complete listing of subject terms used to describe the theses, along with the frequency that each occurred during each year.

I was expecting the regular use of materials in P (Language and Literature)—since this contains core theater studies materials that could be influential due to their focus on performance, R (Medicine)—since the field of Dance Medicine draws from these topics regularly, and H (Social Sciences)—since so many students are examining how dance reacts to or is influenced by society, but I was surprised that materials in B (Philosophy, Psychology, Religion) were so prevalent to be the second most frequently used classification area for books and fifth for periodicals. Greer also noted that the third most frequently cited classification area for undergraduate art theses was B.³⁵ Interestingly though, Robinson, whose study focused on the information seeking behavior of dance professionals, did not mention philosophy, psychology, or religion as any of the subjects used “outside the visual and performing arts.”³⁶ This seems to indicate that the interdisciplinary nature of dance scholarship might be more similar to art than to music, which primarily cites materials from the M class, with the exception of the specialized field of music education, which more regularly makes use of materials outside of M.³⁷ In fact, 42 percent of the respondents surveyed by Robinson indicated that they use visual arts materials more than any others (with the exception of dance specific resources), so it’s interesting to see the relatively low use of N class (Fine Arts) materials in these theses.³⁸

A closer examination of these B titles indicate that researchers were particularly interested in materials dealing with aesthetics, something which I have never been asked for help locating or researching. This has implications on outreach, instruction, and collection development duties to ensure that I discuss these materials with students, better understand this classification area’s arrangement, and to also consciously purchase dance-relevant materials that fall into this category.

Due to the textual nature of subject headings, quantitative analysis of this data is limited to counting occurrences of words and phrases. Each year there were more unique subject headings than the previous year (i.e., there were 306 subject headings in 2010, 314 in 2015, and 333 in 2020). While “Dance” was the most frequently occurring subject heading every year of the study, its recurrence went down each year: 86 times in 2010, 63 times in 2015, and 54 in 2020. This, in and of itself, does not prove that materials cited

³⁵ Greer, “Undergraduate Studio Art,” 235.

³⁶ Robinson, “Artists as Scholars,” 783–4.

³⁷ Kuyper-Rushing, “Identifying Uniform Core Journal Titles,” 158.

³⁸ Robinson, “Artists as Scholars,” 783.

are becoming more interdisciplinary in nature, but coupled with the decrease in books cited from the G classification in 2020 (see Table 3) I do feel confident stating that the materials being used in the production of dance scholarship are becoming less dance-focused and draw more upon materials from other disciplines.

It is fairly clear that there is a core periodical literature. Only twelve different periodical titles were cited in all three years of theses. Of these twelve titles, only five are classified in G (*Dance Research Journal*; *Journal of Dance Education*; *Research in Dance Education*; *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*; *Dance Teacher*); the other seven are in A (*New York Times*), D (*The Guardian*), N (*Arts Education Policy Review*), P (*Theatre Journal*; *Women & Performance*), Q (*Somatics*), and R (*American Journal of Dance Therapy*). Several other periodical titles classified in G—although they were not cited in each year of the study, such as *Dance Magazine*, *Journal of Dance Medicine & Science*, *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, and others, are certainly also important to researchers based on their frequency of use. Librarians working with dance might want to ensure they are providing access to these journals and to also ensure their users are able to easily find and utilize them.

Conclusion

This citation analysis examining MFA dance theses helps shed light on what materials are being used for the creation of dance scholarship and how it has partially changed throughout the 2010s. It is clear that materials cataloged in the G classification area are most frequently used by researchers, since this holds the GV range where dance materials are primarily placed.

The similarity of these citations from dance theses to the citation trends of other artistic disciplines is interesting to see, but certainly they are different enough to emphasize that dance scholarship is its own unique field and should be treated as such by the library. Performing arts librarians should ensure that they are not only collecting core dance resources, but also relevant materials from the fields of philosophy, psychology, medical sciences, kinesiology, theatre studies, and the expanding social science fields of intersectional studies like gender studies, sexuality studies, and ethnicity-oriented studies. Likewise, as librarians ensure they are providing access to these materials, they should also include them in their information literacy and outreach work so that dance researchers are aware the materials exist and also feel comfortable accessing them.

This is only a single study focused on this unique discipline and future studies should occur to compare with this baseline. It would be interesting to see if trends that have been seen in dance theses also occur in more established scholarship, like in the core dance periodicals—both scholarly and trade—identified in this study. Hopefully more scholarly study will be brought to the field of dance through the lens of library and information science to illuminate this discipline, how it is a burgeoning part of the

scholarly artistic landscape, and how the library can best support this field as it continues to move forward in establishing its own identity outside of the traditional boundaries of music or physical education.

Abstract

The author analyzed the citations from a total of seventy-five dance MFA theses from the years 2010, 2015, and 2020. Results indicate that dance scholars use books more frequently than other types of information. Based on an analysis of Library of Congress Classification areas, the information cited in the theses was very interdisciplinary, with more non-dance resources being cited than dance-specific ones. This information—the first citation analysis focused on dance—helps to establish a baseline of information use in the scholarly dance field and can also be of practical use to the performing arts librarian wanting to better understand how to potentially work with this unique discipline.

Appendix A

Most Frequently Cited Periodicals Arranged in Descending Order of Count of Theses

Periodical Title	Theses Citing Periodical	Total Citations
Dance Research Journal	15	26
Journal of Dance Education	13	20
Dance Magazine	12	16
The New York Times	12	16
Research in Dance Education	7	16
Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices	7	16
Dance Teacher	7	7
Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance	6	12
American Journal of Dance Therapy	6	8
Theatre Journal	6	7
Journal of Dance Medicine & Science	5	12
The Guardian	5	5
Contact Quarterly	4	6
The New Yorker	4	6
Arts Education Policy Review	4	5
The Washington Post	4	5
Time	4	5
Dance Research	3	4
Signs	3	4
Women & Performance	3	4
Los Angeles Times	3	3
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	3	3
The Huffington Post	3	3
Theater (Durham)	3	3
Somatics	3	3

San Francisco Chronicle	2	10
TDR	2	5
Hypatia	2	4
Ballet Review	2	3
Social Science & Medicine	2	3
Ethos (Malden)	2	3
NTQ New Theatre Quarterly	2	3
Psychology Today	2	3
American Quarterly	2	2
Australian Feminist Studies	2	2
Dance Chronicle	2	2
Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience	2	2
Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy	2	2
Frontiers (Lincoln)	2	2
Frontiers in Psychology	2	2
British Journal of Aesthetics	2	2
Journal of Asian American Studies	2	2
Journal of Black Studies	2	2
Journal of Pan African Studies	2	2
Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology	2	2
PAJ	2	2
Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise	2	2
Sport in Society	2	2
The Atlantic Monthly	2	2
USA Today	2	2