

Bonfante 1

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In Andrea R. Fishman's article, "Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish" she studies the literacy instruction of a six-year-old boy named Eli Fisher Jr. She claimed the kids "...come to school not devoid of knowledge and values but with clear demand of what their world demands and requires..." (Fishman Introduction Paragraph). When Fishman was studying Eli, she noticed a few things. Before Eli started to attend school, he would participate in family "events". These events aren't scheduled per say, but they often occur at the same time every day. One day after dinner while his siblings went to play games, Eli sat with his father and read a book. "Eli, Sr., began reading the book out loud... soon everyone was listening to the story..." (2). When Fishman included this observation into her article, she gave us an example that helps to support her claim. Before the children even start school, even though literacy and education aren't encouraged in this Amish house, they are still presented with opportunities to read. Showing that learning doesn't start in the classroom but rather at home. Relating this to

myself, when I was a child before I started school, I would watch a show called Xuxa. It is very famous in Brazil and helps teach about the basic language of Portuguese. That is my earliest memory of learning to read, and it was before I even started to attend school. In Madeline Halvey's article "Simple Forms of Dance and Movement Literacy" she described the benefits of writing and how it affects dancing. A claim made by Lehoux states "...that the best understanding of dance movement is through notation." (Lehoux 4). When trying to prove her claim that writing improves dancing, she gave questionnaires about any literate activities done to one ballet instructor (Briana) and one college level ballet class professor (Kris). Both of them both reported writing down choreography in a binder or notebook. For Briana she reported doing so because, "...her writing style helps her define parts of the piece where the dancers are in new spots or where the actual choreography differs from the previous choreography..." (Role of Dance Instructor: Choreography and Corrections). This helps support her claim that literate activities improve dance. By writing down the new positions and dancers' locations she can help put it together on the dance floor better. She uses her writing to bring the dance to life. For Kris, she says "...writing down her choreography or lessons helps her remember and clarify information..." (Role of Dance Instructor: Assignments and Exams). While for Kris, writing down her information doesn't help with dance itself, it does help for learning the basics of dance. As a professor for college level ballet, she needs to be able to teach terminology and pronunciation properly and to do that she uses lots of literature. She has two textbooks assigned, and to ensure her students are prepared and knowledgeable of ballet, she assigns multi-paged essays. While both the

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dance teacher and professor use language and literacy in their curriculum, their uses are very different. Regardless, using both of their reports, it supports Halvey's argument that writing can improve dancing. For Briana, writing helps to visualize the better and put it into physical form on the dance floor, while for Kris, writing helps students remember their ballet curriculum. Both are very different uses but nevertheless, very helpful for dance.

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Works Cited

Fishman, Andrea. Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish

Halvey, Madeline. Simple Forms of Dance and Movement Literacy