

Learning a Language of Movement :  
Laban's Effort Shape Theory Linked to Drama Therapy Practices

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A Thesis

In

The Department

of

Creative Arts Therapies

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Creative Arts Therapies) at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

September 2010

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*Your file* *Votre référence*  
ISBN: 978-0-494-71039-5  
*Our file* *Notre référence*  
ISBN: 978-0-494-71039-5

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## Abstract

### Learning a Language of Movement:

#### Laban's Effort Shape Theory Linked to Drama Therapy Practices

Anne Eitzen

Although Laban's effort shape theory has been integrated into education and the field dance movement therapy, it has yet to be linked to the field of dramatherapy. This paper explores the principles of Laban's effort shape theory and presents a language for understanding and qualifying movement. It goes into detailed examples of how the Laban's theory has found its place in the therapeutic domain. Effort shape theory possesses similar fundamental beliefs to that of the drama therapy field, specifically, found in the work of Jones' Core Processes and Sue Jennings' EPR Model. The paper will demonstrate various possibilities for linking Laban's theory to these two dramatherapy techniques, specifically when working with the body in movement. Ideally the reader will understand that by providing a vocabulary of movement to the field of dramatherapy, it might serve as a useful tool for therapists when working with their participants.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my family for their support throughout this process. They have always given me encouragement during my academic studies. I would specifically like to acknowledge my grandmother, Janet Weinroth, who not only helped with the editing of my paper but also provided a warm and nurturing environment while I was writing.

As well I would like to acknowledge Liz Valdez and Bryan Doubt who introduced me to the work of Rudolph Laban. These two educators helped me develop an awareness of my movement style and pushed me to move outside of my comfort zone. It is a direct result of their teaching that I pursued my studies in theatre and drama therapy. I am very grateful for the lessons they gave me and the personal growth that resulted from the process.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my thesis supervisor, Yehudit Silverman. I thank her for her patience in the editing and re-working of the paper. Her work was not only diligent but in-tuned with my writing style. Mostly, I am grateful for her encouragement and sincere interest in my research topic. In moments of doubt I was reassured that the topic area had great potential for the field of dramatherapy.

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## **Introduction**

During my years of training as an actor I discovered the work of Rudolph Laban. His theories and vocabulary of movement were extremely helpful in terms of increasing my body awareness and understanding and recognizing my specific habits and movement patterns. The effort shape theory is a useful tool as it promotes the exploration of new type of movement outside of one's comfort zone. As Laban's vocabulary of movement is accessible and easy to understand it facilitates discussing movement in a clear and succinct way.

This paper will attempt to address the question; can Laban's language of movement, specifically that of effort shape, be beneficial as a tool for drama therapists when observing the movements of their participants and when walking them through specific activities? Perhaps this specific vocabulary can help drama therapists recognize movement patterns in their participants. The vocabulary then becomes a useful tool for assessing the degree of change and transformation present in the therapeutic process of the client. The vocabulary of effort shape is beneficial to the therapist as a means of observing, assessing and leading participants through movement exercises.

If the language of Laban is easily accessible and simple to understand it may also become a tool for participants, helping them to better understand their bodies and offering new discoveries of movement. In drama therapy we require that participants engage in their bodies, whether in the play or in the embodiment of specific characters. Laban intended for his work to help individuals in understanding their movements and believed this helped personal development. This seems to parallel the same goals of embodiment outlined in drama therapy.

This research paper will examine the possibility of Laban's effort theory being a useful tool for drama therapists and participants when exploring movement in the therapeutic process. The first chapter will break down effort theory by examining the four categories of effort that are present; this includes the effort of weight, time, space and flow. This chapter will give a clear definition of Laban's effort shape vocabulary and specific examples of how it is used. By understanding the various terms in Laban's effort shape theory the reader will have a strong base for the following chapters.

The second chapter will explore how Laban's effort theory has been incorporated in various forms of therapy. As Laban's work does not have a lot of literature linking it to dramatherapy this chapter will explore links made to our sister field of Dance Movement Therapy. The chapter will also provide examples of how Laban's language of movement serves as an educational tool in various contexts. In understanding how effort has been related to therapy it becomes clearer how it may be used as a tool for drama therapists working with movement.

The third chapter will explore the work of drama therapist Phil Jones and his nine core processes. This chapter will outline the seven of the core processes in detail in order to understand how the processes are used in the therapy process. These processes include; dramatic projection, play, embodiment, role taking and personification, empathy and distancing, the life drama connection and transformation. These processes will be viewed specifically in relationship to the presence of movement. The specific parts of the process that relate to movement will then be examined in relationship to Laban's vocabulary. I will also provide examples of how the effort shape vocabulary might be integrated within each of core processes.

The fourth chapter will explore the work of drama therapist Sue Jennings and her three part developmental paradigm; embodiment, projection and role. The chapter will outline the EPR paradigm and explore the three parts of the process in detail including the aims and goals present in exploring embodiment, projection and role. EPR will be explored specifically in relationship to movement and active exploration of the body. The chapter will see if the goals of Jennings' work parallel the goals outlined by Laban's effort theory. This will be done by identifying the presence of movement as well as the exploration of the body found in EPR. The chapter will also identify the ways in which Laban's effort language of movement has potential to enrich this process and will provide specific examples of including the effort shape vocabulary within EPR activities and exercises.

The conclusion section will provide an overview of how Laban's effort shape theory has been used in therapy up until now. The conclusion will also summarize the potential parallels between Laban's vocabulary of effort shape to the work of both Sue Jennings and Phil Jones. This chapter will finish with a discussion section that will acknowledge some of the possible limitations of linking these theories and possible reasons why it may not be an appropriate match. The final part of the discussion will explore future applications for incorporating Laban's effort shape vocabulary as a tool in the field of drama therapy.

### **Chapter 1: An Overview of Laban's Effort Shape Theory**

This chapter will provide an overview of the life and theories of Rudolf Laban, specifically his studies of Eukinetics, also known as effort shape theory. This chapter will present effort shape theory as it is broken down into the four categories of weight, time, space and flow. Each category will be defined and placed on a continuum axis



between two extremes. The various categories of movement will be further developed by examining the qualities of the different movements and providing multiple examples of how these movements exist within the body. Theory will be incorporated into the material to incorporate how others understand and have enriched Laban's work in this area.

Rudolf Laban was born in Bratislava, the former Czech Republic in 1879 (Hodgson, 2001), and worked as a dancer, choreographer as well as a dance and movement theoretician. Laban also spent a considerable amount of time observing the movement of factory workers (2001). After several months of observation he concluded that movement is highly connected to one's mind and emotions (Laban, 1950).

His technique has also been used in acting. An actor discovers his craft through the acts, or actions of the character. As opposed to discovering the connection from the outside in, as in method acting, the Laban effort shapes create tension and sensations in the body that invoke the life force of a character (Adrian, 2008). Towards the end of his life Laban was interested in looking at the therapeutic qualities of understanding movement, he even discussed these possibilities with Carl Jung (Foster, 1977). Laban's work has been further explored and expanded upon by the next generation and examined for its possibilities for interpretation and implementation in dance, theatre, education and therapy (Maletic, 1987).

Rudolph Laban was renowned for developing a system of notation that described movement in dance (2001). He broke down the body into different hemispheres and identified different patterns of movements. Laban notation and his contribution to the study of kinetics are constantly being used in different fields. For the purpose of this thesis, one specific theory will be examined in detail, effort theory. This theory

involves examining the amount of energy and the quality of effort put into human movements.

Eukinetics, translated into English as effort shape theory, Laban developed this theory to increase the efficiency of movement of factory workers (Maletic, 1987). Laban later integrated the effort theory for dance and theatre. Effort shape examines the spatial locations and motion factors of movement. He looked at what visible efforts are expressed in the body (White, 2009). He first broke down movement into four categories as a type of structure and then qualified varying degrees of movement within that structure. According to White (2009), the qualities of movement are similar to dynamics in music. Music qualifies volume on a spectrum between pianissimo or forte and qualifies rhythm between andante or allegro. Laban developed similar dynamics in movement that he called effort. In effort theory the four basic factors of movement are weight, space, time and flow. Each movement factor qualifies movement on a scale that varies between two polarities, this will be further clarified in the following paragraph.

Weight ranges between strong, heavy or forceful movements to light, fine or delicate movements. Rhythm ranges between quickness and suspension. Space, in movement, ranges between directness, straight cut movements, and indirection, curvy and non-linear movements. Flow ranges between being bound, cleansed and contracted movements to free-flowing, open and released movements. Breaking down movements into these categories gives an understanding and a context to what is experienced in the body on a continual basis. Laban broke down effort shape into four distinctive categories and attributed qualities to each one. The following section will examine each of the qualities in detail.

The first category of effort theory is weight. It exists on a continuum between strong and light. Weight can be understood in relationship to how a person accelerates the force of gravity (Peterson, 2007). Strong movements use a great deal of force that highly accelerated as a result there is more muscle tension. Light movements use very little force and therefore the muscles are very relaxed (2007). Strong is also sometimes referred to as firm and has qualities of being forceful or energetic (White, 2009). Examples of strong movement include: stomping, punching, hammering, banging, thrusting, yanking or lifting heavy objects and movements that have an impact (Adrian, 2008). Light movements are sometimes referred to as fine and have qualities of being delicate or fine touch (2008). Examples of light movements include: caressing, tapping, stroking or gently brushing against something.

According to Katya Bloom (2006), weight relates to the physical sensations of the body. It can be felt and observed in the skin, muscles and joints. Bloom (2006), also believes that weight affects the body on the surface and also on a deeper level. Weight brings aspects of life experiences into the conscious; this is partially due to the fact that this effort creates a conscious awareness of the body. This also impacts on how one relates to one's body as well as the impact it has on others. She also believes that weight creates a three dimensional plane which creates a space to feel, see or think.

When weight is used for actors in the theatre, this factor is connected with the actor's intention within the scene. How strongly does the character intend to trick the others or how lightly does she intend to seduce her lover. If a mother's child is trapped under a car she will use strong weight to move that car, in her moment of adrenalin. While if a brain surgeon is making a critical incision his weight will be very light as to not damage any other part of the brain. According to Adrian (2008),

weight has a quality of condensing while lightness has a quality of elongating or expanding.

The second category of effort theory is time. It exists on a continuum between quick and sustained. Time can be understood in relationship to rhythm, sometimes the rhythm is very fast with micro-second pauses and other times the rhythm is so slow that the pauses stretch. Quick is sometimes referred to as sudden and possesses qualities of instantaneous or urgent movements (White, 2009). Examples of sustained movements are removing your hand from a hot surface, or moving out of the way of danger, rushing to work. Quick movements are spark like and rushed, (Adrian, 2008). Sustained is sometimes referred to as slow and possesses qualities of lingering or endless movements. Some examples of sustained movements include a lingering stretch, doing tai chi or taking a casual walk. Sustained movements are prolonged and endless, (Adrian, 2008).

According to the work of Bloom, (2006), the time factor plays an important role in decision making. Certain activities can be done with an air of leisure, such as taking ten minutes to indulge in combing your hair, this happens when a person makes the decision to take his time. Other activities are hurried and rushed with a sense of urgency, such as getting your children ready for school or getting a project handed in by the dead-line. Time does not relate to a specific rhythm or tempo but rather one's attitude toward time such as a leisure or rushed attitude, this attitude is revealed in the body.

Laban's effort of time is used in theatre for actors as it relates to impulses, decisions, rhythms and phrasing (White, 2009). The character in theatre, or self in the real world is subject to the natural order of the world, therefore, time happens in relationship to the environment. There may be an impulse to accelerate to quickness

as there is a time constraint being imposed by outside forces. There may also be a moment of transition or open space where time can be slowed down and sustained.

The third category of effort theory is space. It exists on a continuum between direct and indirect. Space can be understood in relationship to whether a person moves in linear or non-linear way. Direct is sometimes referred to as straight and possesses a quality of targeted or on point movements (White, 2009). Examples of direct movements include; threading a needle, hammering a nail, picking berries or painting fine details. Direct movements are to the point, aimed and blunt (Adrian, 2008). Indirect is sometimes referred to as flexible and possess a quality of wavy, roundabout or undulating movements. Examples of indirect movements include; swaying to movement, weaving through a crowd or walking dizzily. Indirect movements are flexible and have multiple overlapping foci (2008).

According to Bloom (2006), space identifies where certain inner states of being are located. Once again it is one's attitude to location rather than the location itself that creates the quality of movement. Direct movements create a quality of condensed movements while indirect movements create a quality of expanded movement (2006). Direct movements tend to focus on specific points and move from one point to another in a concise manner. Indirect movements do not have a pre-planned track and can waver and move unknowingly between the different points.

Bloom (2006), also believed that the effort element of space is related to one's attention to the outside world, one's perspective or particular point of view. It particularly engages the mental aspect of personality, the difference between having direct focus or a broad overview. Some people might be more inclined to have several ideas in their head all at once as opposed to another person who has a one-track plan. If you see a glorious mansion for the first time and you begin to scan the antiques you

will be looking in a manner that is direct as each object is pinpointed, one at a time (White, 2009). Or you could be walking in a forest and be distracted by the sounds of the animals and the different elements and change your focus without any particular objective but with a quality of distraction.

The fourth category of effort theory is flow. Flow exists on a continuum between bound and free. Flow can be understood in relationship to how much a person holds or releases within the body. Bound is sometimes referred to as constrained movement and possesses a quality of tight, clenched, held or contracted movements (White, 2009). Examples of bound movements include jerky movements like carefully stepping on uneven rocks or picking up tiny objects. Bound movements are careful, restrained and controlled (Adrian, 2008). Free flow movements are sometimes referred to as released movements and have a quality of being open, released and relaxed. Examples of free movements include; swaying or rocking or running down a hill and not being able to stop. Free movements are abandoned, uncontrolled and unlimited (2008).

According to (Bloom, 2006) flow is the factor that provides the underpinning of the other factors. Flow is related to continuity and it answers the questions “how”. Your attitude toward flow is free if you give in or indulge in a sense of abandon; this makes the movement difficult to stop or to interrupt. The attitude toward bound flow is done with restraint and meticulous care, as if you were creating a miniature model.

According to Bloom (2006), the category of flow is associated with the continuity of movement. It can be seen in how free or restricted movements are and this is often noticeable in the breath, energy or life force of a person. It can also be seen in the muscles of the body which can be very contracted or released at different times. Bloom (2006), also believes that flow is an effort that is very rooted in emotions and

can be seen in cases of stress where people clench their stomach or cases of joy where people release the voice as a cry or yelp upon seeing an old friend.

Having been presented with specific definitions and examples of the effort shape factors; time, weight, space and flow it will now be easier to understand Laban's Eukinetics. All four of these efforts are more easily grasped by knowing the various types of movements that are qualified and described by these efforts. It is important to acknowledge how Laban's language can be descriptive without being threatening or judgemental. These effort factors offer a structure for individuals to better understand and qualify their movements. Although there are extreme polarities on each effort factor spectrum, it is important to clarify that movements are often subtle and can be only slightly strong or slightly sustained. Different movements will fall into different categories within the spectrum and as the vocabulary is very succinct and easy to grasp it becomes useful for individuals to describe their various movement patterns. The real strength of Laban's theory is that it offers a framework and vocabulary to promote self awareness of movement. Perhaps effort theory can provide a structure to help individuals have an understanding of their own movements and where they rank on the spectrum. Laban's theory encourages each person to assess where movement feels more natural and comfortable on the effort shape continuum. Effort shape also gives a point of reference to work from, so that the individuals can challenge themselves by exploring new movements and potentially integrating new styles of movement into their repertoire.

## **Chapter 2: Laban's Effort Shape Theory Linked to Therapy**

In order to best understand how the language of Laban's effort shape theory can be applied and related to dramatherapy it is important to understand how Laban's work has been incorporated into therapy thus far. This chapter will mention some of the

various ways that Laban's work has been a tool for therapists and how his work connects to some of the theories of psychology. This chapter will examine how Laban's effort theory is aimed to be accessible to the everyday man, not just the dancer. The first part of the chapter will examine the multi-faceted purposes that Laban intended for his work, who he wanted it to reach and in what capacities. The chapter will also acknowledge how effort theory has been used in dance movement therapy and specifically the ways Laban's work has been incorporated into the Sesame Institute that uses both drama and movement in a therapeutic context. The final part of the chapter will highlight how Laban Movement Analysis has been used as an assessment tool in schools, therapy and research. Reviewing how effort theory relates to these various forms of therapy offers ways of understanding how it may be a useful in dramatherapy.

In order to understand how the Laban's effort shape theory can be related to therapy it is important to understand a bit more about the work of Rudolph Laban. Laban's language of movement attempts to put into words the non-verbal forms of communication that the body is constantly engaged in. He believed that human beings speak not only with words but also with their bodies (Laban, 1950). Laban understood that our bodies are constantly communicating and he intended his language of movement to be accessible and adaptable to individuals even if they have a varying degree of mobility (Casciero, 1998). This makes his vocabulary easily accessible and universal which facilitates how it might be incorporated into various the populations found within the therapeutic setting.

Beyond wanting to develop a language of movement that was readily available for the general population Laban also wanted to use movement to promote healthy development. One of the goals of his work was to explore the possibilities of the body



and to try out different movements in order to facilitate healthy personal development (Laban, 1950). According to Laban movement instructor Casciero (1998), Laban's movement system reported to have helped actors in training increase the awareness of their bodies as well as self-image, confidence and self-expression.

Another important goal of Laban's work is that it helps individuals develop an awareness of the specific articulations that happen in the body as well as the overall movement phrases. He also believed that the individual had to go deeper and explore the inner moods and affects that are constantly emerging from the body's actions (Laban, 1950). It was specifically in his work with effort shape theory that Laban began to explore the concept of the inner and the outer. According to Adrian (2008), Laban's effort theory has helped in describing how humans move with moment to moment impulses and how these impulses are directly related to their feelings or emotions.

Laban encouraged the notion that movement should be readily available for the every man, not just for the dancer. He strongly believed that movement was a very powerful educational tool (1950). He thought that if man could understand movements and learn new ways of exploring the self, through the body that one would greatly benefit and this would facilitate human development. Laban believed that it was possible to teach people new ways of movement and that this would help them deepen their self understanding (Laban, 1950). He also stated that if one is aware of the effort factors, they are ultimately increasing their understanding of the self. This understanding is present both in the body, as it incorporates muscle memory, as well as in the feeling states, that accompany the efforts (Laban, 1950).

Laban's effort theory has been linked by dance movement therapist Kaylo, (2009) to the work of Jung, specifically his theory of the anima and the animus. According to

Kaylo (2009), that both men and women are undergoing a great disconnection from their bodies, this can be seen in a variety of different cultures. As a result there is a tightening and constriction in understanding the happenings of the body. His research of dance movement therapy attempts to address how Laban's effort theory is exploring movement that has a dual expressiveness, as each effort exists on a continuum between two extremes. Kaylo (2009), believes that this dualistic element is similar to the Jungian theory of the anima and animus and that certain effort factors may be correlated to masculine and feminine attributes. Movement, in relationship to the effort factor of weight can have an attitude of lightness that may correlate with yin which Jung presented as the anima. Lightness, yin and the anima all share qualities of delicacy and softness.

These two "sides of the coin" are similar to the Jungian's understanding of gender. As a result the terms formulated by the effort factors can be qualifiers used for describing the two sides of polarity present in the anima and animus (Kaylo, 2009). In his explanation of movement Laban (1950), specifically identifies that humans are either fighting against movement or indulging within it. This means that a person is either fighting against his strong weight or using it to his advantage. This is present in all four of the effort factors, weight, time, space and flow. This is similar to how individuals incorporate their female or male sides of the self. Perhaps, there is an acceptance of the anima or perhaps its presence creates tension and discomfort in the self. According to Kaylo (2009), by linking Jung and Laban's theories it facilitates recognizing polarities in movement. The purpose of this is to provide a new vocabulary when working with clients and students. By understanding the polarities clients have more access to various forms of expression. Kaylo (2009), also believed

that by exploring new forms of movement the individual discover new parts and rediscovers lost parts of their personality.

Several other dance therapists have also incorporated Laban into their work. Dance movement psychotherapist Katya Bloom (2009), states that all movement is constantly being performed in a specific manner. She believed that in order to express the quality of expression, present within movement, that it is important to begin to consider the “effort factors” that are involved. She also believed that the effort factors could be explored independently or concurrently when doing the exploration of a role, character or simply when discovering movement in the body for the purpose of deepening one’s understanding of the self (2009). These are some of the ways in which she was able to integrate the effort factors into her practice.

Dance therapist White (2009), explores how his participants have been enhanced by the effort factors. The vocabulary of movement has helped these participants describe the outward expression of movement in relationship to the internal feeling states. White (2009), also believes that because movement and actions are presented in an outward manner this can make it easier for the therapists to develop an awareness of what is happening for the participant beneath the surface. White (2009), was very interested in understanding what the non-verbal expression of the body was communicating about the participant’s feelings.

White (2009), describes a specific case of a dancer who embarked on a personal therapy process and specifically explored Laban’s effort shape. The case study captures how this participant developed a greater awareness of her body by exploring the effort factor of time. The participant began to explore time in a sustained manner. This was an uncomfortable area for the participant as she was mostly used to moving very quickly in her everyday life. Engaging in this effort factor that was different and

difficult she was able to slow her movements down and this resulted in her becoming more aware of her feelings (White, 2009). Laban's effort factor of time was able to help this dancer by providing a language that clarified for her an understanding of her body and recognition of how the movement related to emotions (2009).

Thorton (1996), provides specific examples of how Laban's effort language of movement has been used with participants in a dance therapy context. The vignettes presented in Thorton's work acknowledges how participants found freedom within their bodies and developed a greater understanding of the self after working with the language of Laban. The participants were able to make strong connections to their emotions and feelings that were emerging from their body. The participants found that the effort vocabulary not only clarified body awareness but also helped them understand how movement is linked to a variety of feelings. They were able to recognize how their mood could be affected by their movement patterns (1996). One participant spoke about how she often moved with repeated patterns, specifically being very light, quick, direct and bound. This dabbing effort action was present in her body and also manifested itself in other ways in her life and relationships. The dance movement therapy allowed her to begin to move in new ways and exploring new patterns such as being strong in her weight, sustained in her rhythm, indirect in her space and free in her flow. By exploring what was new to her this participant began to find freedom in her movement and therefore made new discoveries about herself (1996).

According to drama and movement therapist Susan Thorton (1996), the Sesame Institute of Drama and Movement Therapy offers a safe space for participants to explore movement as a way of discovering the self. The Sesame session uses movement and drama in a therapeutic situation. Thorton (1996), acknowledges that

people are constantly engaged in speaking two languages, one spoken with words and one spoken with the body. Often there is a variance between what is being communicated by words and in the body. For example a person may claim to be very concerned about the welfare for the environment and even recite several interesting facts and detailed theories of global warming and a moment later that person turns around and litters on the ground. Thorton (1996), acknowledges that there is a human struggle because human actions are so often in conflict with words that are spoken. Therefore, it is important to understand the language being communicated by the body.

Thorton (1996), also states that movement behaviour and body language has a powerful affect on one's relationships. She also states that it is considerably more challenging to interpret and to understand the language of the body. For these reasons having a vocabulary of movement, greatly facilitates a better understanding of the language of the body. At the institute there are fundamental concepts of movement that are studied that may continue to facilitate how movement is inherent to the human existence and how Laban's vocabulary is useful in understanding this.

Thorton (1996), outlines the fundamental concepts of movement explored at the Sesame Institute. The first concept is that each and every person is unique, of worth and of value. The second concept is that the inner life of every person is as unique as their set of fingerprints. The third concept is that every person's inner life is expressed through movement, whether it is done consciously or unconsciously. The fourth concept is that movement is a bridge between connecting a person's inner world to their external world. The fifth concept is that this bridge between the internal and the external very often resembles a loop. The outside world affects us internally and the internal movements affect how we react with the outside world.

Laban's theories enriched the Sesame Institute's teachings as it offered the participants a new vocabulary for understanding and expressing their movements (1996). It also provided the participants with new ways of moving, therefore developing their movement skills. Thorton (1996), states that movement within itself offers participants a personal tool for growth and change, both for the personal life and as well as for therapy. She also states that in incorporating the language of Laban we can learn more about our world and this helps the individual actualize his/her place in the world.

Understanding Laban's effort theory can also help enable participants to allow the inner, creative and expressive voices to speak. Thorton (1996), continues to state that we all have an important need to express our creative voices. She states that this is not only the privilege of the artist, but rather the birthright for everyone. All humans communicate through their bodies but not all of the humans have the same understanding of their bodies as dancers (1996). Laban's approach to movement offers and enables the everyday man to refine his language, to increase his movement vocabulary and then to use this new found vocabulary to express his emotional state. According to Thorton (1996), Laban's language is a series of maps, these maps can be learned and followed and in turn offers confidence in understanding the body. Thorton (1996), also believes that one can gain a better understanding of the self as individual movement patterns are as unique as one's personality.

Rudolph Laban has not only contributed to the therapy field through his effort theory but has also made considerable contributions as he was a pioneer in the field of movement observation and analysis and research. Having spent many years observing movement in various contexts Laban perceptions were formulated in a specific detailed vocabulary that has been used in describing human movement, Laban

Movement Analysis (LMA). LMA allows for describing subtle and specific movements and can distinguish through a very large range of different components of movements including both what is quantitative and qualitative. The Laban Movement Analysis has been used in a variety of contexts. It has been used in dance movement therapy by several different therapists.

Dance movement therapists Govoni and Weatherhogg (2007), studied the ways in which the Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) can be used to better understand psychodynamic processes, specifically defence mechanisms. One specific participant, Laura came to dance movement therapy while studying to become a DMT therapist herself. In the therapeutic process Laura discovered that she preferred movements that had a bound flow. She also discovered that she was limited by the lightness of her movements. This related to her dissociation with her own body as puberty and natural development was in direct conflict with the shape of a ballerina's body (2007). She discovered how much conflict she had in relationship to her own body. She would often resort to a "floating-like" effort quality to maintain a controlled comportment. In the dance movement therapy process she discovered the effort qualities of a "puncher". The direct space effort, the strong weight effort and the quick time effort allowed Laura to feel strong and powerful. She was able to discover movement in her body in a very new way, she no longer needed to deny her body as she had for so many years (2007). In this case the Laban effort shape was useful as it helped Laura discover patterns in her movement, leading to body awareness and from there was she able to explore different ways of movement.

Dance movement therapist Maria Valdivia (2010), wrote a case study about a nine year old boy exploring the theories of Winnicott. In this case study she uses Laban Movement Analysis to understand the movement of the participant. She noted how

Daniel would use “bound flow” movement in order to control his emotions (2010). As a result, she used “free flow” in her warm-ups to help him become freer in his movements. He eventually would demonstrate “free-flow” by running down the hall to come to his therapy session. This showed a carefree attitude that was developing within him as there was a sense of play related to the session (2010). By using Laban Movement Analysis the dance movement therapist was able to discover restriction in Daniel’s movements and knew what types of warm-ups would be helpful. She was also able to use the Laban language in her case study to communicate his movements to her reader.

The Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) has also specifically been used at the Center for Arts and Human Development when observing and assessing the movements of adults with developmental delays (Jobling et al., 2006). It has also been used in an educational setting to assess children with varying degrees of with autism. It seems that the Laban language of movement has offered a lot to this specific population of individuals with delayed development. Jobling et al. (2006), developed a dance program that incorporated the language of Rudolph Laban in working with children who have down syndrome. Children with down syndrome often struggle with motor skills and can become frustrated as a result. Dance has been one way for providing an introduction to movement as it requires body awareness, balance and control over the gross and fine motor skills. Jobling et al. (2006), strongly believe that the concepts of effort shape provide these children with a “language of movement” so they can verbally express and communicate with each other what is happening in the body. The vocabulary of movement helps these children understand the concept of time, weight, flow and space in relationship to movement. Language was a powerful tool to help these children in their discovery of movement and they were able to use to



Laban effort vocabulary when describing their experience “When I move quick and jerky way I am a mechanical doll... or a clown stumbling over my feet... or a fish struggling on a fisherman’s hook.” (Jobling et al, p.36, 2006). The children in this program gained confidence and improved not only their abilities to move but how to communicate and interact using the Laban vocabulary.

To summarize this chapter, Rudolph Laban intended his language of movement for personal development, body awareness and education. He believed that by understanding the effort shape vocabulary help individuals learn more about themselves and their bodies. Dance movement therapists have found effort shape useful when working with participants as it helped them identify habitual movement patterns and providing new ways of discovering movement. Laban’s vocabulary provided participants with the language to describe their experience of movement. The vocabulary also served as a tool for dance movement therapists when writing articles and case studies related to their field. It is also important to note that the Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) has also found its place both in the educational field as well as the therapy field.

### **Chapter 3: Laban’s Effort Shape Linked to Phil Jones’ Core Processes**

This chapter will examine the work of drama therapist Phil Jones. As opposed to a specific method or approach to drama therapy Jones has developed a framework of seven processes that are present in several different approaches to drama therapy. The break down of the seven specific core processes examined in this paper are; dramatic projection, playing, empathy and distancing, role, embodiment, life-drama connections and transformation. These core processes will be defined and described in order to understand his work. The order in which the processes are presented is not of

importance. It is also important to note that there is a great deal of overlap and intermixing of the processes. Throughout the description of these processes, movement, body activation and physical work will be highlighted. Understanding the presence of movement in the core processes will help draw links to how effort shape theory applies. This chapter will also attempt to identify how the language of Rudolph Laban's can potentially be applied.

The first core process of dramatherapeutic work is projection. It is important to note that projection in dramatherapy is quite different from Freud's definition of projection which defines it as a healthy defence mechanism. In dramatherapy projection involves taking inner feelings and experiences and projecting outwardly onto a creative medium (Jones, 2007). In this process participants can project parts of their own self onto a character, this could be explored through the creation of masks, puppets or costumes or miniatures.

Interpersonal relationships can be projected into small world miniatures or can be depicted in the creation of scenes of stories. Feelings or sensations can also be explored in projection (2007). This could involve using a symbolic object. Personal experiences or situations can also be projected using stories, scenes or mythology. These are just a few of the possibilities for taking what is going on within a participant and allowing for it to be projected outwardly using a creative medium (2007). One of the goals of this core process is to help participants reflect upon what aspects of the self are being explored through the projection. This encourages self awareness and sheds light on what may have been happening on an unconscious level. As projection is not always obvious to participants on a conscious level, one of the goals of this core process is to explore what emerges in the creative space and allow for the material to be reflected upon, bringing it to a more conscious level.

Movement is present in projection when the participant externalizes their issues using their body. If a participant is exploring an aspect of themselves projected onto a character, then that character has its own movement (2007). If an addict is exploring the part of the self that experiences cravings he may explore this aspect through creating a puppet and projecting onto it. Although the participant may be sitting fairly still, the puppet has its own movement.

Consider then the possibility of asking the participant about the effort about that “part of the self”. Is that part of the self light or strong in its weight? Is that part of the self quick or sustained in time? Is that part of the self direct or indirect? Is that part of the self bound or free in flow? One person might discover in their projection that their addiction self is light, quick, indirect and free flowing. Another person might discover in the projection of their addiction self that it is strong, sustained, direct and bound. Being able to identify these efforts offers a new perspective for understanding the life of that part of the self and it also takes into consideration what is happening on a physical level.

One can also think about the types of movements that are present within a scene, story or myth, different characters have different movements. Consider a young child who is using small world miniatures to project their family situation and relationships onto the space. If they are depicting elements of trauma or abuse in the story the effort language may provide them with a way of describing movement without having to specifically identifying it as hitting or yelling. Maybe one character is strong, sustained, direct and bound in their attack of the main character who manages to escape because he is light quick indirect and free flowing.

It seems that applying the language of Laban’s effort shape theory could be used as a tool to further explore the movement present within the projection. Any discoveries

in movement can be explored in relationship to the self. Maybe the movement within the projection is quite different from the actual self or perhaps it is very similar. If the effort shape theory is being explored in this process then the participant has the possibility to talk about movement and reflect on movement therefore increasing awareness of the body and self. Discussing effort theory while reflecting on the session leads into how this language can be incorporated into the core process of empathy and distancing.

The second core process in Jones' framework is therapeutic empathy and distancing. There is quite a bit of witnessing that happens within the dramatherapy process. Participants are engaging in their personal material and struggles as others in the group watch this process happen and participate in it (2007). In the process of witnessing other participants, the group is developing a sense of empathy. Empathy is also created in the moments when a participant is exploring a specific character or role. The goal of empathy is to encourage an emotional response; there is often a feeling that resonates when there is empathy (2007). Another goal of empathy is to encourage identification with others and a high level of emotional involvement.

Distancing allows for the participant to separate the self from particularly difficult or traumatic material. Distancing encourages material to be outwardly externalized so that the participant can take control over their story without feeling overwhelmed by the intensity of what they experienced. It also allows for reflection of feelings in a more contained environment (2007). Once the participant has externalized their material it becomes possible for them to talk about it as an entity that is separate from the self.

So how can the language of effort theory apply to this core process? It is important to understand that it is a language that is being introduced. The language offers a commonality to all of the members in the group. If indeed the language of effort

theory is a non-judgemental way of describing movement then perhaps it can offer a way of describing movement in a way that is easier to talk about. If a whole group is familiar with the vocabulary then they might be able to connect with each other and empathize on a physical level. There may be the possibility of having the same reaction to an effort shape as another person in the group which can be discovered in the sharing part of the session. If a participant is doing the exploration of a character in a myth and relates to the movement of that role, perhaps exploring how the character moves will create empathy for that character and heighten the experience.

The other factor to take into consideration is using language to describe a physical process. Movement, even of a character or in a story is very much connected with the body and can illicit a visceral response. The drama therapy processes finds ways of allowing the participant to find different degrees of distance from the material. As stated above, the aims of externalization is to facilitate a way of separating the material from the self in order to talk about it as something outside of the self. In this case language offers another way of distancing from the material, and if indeed the language is “neutral” or non judgemental might it then further aid in this process?

Role playing and personification is the third core process outlined in the work of Jones. The main function of this process is to explore what it is like to be someone else and what it is like to play the self in a dramatized way (2007). The participant takes on a fictional identity, this may be a broad role such as “the mother” or “the hero” or an abstract quality such as “curiosity”. In this process participants can start to explore these roles in various situations, either from their outside life, past, present or future and can also explore playing these roles in fantasy situations. For example, the participant could play herself at the age of five. The participant could also enact a relationship as if it were a role. The role of the relationship could be questioned and

asked how it helps the participant or hinders them? This offers the participant a new perspective and way to explore the relationship by externalizing it. This can also be done with different parts of the self, such as the part of the self that “wants to lose weight” or “can’t stand up to other people”. These roles offer different ways of looking at the self. Each part of the self has its own identity and this externalization creates a distance that may allow the participant to consider the various parts of the self without as much guilt or shame. As the parts of the self are experienced through the role this hopefully facilitating a different point of view that can be considered (2007).

In role personification the participants are intentionally isolating a specific part of themselves or their identity. It is a way to explore their role as a “sister” or a “teacher” It can also be a way explore the parts of the self, such as “the part of the self that always wants to please others” or “the part of the self that is judgemental of the body image”. According to Jones (2007), this happens by specifically focusing on one role or aspect of the self the participant is able to externalize this role and therefore reflect and talk about it after.

Jones identifies dramatherapy as having three ways of creating dynamic tension between the enacted fictional self and the client’s identity. Jones also states that it is this tension that is at the basis for therapeutic change in the work (2007). This process offers a way of both distancing the role from one’s own identity by exploring the physical embodiment of the character and also being able to discover new parts of the self. In a group context it can be a way to explore and experiment with new ways of relating to others.

In order to examine how the language of Laban’s effort theory relates to this process it is important to reiterate that the focus comes back to the movement in the

process. This would focus on the part of the process that involves embodying the role. When the participant is exploring the movement they can consider the weight of the role, is there a lightness or strength the weight of the role. Considering the time of the role is there a quickness or sustainment in the movement of the role? Considering the space of the role the participant can explore if the movements are direct or indirect. Considering the flow of the role the participant can explore to if the role is bound or free.

In exploring the different effort shapes the participant can explore the varying degrees that exist on all four of these spectrums. They can question if it is changing. The participant can reflect on whether the effort shapes are something that empower, inspire, challenge or hinder the role. The participant can explore if the effort shapes are being fought against by the role or being used to their advantage. All of this work is intended to have the participant develop an awareness of the role as well as the body. By taking on new roles participants can make new explorations and possibly integrate new and different ways of moving. This may also lead to having a better understanding of how they take on a role and how the different parts of the self live in the body.

The fourth core process is embodiment which involves dramatising the body. In embodiment the participants are exploring how their bodies relate to their identity (2009). In dramatherapy the clients can explore what the active use of the body offers them. Elam (1980), defined embodiment as how the self is realized in the body. He also believed that the body was the primary form of communication between the self and others. He described embodiment as being explored through gesture, expression and voice. This is similar to the function of the effort factors which are also expressed in breath, voice and gesture (Laban, 1950). In several cultures and in theatre, the body

is the main tool for communication. The body can express the impulses, reactions and encounters to the material being explored. By using the body actively in dramatherapy the participants are deepening their encounter with the material that they bring to therapy. Using the body heightens the intensity and facilitates are more engaged involvement on the part of the par

ticipant.

Jones believes that the process of embodiment provides an opportunity for the participants to explore change in their therapeutic process (Jones, 2007). With embodiment the participants are discovering and developing the potential of their own body. One of the goals of the therapy is for the participant to inhabit and use the body more effectively; perhaps by exploring ways of communicating with others or releasing tension that causes discomfort (2007). Change can happen when the participant finds a new bodily identity. The participant may begin to be more free with their bodies and allow themselves to explore new ways of moving.

Embodiment takes on many different forms within the dramatherapy process. It can involve embodying the physical movements of a role but it can also involve embodying an emotion such as fear, despair, rage, etc. It can also involve embodying an obstacle or force that affects the participant such as a natural disasters or difficult circumstances (2007). Embodiment can also occur if a participant is exploring an object.

As one of the goals of embodiment in Jones' core process is to develop a better understanding of the body and to facilitate the potentials of one's movements, it would appear that there could be a real benefit from including the effort shape language. The language offers a new technique to the exploration, offering a new way of looking at movement. Perhaps the participants have never considered their



relationship with time, and have yet to explore moving in a way that is quick or sustained. Being able to try out a new ways of moving may offer ways to change their movements. A participant may also deeply connect with an effort shape and realize that it greatly affects their everyday movement. This allows for the language to facilitate a deeper understanding of their body.

The fifth core process that Jones addresses in his work is play. Play as a process encourages an exploration of different materials. There are several different forms of play. There is sensory motor and body play as well as imitation activities. Play also includes using objects or symbolic toys (2007). Play can also involve projection work with toys in the creation of small worlds. Play can also happen in the form of rumble, tumble play as well as structured games. It can also be make-believe play which involves taking on different characters.

Play within dramatherapy provides a way to explore something scary or traumatizing in a safe way (2007). Jones outlines some of the goals of play. He states that play provides new ways of relating to time, space, rules and boundaries. Play also gives an opportunity to play with situations that are troubling. Play can also offer creative and flexible ways of responding to situations, consequences and ideas. Play does this by offering a safe space, providing relief from trauma, offering a contained space and allowing for support (2007).

There are a few ways in which the Laban language of effort shape can relate to play. It is important to note that the language need not become the focus of the play. Rather consider how it can be incorporated as a way of exploring the parameters of playing. If play fighting is occurring in the session, playing with sustained movements can bring an element of safety into the play and heighten the play by exaggerating movements. The participants could also exaggerate the movements that are indirect as

if they are play fighting with wobbly jelly-like arms. The Laban efforts shape offer new movement parameters that can be played with.

If the participant is playing and telling stories using small world objects they can explore different ways of telling the story. Perhaps everything within the small world happens very quickly as if the whole story is on fast forward mode. This may heighten the quality of the play and the participant may find humour by creatively emphasizing the movements within the story or perhaps such a quick pace may portray some anxiety related to the story. Also the specific characters in the story may take on specific effort shapes that can be discussed and reflected on.

Sensory motor play can be a way of exploring the effort shapes. Participants can try out being in slow motion, having to move through liquid, or in fast motion, running after a train. The participants can explore having to pull a pile of bricks or moving through the space as feathers. Moving through different substances can invoke the imagination while connecting to movements within the body. Although Laban effort shape can be integrated directly into the playing it can also play a part in the reflection process at the end. The therapist may have taken the participants through a structured game and want to generate a discussion about it at the end. In this discussion the language of movement can provide a way of talking about how the game was experienced in the body.

The sixth core process that Jones outlines in his work is the life drama connection. This process examines how the space in dramatherapy relates to the outside world. Perhaps the work in therapy relates directly or indirectly to the participant's real life (2007). Drama therapy intentionally creates a close relationship between life and drama. This connection is essential for the participants in order to have opportunities for change. The life drama connection will be present in the therapy and varying in

the degree in which the client is conscious of them. Even when a client is involved in the story of another person in the group, he may still make connections with his real life. Jones (2007) also acknowledges the safety that is created in the dramatherapy space is more contained than in reality and therefore the participant can feel comfortable taking actions without having to have real life consequences.

In relationship to the Laban language of effort theory the participants can begin to explore their movements in the outside world, such as times when they are particularly rigid in their weight, time, space or flow. Participants can also try out new types of movement within the space and then have the desire to practice these movements in the outside space. Exploring the movement within the space and within the outside world may result in a change within the participant. As the work is being done within the body there are varying degree of consciousness that will be present within the participant. By having a language to describe movement, perhaps awareness of the body will become more conscious for the participant.

Having a common language to describe the movement in the group may help the participants understand themselves in their body even when there is an exploration of another person's story. When witnessing another participant talk about being afraid of moving slowly it may resonate with the witness that they too are afraid of suspension thus opening the door to learning about the self while in the shared play space. Trying out different movements that may seem strange or out of the ordinary in the real world are free to be tried out and exaggerated in the therapy space. Participants also learn about how other people move and this can help them understand people in their own lives who may have specific movement profiles. Perhaps in the exploration of movement the participant connects strongly to a familiar member and makes the life drama connection through the discovery of movement. This may help participants

understand the movement of others and also how they themselves react to the different types of movement, present in others.

The final of the seven core processes developed by Phil Jones is transformation. He gives credit to his colleague drama therapist David Read Johnson (Johnson, 2000), and acknowledges that all human consciousness is always undergoing transformation. Jones continues to specifically acknowledge the various ways in which the participants may transform within the therapy space. First of all he states that all humans have the potential for transforming their identity. There is also the ability to transform the relationship with the therapist as well as the other participants in the group due to the nature of the group dynamics explored in the sessions. Another type of transformation that has the potential to occur is one's relationship to their body (2007). The final two transformations that happen are having the participant allowing themselves to bring their life into drama and to let their life be transformed by drama.

In the process of transformation the language of Laban's effort theory offers the potential for changing one's relationship to her own body and movement. If one begins to explore movements that are not of usual or in their repertoire they open up to the possibility of transformation (2007). Transformation may also occur as the participants are allowing themselves to bring in their day to day movements within the therapy space and consequently have their movements be transformed from what was explored within the space, brought back to the real world (2007).

In their article on dance movement therapy Govoni and Weatherhogg (2007), describe how the effort factors were used to explore transformation on the movement spectrum. Clients who were very stuck as being bound in the flow factor of effort were encouraged to explore being free. This was powerful for participants as they were aware of the effort factors present in their movements and they were also

encouraged to explore the opposite side of the effort, this is where the transformation occurred (2007). In the transformation new discoveries about the self were made and new ways of moving were incorporated into everyday life and relationships.

After having reviewed the seven core processes of Phil Jones one can begin to understand the how the body and its movement are present throughout. Knowing also the purpose intended by the language of Laban's effort theory, one can acknowledge some parallels and begin to understand how the vocabulary may offer a tool to enrich Jones' work. In the work the participant can make use of the vocabulary when working with the body in play, when embodying an object, character or natural force. If the participant is projecting onto small objects or exploring a character he may also explore the presence of movement in relationship to Laban's work. The vocabulary can become a common denominator for the group offering empathy. The presence of the language can be explored in the body and also discussed in the moments of reflection at a greater distance. Movement is present in play and can be played with in order to make new discoveries. Laban's language may help participants make connections between their movement in the play space and their movement in the outside world. Discovering new movement, and learning one's habits also opens the possibility of making new transformations. The Laban vocabulary is not only a way for participants to explore their bodies and in order to develop awareness but it lends itself also a tool for the therapist when observing the movement of the participants and leading the activities.

#### **Chapter 4: Laban's Effort Shape Linked to Sue Jennings EPR**

This chapter will examine the work of drama therapist Sue Jennings. Jennings work is a developmental model that explores how learning takes place within the

body from infancy and this affects us later as adults. Jennings paradigm has three parts to the process; embodiment, projection and role, EPR. Each part of the process will be examined in detail in order to gain a better overview of the process.

Throughout all three stages of the EPR there is a considerable degree of interaction happening with the body and the physical work will be highlighted. Understanding the presence of movement in the three stages of EPR will help draw links to how effort shape theory applies. This chapter will also attempt to identify how the language of Rudolph Laban can potentially be applied.

The work of drama therapist Sue Jennings explores a developmental paradigm of embodiment, projection and role. Embodiment is most prominent during the first years of life. It happens as a sensory experience such as holding, either the body or its parts (Jennings, 1993). Projection is the second stage, in this stage one's experiences are projected out onto various toys or media such as sand or water, this can offer the ability to heighten the sensory experience. Projection can also happen as toys take on roles and relationships giving the child an opportunity to control the outcome over the projected materials (1993). For adults their personal material can be projected on to masks, puppets, objects or material. The third stage of Jennings work is role. In this part of EPR the participant has the opportunity to take on the role as well as moving into different roles. The participant also integrates different roles into the activities including creating stories and exploring real life through drama.

Sue Jennings (2002), believes that the body is the primary place of where learning happens. This is similar to the beliefs of Laban (1950), who also stated that we make sense of our world through movement. Jennings work explores how physical play allows for a healthy rebuilding of the body even if the participant has undergone or experienced trauma related to the body. Laban (1950), also believes that play has a

very important place for understanding the body's action and is required when thinking in terms of movement. Braid (2008), explores how effort theory offers a non-threatening vocabulary for describing and understanding movement and the related feeling processes. The factors also offer potential for working with trauma as they help explore the desires of the unconscious which can be discovered and reawakened within the body (Warnick, 1995). This non-judgmental vocabulary may provide safety and distance for participants exploring physical trauma through embodiment work.

Sensory play is an important part of the embodiment stage. The embodiment stage is something that naturally happens within the first few years of life but this can then be recreated in the therapy process, it is done through careful therapeutic intervention. It is the exploration of the body in relationship with itself and other bodies (Jennings, 1993). This happens through touch as well as the exploration of the other senses. Jennings (1993), believes that touch builds the basis for the human development of identity and this depends on the relationship between bodies. The self must then find a balance between touch and separation.

It is during the first months of life that the human infant receives its first experiences in the world through other people and the environment. Jennings (1993), discusses how the early experiences of a child's life develop a body self and this later contributes to their body image. The body self is ultimately affected by the touch and interaction of the care-taker and is equally affected by lack of touch and interaction. These physical interactions can include; holding, feeling, changing, washing, rocking etc. Understanding that the first physical interactions between the mother and child is important as it can make a permanent mark on the child it is important to consider the type of physical interaction that is happening between caregiver and infant. Jennings (1993), talks about the importance of sufficient physical and mental stimulation

during this developmental stage. She also acknowledges that adults that feel uncomfortable in their own bodies may have problems physically communicating with their children. This is why it is important for play therapists to have a good awareness and training in their bodies.

Laban effort theory and its particular vocabulary has the potential for raising awareness of one's own body as well as understanding movement patterns in others (Casciero, 1998). Jennings also encourages therapists to develop body awareness (1993). This suggests that Laban's vocabulary could be beneficial to therapists in two capacities. Firstly, it is very important for therapists to be aware of their own body. This includes knowing what movements are habitual and also knowing what movements are out of their comfort zone. The more the therapists can expand their movement repertoire and develop an understanding of their own bodies, the more help they can provide to their participants in the same capacity.

The second way that Laban's vocabulary may benefit the therapist is by providing a framework for observing participants. Therapists may begin to have a better understanding of how parents are interacting with their children. The members of the family may have very distinctive behaviours or habits that the child recognizes within movement. Therapists can consider movement in all four of the effort categories and can track if movements are very rigid or on the extreme of the movement spectrum. The vocabulary may be useful for therapists when referring to their client's movements during note-taking or the writing of case studies.

Jennings (1993), outlines the different problematic ways of holding children; the under-held child, the over-held child and the distortedly held child. If the child is under-held the parent may often neglect their children, leave them alone for long periods of time. The parent may also not stimulate their child enough or give



affirmation. These children often suffer from depression, lethargy, anxiety or hyperactivity. The case example provided in Jennings book speaks of mother who had a very difficult pregnancy, she was physically disgusted by the process and felt having a child ruined her life (1993). As a result she created a large caged area for her child and would only touch the child if she wore protective gear and even at this would hold the baby at a considerable arms length away. As a result the child would only sit still, the three year old was of normal intelligence but she was functioning at the level of at 18<sup>th</sup> month old baby due to a lack of physical bonding with his mother.

Jennings (1993), continues to talk about the over-held child, this child is often over protected and not given a chance to be physically stimulated. Parents who over-hold their children often do not encourage their children to take risks. As a result the child has a very difficult time growing older and becoming independent. The over-held child is also often frightened of exploring the space around them. This type of interaction is often a smothering love, the parent here is doing it for their own needs as opposed to the needs of the child. These parents are often also overly attentive to their children or overly anxious.

Jennings (1993), also describes the distortedly-held child. This includes children who have been physically abused, sexually abused, seriously physically neglected. This can also include cases of when there is a lack of safety for the child such as dropping or exposure to dangerous situations. These children often grow up with very chaotic experiences of the body, they have a hard time with their body self.

The embodiment methods that Jennings (2002), explores in her work in order to re-explore the body including gross movements that involve all movements of the whole body as well as fine motor movements that happen in the different parts of the body. The embodiment methods also include sensory movements involving the five senses.

There are also singing game in which part of the body are named and touched.

Embodiment also includes rhythmic movement and dance as well as sword play and wrestling. Participants are also encouraged to explore creative ideas of moving such as monsters, animals, robots, and so on. These embodiment techniques allow for the participant to build trust and re-explore movements within the body (2002).

In relationship to the embodiment stage of Jennings's work the vocabulary outlined by Laban's effort theory offers a tool for observing and assessing the movement of participants and their families. If the therapist can identify certain rigid habits or movement with the types of holding he/she may also begin to know what kinds of movement that would benefit the child. Perhaps in being over-held the arms are around the baby too strong. By using Laban's vocabulary the therapist might know that the child needs to experience lighter forms of touch in relationship to weight. Perhaps the parent who under holds the baby is very anxious and this presents itself in quick, light, bound and direct movements. In this case the child might benefit from being held in a sustained fashion allowing the movement to be indirect and more free flowing. It may also benefit the parents to consider their own movements, their own personal awareness might help them to open up to different kinds of movement. Also simply by exploring the different efforts in the body the participant has a chance to explore the techniques of the projection stage, this includes fine and gross motor movements.

Projective play is the second stage of Jennings's EPR process. Projective play comes as the progressive transition that follows after the embodiment stage. In the development of the child the projective play happens gradually towards the end of the first year. During this time of a child's life he begins to develop a capacity to symbolize. It is also during this time that one can notice the presence of a transition

object. Jennings (1993), explores how during this process the child begins to explore objects that are outside of its own body. Materials become an extension of the body such as using paint, water, sand, clay, food, liquid, jelly, etc. The projection stage of EPR is about encouraging the client in the exploration of these materials as opposed to interpreting the explorations of the client.

The goal of exploring these materials is to promote hand-eye coordination. It also encourages finding balance and learning to manipulate dexterity. As the child begins to develop the projective play also develops. This play incorporates more of the ability to pretend (1993). Objects begin to take on a symbolic meaning such as a block representing a house. In this part of the play humans can often take on animal like qualities. In this play there is also the creation and recreation and developing of new stories, from the past, present or future. It is also during the projective play that one can create or re-create pleasurable or frightening experiences and this allows the participants to change the outcome of the story (1993). It is important to note that not all projective play is symbolic and that the nature of projective play is to be exploratory, sensory and open to manipulations of the material.

As this is the natural development in the child Jennings recreates this development in her projection stage. The first part of the projection stage allows for the client to respond to the world that is outside of their own body through finger paint or sand play, as these substances are being explored the participants are beginning to understand the boundaries of their own body, where their body starts and where the substance begins (Jennings, 2002). During the projection stage the participants not only come into contact with the objects and substances, they also begin to place the objects in relationship to each other such as constellations. The stage continues allows

the participant to continue to explore stories by using toys and dolls and toward the end of this stage the stories begin to be explored through characters and roles (2002).

Jennings outlines specific types of play and projective techniques that have are used as a part of this stage. There is often the use of play with substances, such as water, sand, finger paint, clay and plasticine. There is also play with pictures including crayons, paints, drawing, collaging and varied media. Play also happens with brick and counters including patterns, constructions and allows toppling over and the destruction of created structures. There is also the exploration of playing with toys in which stories and sculpts are created within the sand tray. The play then transforms into scenes that including using doll houses or the creation of puppets. Projection can also involve exploring natural media such as using rocks, moss, flowers or leaves (2002).

There are different ways of engaging with the projective material. If the participant is exploring the boundaries of his/her movements by exploring movement in the sand or water then might it not be beneficial to try moving in different ways through these substances. Quick and strong movement in water will create more resistance than sustained and light movement. By asking the participants to explore different ways of moving through the substance they may be offered a fuller experience of exploration in the material.

The third and final stage of Jennings's EPR process is the role stage. It is through the exploration of role that participants begin to explore their own identity. Jennings's bases this part of the theory on the concept that one's identity is a result of being able to identify with others (Jennings, 1993). Children take on different roles and exploring them through dressing up, creating specific situations or creating specific environments, these roles can be either fictional or social. Jennings (1993), believes

that one needs to explore our lives and its dramas through a series of tested out roles. In trying out these different roles one can explore life situations on a safe and flexible way. Participants also need to explore roles to replace the models of their parents which may have been absent, rigid or distorted.

Role taking can be a way for the participant to test out the character as an extension of the self. Sometimes there is the ability to offer dramatic distancing by using creations that are mythical or fantastical. Children in the work begin to take on roles in this stage, sometimes they play out scenes. They can begin to reflect on “what is right” for a scene or for a particular role. They can begin to reflect on “daddies who do this” or “robots who move like that”. In the scene exploration sometimes roles are not only acted out but sometimes they are directed. If participants are able to direct the scenes they may also begin to have the potential to develop an increasing awareness of the scene and the self.

During the role stage children begin to take on the roles found in stories or in texts. Sometimes the roles are also created and found in improvisation. During this stage the participant begins to bring in the therapist, others, or materials in order to create the environment or roles within the scenes (Jennings, 2002). Children may also explore the creation of masks or costumes while taking on certain physical characteristics of the role as well. A very important part of the role stage is to allow the participants a chance to ‘de-role’ before the session have ended (2002). This allows for the participant to distinguish between him and the role and to take the necessary time and ritual to come back into the here and now, as him. Although in the role stage there is an understanding that the dramatic play will affect the everyday life it is also important to acknowledge that the play space is different, this provides containment and safety (2002).

There are a number of specific techniques that are explored in the role stage of EPR. Often simple roles are used with one emotion such as the scared person, the excited person or the happy person. Roles can also be explored through the creation of animal characters that interact with one another (2002). Sometimes favourite stories or well known fairy tales can be used to enact characters. Roles can also emerge from exploring costume material from a dress up box and from here stories can be created. There are also techniques that begin with the use of mask in order to create a story. Sometimes roles are created as a result of writing a television or theatre script in the group and then enacting it (2002). Role work can also build on the techniques and scenes that have been previously explored in the projection work.

If stories or character are being explored through the projection then I suggest that using Laban's movement would offer a helpful way to explore the movement of these characters in the stories. If the father figure of a participant is being projected onto an alien then that alien may possibly demonstrate certain movement patterns of the father. For example if the alien takes on the qualities of movement that are strong, direct and quick, this demonstrates the effort action punching, this may shed light on how the child experiences the physical presence of his father. This may offer the participant an easier way to address the physical presence of a role model that is distorted in a safe and contained manner. In simply taking on different roles and trying on new ways of moving, in the roles, the participant is beginning to have a chance to try different selves through the roles and new ways of being in the body. This may help them break out of patterns. If there are very strong physical characteristics taken on in the exploration of a role then using effort movements on the other end of the spectrum might be useful in the "re-rolling of the character". If the qualities of the character's movement are very light, sustained, direct and bound

then perhaps in the “de-rolling” part of the process it would help the participant to let the body move in ways that are strong, quick, indirect and free.

In closing, by reviewing Jennings work it is clear that the body itself and the body in movement are at the heart of the process. Laban’s vocabulary, offers words that can express the quality of touch between parents and infants in early development that Jennings regards as so important. Laban’s effort shape factors might also contribute to the embodiment stage as the body is being rediscovered through movement and senses. The vocabulary can help therapists have a language for understanding the movement of their participants in this process. The effort shape vocabulary also offers a way of qualifying the movement of projected materials; the movement of the dolls, puppets or small world objects. The language might also help participants discover new ways of moving through substance such as water, sand and slime. As roles are taken on or explored participants can consider the similarities and differences between their own movement patterns and that of the roles. The language allows for participants to discover a new language when thinking about their bodies in movement. Effort shape theory also provides these same benefits to the therapists, promoting a common language with the participants and a better body awareness of both the self and others.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has been written to address the question of: how the language of Rudolph Laban, specifically the vocabulary found in his effort shape theory can be a useful tool for drama therapists and their participants when exploring movement in Phil Jones seven core processes and Sue Jennings embodiment, projection, role process. The first chapter provides an overview of Laban’s theory of effort shape, explaining how movement is broken down and by defining the specific vocabulary as

well as providing specific examples of effort factors found in movement. The second chapter goes into depth as to how Laban's work has already been incorporated into different therapeutic settings. Although little has been done in the field of dramatherapy, it has been used in similar settings, such as dance movement therapy. These chapters are intended to make the Laban vocabulary accessible to the reader while providing specific examples of its therapeutic use.

The following chapter examines the 7 core processes of Phil Jones. After briefly explaining the processes I sought out to highlight the ways that movement is present within each process. Movement plays an important part in Jones' core processes. Therefore, there is great potential to apply this language of movement on multiple levels. This chapter makes suggestions for how the therapist can use Laban's effort shape theory when leading the activities and also explores how the language provides a common vocabulary for the group. The various suggestions of how to link Laban to Jones are based on the premise that it is important for participants to explore awareness of the body and their own specific patterns of movement. Therapists may deepen role taking and playing by asking participants to consider and explore effort shape. The same applies for the characters explored through projection, by asking the participants to consider the time, weight, flow and space it encourages participants think about movement in new ways and encourages discovery. This vocabulary can also be used to encourage participants in expanding their movement repertoire; it gives new ideas for exploration through play and embodiment. By being able to communicate about the body and the way it moves, the participants have a seemingly neutral language to use when reflecting on their session; this appears to support the concept of aesthetic distance inherent to dramatherapy activities. The vocabulary also has the potential to create a common language that all participants can share,



encouraging them to relate and empathize with each other. As the participants explore movement using Laban they have a way to connect real life movement to their discoveries in drama therapy. As Laban's theory encourages self awareness and expanding one's movement repertoire it also lends itself to transformation which is an important core process in Jones' work. The possibility of enhancing the seven core processes with Laban's vocabulary merits further research and integration in the future.

The final chapter takes a look at dramatherapist Sue Jennings' EPR model. The chapter explains the theory of the model and breaks down what happens in each part of the process, during embodiment projection and role. The research paper specifically addresses the presence of body exploration and movement found in embodiment, projection and role. By acknowledging the presence of movement throughout the model it becomes clearer that there may be many possibilities for incorporating Laban's vocabulary. Jennings encourages therapists training with her model to have a good sense of their own bodies. The vocabulary, therefore, becomes a tools for the personal development, as well as their participants.

Therapists can work with embodiment to ensure that a wide spectrum of sensory experiences and movement are being provided for the participant. The therapist can also observe what effort factors are familiar and comfortable for the participants and which effort factors can be introduced. By encouraging movement awareness and exploration, Laban encourages participants to be fully comfortable in their bodies. During the projection stage therapists can use the effort shape vocabulary when having participants explore different substances and experiencing senses and movement outside of the body. Therapists can take note of what movement patterns appear in the stories created through projection. During the role stage the therapist can

encourage participants to consider the effort shape, this may shed light on how participants view the movement of these particular roles. As Sue Jennings's EPR is centered on each participant's relationship to their body and how the body interacts with the world, having a useful tool, such as the Laban's language of effort shape offers a new way for therapists to consider movement when working with their participants and their bodies.

It is important to address the potential limitations of using Laban's vocabulary when working with movement in the dramatherapy. Therapists should keep in mind that the vocabulary is not intended to become the center of the activity but rather an extra measure to explore the parameters of movement. Its purpose is to expand possibilities of movement as opposed to limiting movement, or boxing it into categories. If there is too much talking about the vocabulary before the activity the participants may begin to lose their connection with the body or over think their actions. Talking may be more useful during the discussions lead in the reflection part of the session. It is also very important for the therapist to be aware that movement can stir up a lot of emotion within participants, this is important to keep in mind while containing the group.

Although this research paper only addresses Laban's theory in relationship to movement in the work of Phil Jones and Sue Jennings, hopefully future research can be done to see how else it can link to the dramatherapy field. One possible future research avenue that interests me is the possibility of linking Laban's effort shape theory to Robert Landy's role theory, specifically when working with role, counter-role and guide (Landy, 2000). Perhaps by understanding the movement of roles, participants might further understand paradoxes between the roles by placing their movements on the effort shape spectrum. It may also support the integration of

contrasting role, by finding less extreme and more balanced movement. Another possibility for future research is to link Laban's effort shape to Yehudit Silverman's Story Within Process (Silverman, 2004). As the participants go through an explorative process in relationship with a mythological or fairy tale character, perhaps understanding effort shape may help identify where they merge and diverge with the character through movement. A final potential research idea would be to examine how Laban's effort shape could be used in de-rolling process when participants go through the process of separating from their roles and coming back into themselves (Jones, 2007). As the Laban effort shapes have polarities that exist on a continuum perhaps in the de-rolling process participants can move in an opposite way as their character in order to get their bodies back into a neutral state.

Hopefully, the reading of this research paper has sparked the interest of dramatherapists who work with movement. The body actively involved in movement, is an inherent part of the work that we do in dramatherapy and is also one of the strengths of our field. Therefore, it seems that a descriptive language of movement, would enhance the work done through the body. Laban's effort shape vocabulary has the possibility of enhancing the work in a variety of ways and helping therapists have a solid framework for understanding movement patterns. Furthermore, Laban has created a language that is so concise and accessible that it not only has the potential to serve dramatherapists but also easily lends itself to participants as well. Laban intended his work to help all people develop a better understanding of their own movements, as this is one of the goals of dramatherapy the link between the two is seemingly appropriate and deserves further consideration.

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