

[00:00:00] Bonni Stachowiak: Today on episode number 340 of the Teaching in Higher ED Podcast, Humanized Online Dance Classes. With Heather Castillo and MiRi Park.

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[00:00:22] Bonni: Hello and welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher ED. I'm Bonni Stachowiak and this is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also talk about how to improve our productivity approaches so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

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Today on episode number 340 of the Teaching in Higher ED Podcast, Heather Castillo and MiRi Park join me. Heather Castillo is an assistant professor of performing arts and dance, and MiRi Park is a lecture in dance at CSU Channel Islands and they're recognized for their creative solutions in transitioning dance classes to online instruction. Their dedication to delivering a humanized online learning experience has influenced the way in which the field of dance is being taught virtually. As a prompt response to campus closure due to the pandemic, Castillo and Park

developed and circulated a guide, considerations for moving university dance classes online to their campus colleagues.

The document was picked up and republished by the world-renowned dance studies organization and became a resource for universities throughout the US including Emory University of Washington and Barnard College. The pair also hosted webinars to help guide universities across the globe to transition dance courses online. Castillo and Park's commitment to providing students with a robust online learning experience led to the development of the core and teen core project, a global web archive of student dance performances.

As dance recitals and other live performances are currently shut down, the website creates an uplifting network for dance students around the world and allows them to share and archive dance videos. California State University's Channel Island's president, Erika Beck, said about Heather and MiRi's impact at the onset of our current circumstances will reverberate and continue to help dance educators well beyond the pandemic. Heather and MiRi, welcome to Teaching in Higher ED.

[00:02:49] Heather: Hi, Bonni.

[00:02:49] MiRi: Thank you.

[00:02:50] Bonni: I'm excited to talk to you today and to hear about your work and especially to get more of a sense of what goes on in your minds around some of the challenges that we're facing. Before we even start talking about the pandemic and some of the things around inequality that I know is central to your work, can you take us way back to getting started in teaching dance in a higher ED context, some of the challenges that you faced or that you saw colleagues facing that were really hard to overcome?

[00:03:23] Heather Castillo: I would say, for me, I had danced professionally for about 12 years before I decided to go back to school and get my bachelor's and my MFA to teach, and I had always identified as a commercial freelance jazz artist. When I returned to school, while as a human I was embraced, I also felt that I was delineated as someone who did something that was fun or entertainment and not

art compared to my other colleagues who did concert dance and ballet, and that was art. While they were kind and generous and celebrated me, on the other hand, I was always this fun other and isn't it nice to have the fun other, but that didn't feel good to me at all.

Upon graduating, one of the things I wanted to do as I was going to move into the world as a lecturer or dance scholar upon graduation was to make a space where commercial jazz freelance dance had a space in academia, that was celebrated for its artistry and not pushed to the side. That led to an untangling thread, as MiRi has called it before, with me, a search for why that is. Without getting into that very long story, it really comes down to institutional racism, it comes down to the connections of jazz dance and commercial dance, being places where artists of color have been able to forge grounds, but there's also problems in appropriation, there's a lot tied into this.

For me, it's always been, as I approach my teaching, I'm literally trying to teach in a way that I have not been taught and to make the space open for all of my dancers, whether they have come to me because they've taught themselves on YouTube or in their garage or with a crew or in their high school Folklorico dance team, or they've had studio training or cheerleading training or dance team training or conservatory training, and none of that is better or hierarchical than the other and we all come to this place. I think that journey for me has been the most fulfilling and continues to be the most fulfilling, but also the most challenging.

[00:05:56] Bonni: MiRi, how for you, what do you think about in terms of your own struggles and challenges early on.

[00:06:02] MiRi Park: I am a product of public higher ED dance training. I went to University of Massachusetts Amherst, I was a BFA dance major. I was taught in my dance history courses about the big three modern dance mothers, Rue St. Denis, Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, and the trajectory of what was presented to me and the values of what was important didn't reflect my training that I came in with, which was very much suburban studio training. I was a competition dancer.

I now look back and say I performed in drag because I was in full makeup, full hair, full sequence all the time, but then when I went to college, I was being molded into this modern dancer, not knowing really what that necessarily meant, but I still I wanted to be the best. So I was like, "I'm going to be the best dancer" even though I don't know what that means. Did not see my ethnic or cultural experience reflected in any of the dances that I did or any of the other supplemental courses I was taking for the dance major.

I left that program understanding who I was as an artist, the beginning parts of who I was as an artist, but it wasn't until I moved to New York City after graduating where I really found my voice and my feeling where I've found myself comfortable in my own skin for the first time. I grew up in a predominantly white suburb, went to a school that was predominantly white, and then for those of you, well, who can't see me, I'm Asian-American, Korean-American specifically, grew up in the '90s. It was a time where I could either fall in with the mainstream white commercial culture, and the only other alternative really was listening to hip hop in the '90s, which I identified with both.

When I moved to New York City, I was writing, I had double-degreed in journalism, so I had a BFA in dance and a BA in journalism. When I moved to New York, I was writing and I was also dancing. Through my writing, I found breaking because I was asked to do a research and article about B-girls. Back in the early 2000s, I didn't know what B-girling was, I didn't know what B-boying was, which is popularly known as break dancing. I thought people still do that, how is this a thing, and come to find out, it is a culture that never stopped. Commercially it may have faded from people's view, but it's a lifestyle.

It's things that people live as opposed to just something they do. I did that pretty intensely for five years, training, battling, practicing. My full-time job was working at a dance organization where I was doing marketing and also producing, and here, I also realized that the New York downtown concert dancing was also this heavily, predominantly white, modern, contemporary focus. I was actually navigating these issues of race and equity in a couple of different layers.

I was also performing with a choreographer called Mia love, who is a black American choreographer with an immense dance background that includes Ballet Nacional de Cuba, studying with Butoh dancers in Japan, as well as just being an extraordinary artist. I was getting my information and learning about racism in this country as being a cornerstone of how this country functions via capitalism, via the project of slavery. Through my education as a dance performer, as someone who is also engaging in going to breaking practice every day and talking to people about their family histories, about being in the outer boroughs in New York City, what it was like to grow up in the '70s and '80s in the city.

Then when I went on to graduate school, I was getting an MA at Columbia in American studies where I wanted to really get into the history of these dances, I had my eyes further open to realize how intertwined these histories are to everything that we do as dancers. It made me really upset that it took me that long. Of course, at this point, I'm only in my mid-20s, but at that point, I was so upset like how has this never been presented to me before? When I had the opportunity to begin teaching in higher education, it was first at NYU Steinhardt in the dance ed program where I was asked to teach hip hop.

Rather than teaching hip hop as a strictly dance practice class, I knew that I had to teach the dance in the context of the people's lives that were lived as they were developing these particular dance forms. That it wasn't just a codified thing where you move on five, six, seven, eight. That's not how I was being taught in the scene and that's not how I wanted to transmit it in the classroom. For me, it came with understanding immigration history, political history, economic history, history in general, and that has informed every step I've taken since then when I teach in higher ed because I think of people who do dance as opposed to merely dancers.

We think, oh, dancers just are these like magical beings. They're human beings that have histories of arrival and each person is unique, so there's never going to be one story. There's multivocal stories that make a much more robust picture of what was going on. When I met Heather, Heather was I think in year five when I met you.

[00:11:57] Heather: I had just switched from lecture and been hired on the tenure track, so five. In year five, yes.

[00:12:05] MiRi: She presented this idea to me that it would be a dance program, small but mighty, where we were different from these traditional programs that we had graduated from which valued modern and dance as the center of technique, of building a dancer's artistry both as a performer but also as a creator. That she wanted to make hip hop essential technique for the students here but couldn't get anyone to come up from LA necessarily or because we're in that weird space, we're not quite Los Angeles. At that point when she was talking about it was a curriculum that was equity-minded, that was inclusive of so many different kinds of dance styles and backgrounds, that's when it took off.

We think it up and then just kept going, the synergy, the connection was made, and then it just keeps rolling forward because this is our conversation every day. Literally, every single day has some aspect that moves this conversation forward constantly. That's what appears in our syllabus for our classes, it appears in our conversation with our students individually, and as Heather gets the opportunity to rewrite the curriculum, will be present in the curriculum as well.

[00:13:31] Bonni: Wow, I feel like we should just record, I don't know, 62 more episodes and we're just getting started.

[laughter]

Thank you both for sharing each of your stories. In fact, I was about to ask you how you had met, and then you just went right there for me, so I love it. We're going to actually come back to some of the conversations around equity, so we're certainly not done but let's spend just a few minutes talking about another easy challenge. I'm sure that you haven't had any conversations about it all and that is a pandemic. I can remember that the first thing that I was hearing from people, whether it was through social media or at my institution was "We can't do X." The two big themes that I heard was "We can't do labs."

There certainly are, of course, challenges around things like lab classes, but then also we can't do things like dance classes. I remember a very specific dance class that was just laughed, like you could never do something like that. I'm thinking where are you getting that idea from, but I want to hear from each of you what do you remember, was it a moment, or did it take a little while until you realized, "Oh, wow, this is actually really happening, we really are in a pandemic and we're about to have our experience and our students' experiences be radically transformed"?

Tell me about that when it hit, and then did you have doubts? Did you have the "How on earth would we do this?" or did you just feel like, "We can do this"? Talk a little bit. Let's start with Heather, and then we get to hear MiRi's as well.

[00:15:04] Heather: This will probably layer a little bit. I think it would be harder for us to go one and then the other.

[00:15:09] Bonni: Oh, sure.

[00:15:10] Heather: So I will start.

[00:15:11] Bonni: Yes.

[00:15:12] Heather: You should know there was never a doubt in either of our minds that this could be done. We were like, "All right, this is what we're doing and this is how you do it." When the, was it the University of Wuhan? Closed I think it was in January, I got a little email about we should think about this and online education. I was like, "Oh." From our teaching and learning innovation group, there was just a small part of us that talk about online education on CI. I got an email and I was like, "That's interesting."

Then I'm going to throw this to MiRi and her personal experience with her evolution because she's got some personal connections that help understand why both of us were actually really ahead of this curve. Not just in what we would but when March 9th came, we were ready about three weeks, four weeks earlier than that, so go ahead.

[00:16:03] MiRi: My parents live in South Korea and my mom is a biochemist and she worked for Amgen for 20 years here in Thousand Oaks. She was working in South Korea at the time, it's still there. In our daily weekly conversations, I was checking in on them to see how they were doing if they were being safe, et cetera, and it got to a point in February where my mother said we're fine in Korea, it's totally under control, it's the States that I'm worried about and you should be getting ready. At that point, I was trying not to be chicken little, I'm a little bit of a hypochondriac as it is.

At that point, I had already started shopping to assuage my anxiety because I felt like I was actually doing something. Heather and I were communicating, again, on the daily because she was someone who was a sympathetic ear. I could say I'm not trying to stoke any flames here, but I think we should realistically think about what this means. Because Heather was having the conference within TLI, we came together and said, "You're not crazy. No, you're not crazy. Let's think about how we're actually going to deal with this." At that point, it felt if we go back to our emails or text messages, it would be like, "So this thing happens, what should we think about?"

This was like mid-February at this point, which was only a few weeks out if we look at it in retrospect, but because Heather had already wrapped her head around teaching online as a TLI fellow, we already had two fully online asynchronous dance courses. The concept of that was not lost on us, and then in addition to that, I recognized that hip hop dance specifically has been taught online for a really, really long time.

For me, I always go back to *Flashdance* from 1984 where there's people who were documented as saying, we went to go see it, if you want to see it, you can see People & Planet or the documentary, where b-boys around the world say, "We didn't go to see Jennifer Beals, we went to go see the Rock Steady Crew." It was not even a five-minute scene where guys, predominantly guys, mostly men, would watch that scene and go back and just try to figure out what they saw in that five-minute clip, and that turned into breaking scenes around the world. I grew up I

remember watching *Mouercise* on the Disney channel and doing exercise in my living room.

I grew up watching recital tapes from the year before and memorizing those tapes. I grew up watching MTV and memorizing all the videos. It was a one-directional learning experience, but our generation, what we've identified as being the Xennials has been learning how to dance virtually our entire lives. Then when YouTube came along, a lot of the social dancers were the first adopters in terms of transmitting information to other people. As every app came out, dancers were the ones that were exchanging, "Hey, this is what I'm doing." That the world got really small really fast online.

As I was talking through this with Heather, Heather was like people have been doing this through Hollywood for a really long. My research was on dance ensembles in the movie musical in the golden age, so like 1945 to 1960. I interviewed a bunch of people. They were in their 70s and 80s at the time, and this is about 15 years ago, and almost every single one of them said that when they were kids, they went to go watch the old films with Fred Astaire and Eleanor Powell. They would go home and try to mimic them and that when they got to stand on their first shiny black floor, it meant the world to them. That was just the sample of people alive.

I'm sure the minute there were flickers, people were watching dances and trying them out, so transmitting dance through recorded technology is not new.

[00:20:11] Bonni: In terms of you talking about transmitting dance through recordings, I have vivid memories too and I just loved hearing you share about that. I can remember watching Jane Fonda workout tapes and all of that, but the one thing that was also coming to my mind that I remember being transformative for me as a dancer, I took 11 years of ballet growing up, was the first times I was able to see myself on one of those VHS tapes.

The feedback that that gave me, I think I both had a weird juxtaposition that it gave me a little bit of a sense of confidence because I don't think I thought of

myself as being able to dance the way that that VHS tape showed me that I could, but also, that at the very same time knew I had ways I could grow. Just to be able to see that it was so different than seeing photographs. I would love to hear you share a little bit about the ways in which you're able to provide that to your students, so not just the one way but where we can see ourselves. MiRi, you mentioned being able to see our own culture and our own self, our sense of identity. How does that one way then in your teaching become that two way?

[00:21:28] Heather: I'm actually going to take that because I'm the one teaching the technique classes now and I've actually flipped the dance classroom. If you think about a traditional dance class that you walk into the room and the teacher stands in front, or you make a circle depending on the style and will start to, in various ways through language and their body, transmit shapes and ideas. It's live and you can pick all of that up in three-dimensional space and you're learning the content live with your dancers, if that makes sense. That there's usually not a prerecorded or something to read.

You might have something to read, but it's not like that you're picking up the dance information before you show up in that classroom. When we flipped during the pandemic, I did what everyone else did and what MiRi and I told everyone in the webinars about Zoom. I taught on Zoom, I met on Zoom with my students, but I thought that in planning a class for fall, but that was actually not the most effective way to actually help a student grow over a semester. Zoom is great in terms of giving class, but it's really hard to observe your dancers and teach the content. That's a very different feeling than the live classroom.

What I've done is I spend time and record how-to videos and demonstrations, and I upload those at the beginning of the week and the dancers learn them. Then instead of meeting with 20, 25, or 30 dancers, I meet with only three or four at a time. Each cohort meets twice a week, once with just themselves and once with me, and in that hour with me, I really focus on just watching them. I have to get up and do a few things, but I'm not giving them the content. I'm just watching them do the content because it takes also longer to learn that content online, so this means

that I'm really there fostering growth. Then at the end of the week, they have to film themselves doing the content and write a journal.

In fact, in terms of their grading, they each have constructed their own rubrics of growth. Instead of me saying what they should grow in or where they want to see themselves grow, they are deciding their markers of growth and goals. Then they also can go back and refer to their videos and also collectively each week how, and they've all commented how much they see themselves growing. They're very surprised in this moment about their growth, but I'd really flipped how a dance class is taught for fall semester online. I will also say it takes me three times longer to do than just showing up in the class and doing it.

[00:24:19] Bonni: MiRi, I wanted to circle back a little bit. You mentioned cultural appropriation earlier in our conversation. I did mention having taken ballet for 11 years and what I didn't also mention was I am sure that I was part of cultural appropriation. I can remember that when those curtains would be closed, there would be the cardboard that would go down behind the curtains, and we would all experiment with breakdancing and me having absolutely no concept at the time of any cultural elements there. If you had talked to me about it, I may have been able to mention that there were different people sometimes doing the ballet than were participating.

They might've been a stagehand working behind the scenes, and then express themselves that way. What do you tell your students today about cultural appropriation? How do you bring it up, and then how do you help them to see the lines between what it is to appreciate someone else's culture and what it is to appropriate it?

[00:25:20] MiRi: I think for me, the key to having the discussion about cultural appropriation is for there to be a basic foundation of knowledge regarding the fact that we exist in a capitalist society. We live in a culture that is about what is being produced and what is being consumed. If you think back to your growing up days, we were consuming things on television, we were consuming things on the radio,

we were buying CDs, we were buying DVDs and VHS or what have you, these are all consumptive practices. We were also buying clothes that said this is your identity.

Like the example that I like to use back when I was growing up in Jersey, if you wanted to be a skater opposer, you would buy a pair of vans and a pair of big jeans and a wallet with a chain on it. Whether or not you skateboard, it didn't matter, but you were fronting like you were a skateboarder, so you could buy an identity. Halloween, this comes up every year where you can actually buy an actual costume of someone else's culture and wear it for fun. The concept of appropriation, so the definition of that is when you take someone else's culture and profit off of it. We have to have that conversation about money without that piece where we're spinning in circles with no weight to it necessarily.

I think cultural appreciation, intercultural exchange will happen, has happened for centuries since humans have found other humans who are not like themselves. Does it mean that they were appropriating? No. We have in the upper-division dance history course a week that is just focusing on appropriation and examples of what that might look like and how people profit off of other identities. It can happen in commercial dance and it is multi-directional. We think about the group that's in power, the dominant group as appropriating from another group, but what that means is that it doesn't necessarily mean a racially dominant group, it can be an economically dominant group that appropriates from another group.

The bottom line really that I want people to understand and for my students to understand is that democracy and capitalism are not the same thing, but because we live in America, because the economic paradigm that we exist in is that of capitalism, anything that we produce, be it dance or some sort of art, it will get consumed. The question is, how are you as the artist, how are you as the producer going to have the control over what happens with your image, with your artwork? Whether you want to engage in capitalism or not, this will happen and it might happen outside of your control.

I come at it from the perspective of I wish I had learned this when I was a young person because that would have affected the choices that I made as an artist

intensely as an artist of color and as someone who identifies as a cisgender female, and all of these other things that are at play because we can appropriate in so many different ways. Because we are children of capitalism, our instinct is to appropriate without understanding what that is because we are taught. We have naturalized consumption as if it's something that we are meant to do. Part of my job is helping students identify those pieces in themselves and identify and think critically about other instances and other phenomenon.

[00:29:13] Bonni: I can only imagine in having those conversations that so much of it, yes, it's just become what we've been conditioned to do and it's really hard to imagine other ways that people actually live, but there are actually other models that exist beyond the one that we have been centered in so much of our lives so many of us.

[00:29:31] MiRi: I'll also add that it's a tough conversation for folks. It can be very scary because what it does is it forces you to question everything that you know so far in your life. It has the potential to take apart all of your values that you arrive with. So in order to get students to engage, we often, in higher ed and also in K-12 education, talk about safe spaces, but I work with some activism communities that talk about brave spaces, and that sometimes these are topics, it's the first time you've ever been presented them, it's the first time you're like downloading them and processing them in your brain. I am asking people to participate and it might not come out in the way that is politically correct.

I do ask that you are brave and mindful and kind to those who are in the virtual room and that we reduce harm. Basically that our speech reduces harm. We do not intend to do harm with our thoughts and articulations, but they'll be far from perfect if it's the first time you're treading that territory.

[00:30:45] Bonni: I appreciate that you said it can be scary because one of the things that I've done in class that has had similar scary times is showing a documentary about the fast fashion industry. Since, as you already have mentioned, our clothing can become such a part of our identity that we buy, this thing that makes us seem like we're a certain way. Then once you start messing with

our identities, what are we going to do with that? I've had experiences in my life not having to do with clothes, but having to do with the loss of a job that I'd worked at the same company for more than 10 years, and so I remember very vividly what it is like to completely have your identity stripped from you.

I know for myself, my human was like, "How do I get back to something if I don't know who I am anymore without this as part of my identity?" Some of the conversations, it sounds like you're having, really can get down to that raw, raw sense of identity. I could imagine too, some of that is "Wait, I identify myself as a good person and now you're making me think that maybe I'm not as good of a person that as I'd like to think that I am." Being able to release that, really challenging for sure. Would you share about the project to dance? Maybe project is too small of a word. Would you share about dance as protest?

[00:32:02] MiRi: Yes. Immediately following the murder of George Floyd and watching all of the uprisings that happens all over the country, and then all over the world, I was left in a mixed bag of emotions because as someone who lives in the suburbs with kids, I wasn't prepared to go to the cities or start the protests here in this particular town for various reasons. I was really trying to figure out how can I use my time towards forwarding the cause as well and amplifying what's going on in the world? What are my strengths that I can bring to the table? I started to just document all the instances of dance that were happening at protest because I noticed that it was happening a lot.

First for myself in a Google Doc. I'm currently a third-year PhD student at UCLA, so part of what I'm doing is just collecting information at this point. I just started this document and I realized this is actually quite a phenomenon. I have a colleague I work with, Dr. Shamell Bell, who's also a graduate of UCLA and her dissertation was about what she calls street dance activism of incorporating intentionally street dances, hip hop dances in protest as a marker of black joy, for black liberation because the thing that white supremacy seeks to destroy is black joy. Knowing her and knowing her work also really inspired me.

She came to prominence after Ferguson, and a lot of the dancing and protest that was happening there, which has already been five years at this point. Dance is happening at almost every single protest that I saw and it wasn't just street dances, it was people's indigenous dance forms and ethnic dance forms they were bringing. I think the ones that were going viral were the new dances from Aotearoa, New Zealand, the Hakas, the jingle dress dances that were happening in Minnesota, vogue that was happening in Chicago.

It was just remarkable to me where I said, "Okay, I am a keyboard warrior at this point in my life, so I'm just going to put this all together with as much information as I can and make it public." At that point, Heather and I had already made one document public for moving, transitioning university dance classes online. That was a huge service to the field at large. I was like why keep the information to myself when I can share it with others? I'm not doing an analysis, I'm not writing a paper, I can just document and put it out there for anyone else as a resource, and also to show that dance is protest. It has always been protest, particularly in this country, particularly in the line of Afro-diasporic dances.

The New York Times picked up on the piece as part of a larger article about dance at protest, and so I hope that it continues to be a resource. It's a finite period of time. It is from right after the murder of George Floyd to the end of July, which was that intense period of uprisings. I stopped documenting at the end of July for a couple of reasons, one of which I'm sure we'll get to at some point, but that's where I was in regards to dance and protest.

[00:35:34] Bonni: I wanted to mention to people because I know we're going to run out of time to be able to talk about so much of the work you're doing, but that people head over to teachinginhigher.ed.com/340 because we're going to have some incredible links. I love, too, that even though this particular documentation of these dance protests was this finite amount of time that you link at the very top, too, if you want to find out those sources that are even providing current information to today, there's other places that we can go visit, so I encourage people to look at that. This is the place in the show where we each get to give our recommendations.

I sent out just a weekly update from Teaching in Higher ED and got to hear back from Sarah McNeil, who I know from the University of Houston. She shared about one of their faculty members presenting breakout rooms and Jamboard. His name is Justin Burris. He has Jamin' as in Jamboard, Jain' with Justin Burris. Jamboard is a product that allows you to almost just- you hear so much about online whiteboards, but it's so much more than that as far as being able to invite people to collaborate in visual ways. I just suggest that people go over and have a look. There's a video recording, he has his slide deck available, and I just appreciate Sarah sharing that with me so we can pass that resource on.

I wrote an article for EdSurge about using breakout rooms where you can see the work that students are doing through a collaborative document. I've been using a lot of Google Slides, but they were saying that it's just not visual enough for their class types, so wanting there to be that visual way where you could sketch something out, draw it. They were talking about teaching staff and wanting students to be able to draw the calculations they were making. I just love that we're connected in solidarity with one another and I get to hear from people and see the ways that you're experimenting, and then, of course, getting to talk to people like Heather and MiRi.

Heather, I'm going to pass it over for your recommendation, and then you can pass it over to MiRi.

[00:37:37] Heather: I recommend roller skates. It's just a lot of fun, but there's actually a little more connected to this. Right before we were dismissed to quarantine, I was actually talking with my students quite a bit about what were some different ways that they thought would be a lot of fun if we had to transmit. I had some real TikTok lovers, so I got an account. We even did a few TikTok things as a group. They would do it with me and different things if they wanted. None of them were required to join the platform TikTok, but it was an option for them. I was going and all of a sudden, there's all these roller skaters and I hadn't roller skated since I was eight, it was a long time, it's decades ago.

I went and you could not find roller skates. Roller skates became very popular in the pandemic. Everyone decided to roller skate and the factories were shut down. I actually went to our local rink out here, the Ventura Roll, and I called them up and I said, "Do you have skates left?" and he says, "I can sell you a pair of rentals," so I got a pair of rentals and I joined a few boards on Facebook. What I grew to learn is that roller skating very much has an activist protest, rich cultural history connected to African-Americans. It was very interesting. It was going through the Black Lives Matter movement.

I was reading a lot on roller skating and its history and its culture, which I thought really tied to some of the same things we were going through at dance and what we're learning about decolonization or recentering and honoring all of the people who are participating in appropriation through roller skating. Then the other side of that is just also the absolute joy I have at the end of a Zoom day where I put on my skates. My kids wanted a pair. One of them is really taken to it and we roller skate around our backyard at night and it's soaring. I'm not great at it, I just figured out how to scooch backwards, which is super we're fun, but in this moment, there is a lot.

That is my joy is roller skating. If you're looking for something to find joy in your backyard that makes you feel like you're flying, I highly recommend roller skating and I recommend Moonlight Rollers. They are a black-owned roller skating company, so if you're going to go and buy yourself a pair of roller skates, there's some really cool new ones, so I really recommend you check them out.

[00:40:05] Speaker 2: Thank you so much. MiRi, how about you?

[00:40:07] MiRi: My recommendations are two websites. The first one is streetdanceactivism.com. At the end of July, I shifted my focus into organizing with this group of VIPOC artists somatic practitioners and scholars, where we created a 28 day global dance meditation for black liberation. We organized that, we did one round of the global dance meditation, and now we're in a second-round that will actually culminate on election day. On the day of the election, we're going to be holding a wellness marathon, a 12-hour marathon that people can drop into at

any point in time. We're scheduling prerecorded and live segments of things like sound bowls and guided meditations, sharing circles.

We're trying to find some comedians because we know we're going to need to laugh that day. We are currently in our second week of the second round of the global dance meditation. It incorporates a lot of movements as well as spiritual opportunities for healing and growth and a lot of daily affirmations. Our first week's affirmation was I am, and that is more than enough. These are things that you're familiar with. It helps to just hear it again and again and again. That's my first recommendation. My second recommendation is a project that Heather and I also threw ourselves into headlong called The ReadIn Series, which you can find at thereadingseries.com.

It is a educational activist activity where 34 prominent black actors from across stage and screen read WEB Du Bois as black reconstruction in America, which was published in 1935, but it's specifically about the reconstruction era following the American Civil War. It's 750 pages long. When all of the book lists were flying around during the pandemic about how to get woke, how to be anti-racist, I realized this book was never going to make a list, so how could we get people to hear it? Because what Du Bois accounts in this particular text feels like it could have been written last week. We are airing them Tuesdays and Fridays at noon Pacific Standard Time, but you can find everything at thereadinseries.com.

[00:42:34] Bonni: Heather and MiRi, I'm so grateful to be connected with you by the California State University. I'm so thankful for all your work, and I'm just leaving today with a smile, but also a sense of we're in this together and just being inspired and challenged by your work. Thank you so much.

[00:42:51] MiRi: Thank you.

[00:42:52] Heather: Thanks for the opportunity, Bonni.

[music]

[00:42:57] Bonni: Thanks once again to Heather Castillo and MiRi Park for joining me for today's episode of Teaching in Higher ED. I hope you'll head on over to teachinginhighered.com/340 as there are so many great links and sources for information to check out over there. Just thanks for each of you for your work and for coming on the podcast to share your stories, and thanks to all of you for listening. It's hard to believe that back in June of 2014 this whole thing got started, and more so than ever, I feel in solidarity with you as a community and us all just trying to navigate all that's going on. Thanks so much for listening and being a part of this community, and I'll see you next time on Teaching in Higher ED.

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