

The Dance Therapy Program of
Hunter College
1971-1996
Finding Aid

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Accession Number: 99-15

Size: 0.4522 cu. ft.

Provenance: Hunter College Dance Therapy Program

Restrictions: None.

Location: Range 6 Section 1 Shelf 1

Archivist: Prof. Julio L. Hernandez-Delgado

Assistant: Mrs. Dane Guerrero

Date: October, 2001

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HISTORICAL NOTE

Hunter College bestowed its first M.S. degree in Dance Therapy in 1971. The program was developed by Claire Schmais (Class of 1949) instructor of volleyball and modern dance at Bronx State Hospital; Elissa White who was the first dance therapist at the aforementioned institution; and Martha Davis a psychologist who specialized in the science of movement. The curriculum was developed from a grant from the National Institutes of Mental Health and focused on dance therapy and practice, movement observation (using the Rudolph Laban system), and dance as a non-verbal medium of communication. As students progressed through the program supervised internships were established with agencies/centers which cared for psychiatric patients, the mentally retarded, substance abusers, disturbed children, infants, and seniors.

The original program lasted 1½ years and consisted of 30 credits. The student body was international in scope with individuals representing Switzerland, Germany, Japan, China, Norway, Columbia, India, Israel, as well as the United States of America. All students interned at Bronx State Hospital. In 1982, a dual degree program combining social work and dance therapy was started. This was a three-year 80 credit program granting both an M.S. in Dance/Movement Therapy and an M.S.W.

The Dance Therapy Program at Hunter College was abruptly suspended in 1995. Many of the program's instructors and former students were dismayed to hear that Hunter College would no longer offer a degree in Dance Therapy.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Dance Therapy Program of Hunter College was operational from 1971 to 1995. It should be noted that this program was a prototype for the training of dance therapists in the United States. Over the years the program prepared clinicians for work in mental health facilities with people who were emotionally, mentally, and/or physically impaired.

This collection contains incomplete records for the years 1971-1996. In addition, there is a small set of files from the Hunter Dance Therapy Alumni Association for the years 1976 - 1979. The records are arranged in two series: Administration and Hunter Dance Therapy Alumni Association. The folders are arranged alphabetically within each series.

CONTAINER LIST

SERIES I - ADMINISTRATION

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	Admissions Information, May 11, 1971
	2	Changes to the Dance Therapy Program, 1971 - 1996
	3	Conference flyers
	4	<i>Dance Newsletter</i> , 1988
	5	Fieldwork and Internship Manual
		Final Report
6		Dance Therapy Program, 1977 - 1984
		Dance/Movement Therapy Program, 1985 - 1994
7		History of Dance Therapy Program
8		Master Thesis Abstracts
9		Proposals, May 1977
10		Proposals for New Courses, 1970 - 1973

SERIES II - HUNTER DANCE THERAPY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

1	10	Activities
	11	<i>Hunter Alumni Association Newsletter</i> , 1976, 1978
	12	Membership, 1976
	13	Minutes, 1976, 1978