



The New York Public Library  
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

**Irene Dowd papers**

1972-2015

(S) \*MGZMD 366

Processed by Lea Jordan in 2014. Collection was rehoused and foldered.

## Summary

**Creator:** Dowd, Irene

**Title:** Irene Dowd papers

**Date:** 1972-2015

**Size:** 15.35 linear feet (34 boxes)

**Source:** The source of the original collection is unknown. The additions were donated by Irene Dowd in 2017.

**Revision History:** 30 boxes processed by Nathan Evans

**Abstract:** Irene Dowd (1946-) is a kinesthetic anatomist, educator, author, and dance choreographer. The Irene Dowd papers, dated 1972 to 2015, emphasize her teaching career with course materials and notes. The papers also include writings for various academic activities, and audio and video recordings of dances and classes.

### Conditions Governing Access:

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**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Lea Jordan in 2014. Collection was rehoused and foldered.

## Creator History

Irene Dowd (1946-) is a kinesthetic anatomist, educator, author, and dance choreographer. She studied philosophy at Vassar College, anatomy and neuroanatomy at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical School, and neuroscience at Columbia University. She also studied with and assisted Dr. Lulu E. Sweigard at the Juilliard School from 1968 through 1974. Since 1970, Dowd has taught dance, composition, functional and kinesthetic anatomy, and neuro-muscular re-education at many institutions throughout the United States and Canada. She served on the faculties of the graduate program in dance at the Teacher's College of Columbia University from 1977 to 1995, and the Graduate Liberal Studies program at Wesleyan University from 1985 to 1993. Additionally, Dowd was a regular guest instructor at Canada's National Ballet School from 1991 to 2013. Currently she sits on the Dance Division faculty at Juilliard College and teaches for the graduate program in dance at Hollins University. Dowd maintains a private practice, and has choreographed warm-up dances and conditioning exercises. In addition to teaching, she has contributed to academic publications such as *Dance Research Journal* and *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, and is the author of *Taking Root to Fly*. Dowd resides in New York City.

## Scope and Content Note

The Irene Dowd papers, dated 1972 to 2015, hold teaching materials and notes, writings for various academic activities, and audio and video recordings of dances and classes.

Teaching materials and notes are the most substantial part of the collection. They reflect courses and workshops taught by Dowd at institutions, conferences, and her private studio. Courses are predominantly represented by handouts and assignments, as well as notes, illustrations, and attendee lists. Teaching materials and notes are almost all written and compiled by Dowd, with some handouts repeated for versions of courses in different years, either with slight alterations or without. Common course subjects include kinesthetic anatomy of the limbs and spine, ideokinesis, and dance warm-ups. A large portion of the materials are for courses taught at Dowd's private studio and Canada's National Ballet School.

The collection also documents Dowd's professional activities outside of teaching. There are drafts for her articles in the *International Encyclopedia of Dance* and *Dance Research Journal*, materials relating to an imagery study, drafts and notes for her 1982 *Eye on Dance* appearance, and notes for exercise videos at Canada's National Ballet School. Dowd's illustrations and drafts for *Equipoise: The Life and Work of Alfredo Corvino* are also included, as well as documents for her New York City Artist Certification from the 1970s and 1980s.

Finally, video recordings primarily feature workshops, classes, warm-ups, and performances and rehearsals for dances choreographed by Dowd. Audio recordings include music accompaniment for dance warm-ups. All recordings date from 1991 to 2015.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged in three groups: Teaching Materials and Notes; Other Activities; and Audio and Video Recordings.

## Key Terms

### Subjects

Choreography  
Dance -- Study and teaching  
Kinesiology  
Movement therapy

**Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Drawings  
Instructional and educational works  
Sound recordings  
Video recordings

**Names**

Dowd, Irene  
National Ballet School (Canada)

## Container List

### Teaching Materials and Notes 1972-2015

This group is arranged chronologically by institution, with Dowd's private studio courses, lecture notes, and study cards ordered at the end. Each section contains materials for courses taught by Dowd; the vast majority of courses are represented by handouts and assignments. Notes, illustrations, and attendee lists are also included, mostly for courses taught at Dowd's private studio. Some courses, particularly those at Canada's National Ballet School, are documented by programs, booklets, and both incoming and outgoing correspondence. Course names or types of courses are described below each section.

- b. 5 f. 1 **New York City Community College 1972-1974**  
Notes for dance workshops.
- b. 5 f. 2 **Muscular Therapy Training Lectures 1977**  
Institution unknown.
- b. 5 f. 3 **Dance Notation Bureau 1977-1981**  
Most materials relate to "Teaching Dance from an Anatomical and Dynamic Base."
- b. 5 f. 4-10 **Columbia University 1977-1995**  
Most materials relate to "Anatomical Analysis of Ballet and Modern Dance Technique."
- b. 1 f. 1-5 **Columbia University Course 1988, 1991**  
"Anatomical Analysis of Dance Technique."
- b. 5 f. 11-12 **Laban Institute of Movement Studies 1978-1995**
- b. 6 f. 1-3 Course topics include touch, teaching dance, the nervous system, neuromuscular function, anatomy and kinesiology, and stretching.
- b. 6 f. 4-6 **Naropa Institute 1978-1982**  
"Functional Human Anatomy," "Moving the Axial Skeleton," and "Studies in Movement Phrasing."
- b. 6 f. 7 **City College of New York 1979**  
"Kinesiology for Dancers II."
- Hollins University/American Dance Festival 1981-2015**
- b. 6 f. 8-9 **1981-1983**  
Materials relate to body therapy workshops and a kinesiology course.
- b. 6 f. 10-12 **2003-2015**
- b. 7 f. 1-11 Most materials relate to "Our Ecological Bodies: Musculoskeletal Interactions with Earth, People, and Things."
- b. 7 f. 12-13 **Wesleyan University 1985-1993**  
"From Perception to Performance: Coaching Functional Movement," "Kinesiology for Dancers," and "Dynamics of Touch."
- b. 8 f. 1-4 **Movement Research 1985-2015**  
Mostly dance warm-ups.
- b. 8 f. 5-6 **Simon Fraser University 1991-1994**  
Courses include "Investigation of Walking as the Basis for the Elements of Dance," "Getting Off the Ground: Jumping/Leaping/Hopping," and "Body Mechanics Intensive: Applied Anatomy and Kinesiology for Ballet and Modern Dance Teachers."
- Canada's National Ballet School 1991-2013**
- b. 8 f. 7 **1991-1993**  
Dance warm-ups and "One Approach to the Elegant Standing Leg: or Control of the Sway-Back Knee and the Rolled-In Foot."
- b. 8 f. 8-11 **1995**  
Includes materials for various dance workshops, courses taught at "The Art and Science of Dance" seminar, and "Turn Out: From the Hips? From the Feet?"

Teaching Materials and Notes (cont.)

Canada's National Ballet School (cont.)

- b. 9 f. 1-3      **1996**  
"Wandering Knee-Caps: Patellofemoral Syndrome," "The Art and Science of Dance" courses, "Assessing the Dancer's Hip," and "Feet Like Hands."
- b. 9 f. 4-6      **1997**  
"Feet Like Hands," three jumping courses, "The Art and Science of Dance" courses, "The Arabesque," and "The Dancer's Knee."
- b. 9 f. 7-10     **1998-1999**  
"Orbits," "The Dancer's Hip, Orbits, and Observations on Leaping," and "Preparing for Jumping and Leaping."
- b. 9 f. 11       **2000**  
"Helix: Equilibrium in Performance," "Spirals," "The Extravagant Hand," and "The Dancer's Thorax and Arms in Performance."
- b. 9 f. 12       **2001**  
"Spirals and Epaulement," "Elements of Spirals," "Problem-Solving to Achieve More Effective Turnout and Flexibility Practices," and "The Dancer's Thorax and Hands in Performance."
- b. 10 f. 1-4     **2002-2003**  
"Volutes," "From the Center Out: Anatomy, Motion, Maturation, and Training of the Pelvis and Lumbar Spine," "Gripping," "Exploring Artistry," and notes on conditioning.
- b. 10 f. 5-8     **2004**  
"Exploring Artistry: Mind, Body and Soul," "Maximizing Range of Motion Both Musculoskeletally and Artistically," and "Teaching the Dance Itself."
- b. 10 f. 9-14    **2005-2006**  
"Inspiring and Sustaining Artistry: The Arabesque," "The Knee: Simple Training Practices for a Complex Joint," "Foot/Ankle Architecture, Movements and Actions," and "Moved by Music."
- b. 11 f. 1-3     **2007-2009**  
"Moved to Dance," "Preparation for Partnering," "Tendon Strength Lectures," "Assessment of Shoes," and "Knee Hyper-Extension and Lower Limb Hypermobility Control."
- b. 11 f. 4       **2010**  
"Summer Intensive" and faculty workshops.
- b. 11 f. 5       **2011**  
"Movement Material to Enhance Dynamic Trunk Turnout Control from the Hips with Trunk Stability," "Developing Foot and Lower Leg Stability, Power, Speed and Phrasing," and various staff workshops.
- b. 11 f. 6       **2012**  
Materials are mostly for "The Dancer's Foot and Ankle."
- b. 11 f. 7       **2013**  
"Knee Hyperextension and Control."
- b. 11 f. 8-10    **New York University 1994-2015**  
Course topics include ideokinesis, injury prevention, dynamic trunk stabilization, dance warm-ups, and the knee.
- b. 12 f. 1-7     **Juilliard School 1996-2014**  
Primarily includes materials for "Dynamic Spine/Trunk Stabilization," Summer Dance Intensive, and dance warm-ups.
- b. 12 f. 8-9     **Sarah Lawrence College 1997-2001**  
Course topics include hip joints, dynamic trunk stabilization, training and conditioning for dancers, and dance warm-ups.
- b. 13 f. 1-4     **The School of Toronto Dance Theatre 1997-2009**  
Course topics include ideokinesis, jumping, breathing, lower back, arms, knees, spine, chest, and hip joints.
- b. 13 f. 5-11    **Workshops with Steven Fetherhuff 2006-2015**
- b. 14 f. 1-10    Most workshops are about intervertebral joints and shoulders, taught at the Pilates Method Alliance Conference.
- Various Guest Teaching Engagements 1981-2015

Teaching Materials and Notes (cont.)

Various Guest Teaching Engagements (cont.)

- b. 15 f. 1-7      **1981-1993**  
Course topics include ideokinesis, neuromuscular training, computer work stress management, injury prevention, and dance warm-ups.
- b. 15 f. 8-9      **1995-1997**  
Includes "Anatomical Implications of the Humphrey/Limon Technique," "The Abdominal Story," and conditioning workshops.
- b. 15 f. 10-12    **1998-2001**  
Includes two "Spirals and Spine Stabilization" courses, workshops on the hip joint, knee, and shoulder, and "Staying Power for the Professional Dancer and Dynamic Trunk Stabilization Practices."
- b. 16 f. 1-2      **2002-2004**  
Course topics include spine/trunk stabilization, knees, and shoulders.
- b. 16 f. 3-4      **2005-2006**  
Courses include "Turning-Out: What, Where, When, Why, and How We Do It," "Horizons: Hand/Eye Coordination as Preparation for Performance," and "The Exquisite Versatility of Our Upper Body."
- b. 16 f. 5        **2007**  
Courses include "Knee Joint Harmony: Creating Protocols for Pilates-Based Training Program," "Models of Function for Our Feet," "Psoas Muscle Workshop for Pilates Instructors," and "Panel on Injuries, Movement and Medicine."
- b. 16 f. 6        **2008**  
Courses include "Movement: A Universal Language Symposium," "A Long Warm Up Sequence for Basic Partnering," and "Knee Issues: Devising Pilates-Based Training Programs Specially Focused on Patello-Femoral Tracking Disharmony."
- b. 16 f. 7-8      **2009**  
Most courses are for pilates training.
- b. 16 f. 9        **2010**  
Most courses are about feet and hip joints.
- b. 16 f. 10-11    **2011**  
Most courses are about trunk, spine, and shoulder stabilization practices.
- b. 17 f. 1-2      **2012-2013**  
Course topics include feet, hips, ideokinesis, and dance warm-ups.
- b. 17 f. 3-4      **2014-2015**  
Course topics include dance training, feet, and the pelvis.

**Studio Courses and Workshops 1979-2015**

- b. 17 f. 5-10    **1979-1983**  
Course topics include the nervous system, posture, functional anatomy, and ideokinesis.
- b. 17 f. 11-13   **1984**  
"Choreography Through Personal Change," "Change Through Touch and Visualization," "Teaching Dance from an Anatomically Sound Base," "From Perception to Performance: Drawing What Your Fingers Feel," "Posture and Movement Lab," and "Understanding and Alleviating Chronic Back Pain."
- b. 18 f. 1-13    **1985**  
"Dancers Lab," "Kinesthetic Anatomy" (Spring and Fall), "Maintaining Healthy Bones and Muscles" (Spring and Fall), "Teaching Dance from an Anatomically Sound Base," and "Dynamics of Touch."
- b. 18 f. 14-15   **1986**  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy" (Spring and Fall), "Touch Workshop," "Ideokinesis in Dance," "Problem-Solving Through Movement," and "Perceiving Pain Workshop."
- b. 19 f. 1-2     **1987**  
"Change Through Touch and Imagery," "Training the Dancer," and "Kinesthetic Anatomy."

Teaching Materials and Notes (cont.)  
Studio Courses and Workshops (cont.)

- b. 19 f. 3-6      1988  
"The Use of Touch and Imagery for Personal Change," "The Use of Spatial Imagery as a Choreographic Resource," "Kinesthetic Anatomy," and "Perceiving Movement."
- b. 19 f. 7      1989  
"Dynamics of Touch," "Anatomical Analysis of Modern Dance and Ballet Technique," "Kinesthetic Anatomy," "Body Image," "Interacting with the Cranial-Scalal Rhythms," and "The Foot as Interface Between Self and Ground."
- b. 19 f. 8      1990  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy," "Touch as a Means of Communication," "Seeing the Moving Body," and "Dancers Lab."
- b. 19 f. 9      1991  
Course topics include touch, kinesthetic anatomy, and the spine.
- b. 19 f. 10-11      1992  
"The Dynamics of Intentional Touch," "Spirals: A Movement Laboratory," "The Hand at Work: Carpal Tunnel and Other Conundrums," and "Kinesthetic Anatomy and Physiology of Motion."
- b. 19 f. 12      1993  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy and Physiology of Motion" (Spring and Fall) and "The Use of Touch in Teaching Dance."
- b. 20 f. 1-2      1994  
Course topics include touch and kinesthetic anatomy.
- b. 20 f. 3-4      1995  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy and Physiology of Motion" (Spring and Fall), "Touch and Dynamic Variations," "Choreographic Training Sequences: A Course for Dance Teachers," and "Pain and Touch/Movement."
- b. 20 f. 5-6      1996  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy and Physiology of Motion" (Spring and Fall), "Touch and Movement," "Spirals and Helix Workshops," "The Dancer's Spine," and "Pain and Touch: Focus on the Thorax."
- b. 20 f. 7-8      1997  
Course topics include kinesthetic anatomy, touch, and walking.
- b. 20 f. 9-14      1998  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy and Physiology of Motion" (Spring and Fall), "Dancers Lab," "Movement Problem-Solving First Step: Assessment," "Taking Root to Fly: Functional Anatomy for Dancers," and "Problem-Solving: Visual Assessment of the Upper Body."
- b. 21 f. 1-8      1999  
Course topics include kinesthetic anatomy, touch, and Dowd's "Spirals" warm-up.
- b. 21 f. 9-13      2000  
"Communication Through Touch: Manual Assessment Skills," "Dancers Lab," "The Dancer's Spine," "Kinesthetic Anatomy: The Limbs," and "Seeing the Dynamic Body: Visual Assessment."
- b. 22 f. 1-6      2001  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy: The Limbs," "Movement Problem-Solving Clinic," "Dancers Lab" (Spring and Fall), "The Articulated Dancer: Kinesthetic Anatomy of the Limbs," "Kinesthetic Anatomy: The Spine and Trunk," and "Seeing the Dynamic Body: A First Step in Movement Problem-Solving."
- b. 22 f. 7-12      2002  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy: The Limbs," "Communication Through Imagery and Touch," "Saturday Workshop Series," "The Dynamic Dancer: Kinesthetic Anatomy of the Spine and Trunk," "Topics in Anatomical Problem-Solving," and "Kinesthetic Anatomy: The Spine and Trunk."
- b. 23 f. 1-6      2003  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy: The Limbs," "Elements of Movement Re-Training," Saturday Workshop Series, "The Articulated Dancer: Kinesthetic Anatomy of the Limbs," "Seeing the Dynamic Body," and "Kinesthetic Anatomy: The Spine and Trunk."

Teaching Materials and Notes (cont.)  
Studio Courses and Workshops (cont.)

- b. 23 f. 7-11      **2004**  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy of the Limbs," "Supple Joints: Imagery, Manual and Movement Techniques to Enhance Synovial Joint Function," Saturday Workshop Series, "Dynamic Dancing: Kinesthetic Anatomy of the Spine and Trunk" (Summer and Fall), "Seeing the Dynamic Body," and "Functional Muscle Harmony."
- b. 23 f. 12-13      **2005**  
b. 24 f. 1-3      "Teaching Spirals," "Kinesthetic Anatomy: The Limbs," "The Articulated Dancer: Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of the Limbs," Saturday Workshops, "Seeing the Dynamic Body," "Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: The Spine and Trunk," and "Volutes: Spine Mobilization and Dance."
- b. 24 f. 4-12      **2006**  
Saturday Workshops, "Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: The Limbs," "Supple Joints: Imagery, Manual and Movement Techniques to Enhance Synovial Joint Function," "Dynamic Dancing: Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of the Spine and Trunk" (Summer and Spring), and "Concepts of Muscle Balancing."
- b. 25 f. 1-11      **2007**  
Saturday Workshops, "Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: The Limbs," "Horizons: Hand-Eye Coordination Dance," "The Articulated Dancer: Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of the Limbs," "Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: The Spine and Trunk," and "Seeing the Dynamic Body."
- b. 26 f. 1-11      **2008**  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: The Limbs," "Imagery, Manual and Movement Techniques to Enhance Joint Function," "How to Get a Good Night's Sleep," "Optimizing Tendon Health and Functioning," "Dynamic Dancing: Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of the Spine and Trunk," and "Advanced Study on Spine and Trunk."
- b. 27 f. 1-5      **2009**  
"From Hand to Heart: A Review of the Functional Anatomy of the Upper Body," "Topics in Problem-Solving for the Lower Extremity and Pelvis," "Mapping the Pathways of the Peripheral Sensorimotor Nervous System," "The Dancer's Foot and Ankle," and "Topics in Problem-Solving for the Lower Extremity and Pelvis."
- b. 27 f. 6-10      **2010**  
"The Dancer's Knee and Hip," "Muscle Balancing at the Hips: Strategies for Protecting the Knee Joints While Enhancing Rotation at the Hips," "Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: The Spine and the Trunk," and "Clinics in Arthrokinematics of the Thorax and Shoulder."
- b. 27 f. 11-12      **2011**  
b. 28 f. 1-2      "Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: The Limbs," "The Dancer's Lower Trunk: A Dynamic Relationship Between the Pelvis and Rib Cage," "Clinics in Manual Skills and Tactile Strategies: Focusing on Extremities of Feet, Hands, and Top of Spine," and "Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: The Spine and the Trunk."
- b. 28 f. 3-6      **2012**  
"Arthrokinematics and Anatomical Coaching of the Knee Joint in Relationship with the Entire Body," "Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: The Limbs," "The Dancer's Arms: From Hand to Heart," "Arthrokinematics and Anatomical Coaching of the Spine and Trunk," and "Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: Spine/Trunk."
- b. 28 f. 7-9      **2013**  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: The Limbs," "Teaching the Spirals Dance," and "Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: Spine/Trunk."
- b. 28 f. 10-13      **2014**  
"Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: The Limbs," "An Introduction to Ideokinesis," "Teaching Volutes," "Kinesthetic Anatomy and Biomechanics of Motion: Spine/Trunk," and "Exploring Concepts of Functional Muscle Balancing in Context of Daily Life Performance."
- b. 29 f. 1-7      **2015**  
Course topics include kinesthetic anatomy of the lower limbs, upper limbs, and spine and trunk.
- b. 29 f. 8-15      **Flyers 1979-2009**
- b. 29 f. 16-17      **Neuromuscular Training Brochure Materials 1985**

Teaching Materials and Notes (cont.)

- b. 31-33 **Lecture Notes 1975-1990**  
For courses taught at various institutions and Dowd's studio.
- b. 33 **Anatomy Study Cards**  
**Other Activities 1977-2003**
- b. 30 f. 1 ***Dance Research Journal* 1977-1986**  
Mostly drafts and correspondence.
- b. 3 f. 1-7 **Writings 1978-1997**  
b. 4 f. 1-9 Includes pre-publication versions of published articles, annotated bibliographies, lectures and presentations, and original contributions to the *International Encyclopedia of Dance*.
- b. 30 f. 2-5 **Artist Certification 1979-1987**  
Applications, notes, correspondence, resumes, clippings, and academic articles.
- b. 30 f. 6-7 ***Eye on Dance* 1983-1987**  
Mostly notes and correspondence.
- b. 1 f. 6-7 **Study Materials 1984-1986**  
b. 2 f. 1-5 Proposals, correspondence (primarily with Judith Smith), notes, data charts, and other material created while conducting the study "Effects of Neuromuscular Retraining on Mobility of the Elderly."
- b. 30 f. 8-9 **Canada's National Ballet School Exercise Videos 2001-2002**  
Notes, handouts, and some correspondence.
- b. 30 f. 10-11 ***Equipoise: The Life and Work of Alfredo Corvino* [2000s]**  
Reference photographs, sketches, and notes.
- b. 34 f. 1-2 **Miscellaneous 1983-2003**  
Includes letter to Dowd from a dance student; *Dance Today* (Israel, 2001); *The White Oak Dance Project* (2003); and clipping from *The New York Times* about back pain.