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## Assignment 2: Research Audience or Problem Space

The audience that I am focusing on are dancers, or more specifically, dance teams. I became interested in this audience because I have experience with participating in dance teams both large and small, and I know there are definitely some improvements that can be accomplished in the dance community with the assistance of technology.

There is an overwhelming need for a solution for choreographers to effectively visualize and execute set formations that not only saves time and effort, but also minimizes confusion during rehearsals. It is not uncommon for dance teams to perform sets that can range from one to twenty minutes. Naturally, the longer a dance set is, the more likely it is for there to be plenty of formations as well as transitions. With a group of 10+ people, choreographers are still relying on pen, paper, and memorization to plot team members in formations. The leaders of these dance teams are often found rifling through numerous sheets of paper or a notebook, trying to remember who is supposed to be in what spot, and what the formation is supposed to look like at all points of the set.

This can be frustrating, as time is wasted at practice while the choreographer physically places each person in their spot, or when it is time for the next practice, and

some people forget their position and have to be reminded and placed again.

Furthermore, other problems begin to arise when formations must be quickly reorganized due to whatever changes, such as members dropping out of certain pieces, or when more dancers have to be added. Not only that, choreographers have no means to test their formations until the day of practice to determine if they are realistic and executable with regards to the music. I would like to develop a solution that minimizes the process of having to deal with these issues and instead, allows dance teams to focus on the movements and performance.

The research I conducted shows that there are indeed existing products created to target this problem, but only two are close to ideal on the mobile platform. I looked into two of the most popular smartphone companies in the U.S., and found that the results were bare. The few products that do exist do not have music players, only show static formations, were only made for sports teams such as football, and/or have a non-user-friendly interface. ChoreoMaker on the Apple store is currently on sale for a hefty price of \$9.99, and the only feedback available was from a one-star rating saying, "It doesn't seem possible to add too many templates." The other more favorable product is available on Android and is called "StageKeep". There are a mix of five and one-star reviews. Some say they cannot operate the app because they "cannot sign in", while others suggest it as a great app for stage work. The UI also appears to be more visually pleasing than ChoreoMaker. However, ChoreoMaker does have key functionality that StageKeep lacks such as showing dancer paths, applying custom names to each dancer, and changing the music playback speed. All of these apps seem to only capture

certain favorable qualities while severely lacking in other areas. I want to implement a solution that is strong in functionality as well as visual design and user interface.

Though there are not many ideal solutions for modern dance on the mobile platform, there are however, solutions are already being implemented for other forms of art such as marching band. Marching bands have been using “drill design software” for years to visualize their formations before a big game (Bailey 11). While this is a good inspiration to look to, these types of solutions are not as convenient due to the cost and nonportable nature of the software.

A mobile technological solution that can eliminate the previously mentioned issues as a result of analog use of pen and paper, could tremendously help the dance community around the world. An application that showcases formation plotting and transition animations while keeping time with music could be game changing. Rehearsals would be much shorter if everyone was aware of their positions through the use of digital mass sharing, viewing, and editing capability similar to Google products such as Drive, Sheets, etc. Confusion would be near removed as clear paths are drawn out from a top-view level, eliminating “roadblocks” aka bumping into others. The ability to slow down and repeat music to analyze and drill formation changes could potentially facilitate better learning opportunities not just for the choreographer, but for the whole dance team. A solution such as the one I am proposing, allows choreographers and dancers more time to practice other, more important aspects of dance, such as vision, stage presence, and movement.

## Works Cited

“1.” *The Complete Marching Band Resource Manual: Techniques and Materials for Teaching, Drill Design, and Music Arranging*, by Wayne Bailey et al., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015, pp. 1-11.

ChoreoMaker app:

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/choreomaker/id1439076656>

StageKeep app:

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.WamVam.StageKeep&hl=en\\_US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.WamVam.StageKeep&hl=en_US)