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# MAPPING DANCE

*Entrepreneurship and Professional Practice in Dance Higher Education*

Susanne Burns

The Higher Education Academy
PALATINE Dance, Drama and Music

working together to enhance the student learning experience

## THE AUTHOR

Susanne Burns has 25 years of senior management and leadership experience in the arts much of it in dance world. She currently works as an independent development consultant with a wide range of clients ranging from Liverpool Biennial and Tate Liverpool to Youth Dance England and Arts Council England. She has a background in Higher Education where she developed and ran the BA in Enterprise Management at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (1994-2000) and developed course content and currently teaches on the MA in Music Theatre at RSAMD. She is an external examiner and is currently Course Leader for the MA Cultural Leadership at Liverpool John Moores University.

**PALATINE** is the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Dance, Drama and Music. Our role is to provide, for the performing arts communities in UK higher education, high quality information, expertise, and resources on good and innovative learning and teaching practices. We also promote and transfer such practices to enhance learning and teaching activity in the performing arts HE sector and to the wider higher education community.

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Susanne Burns

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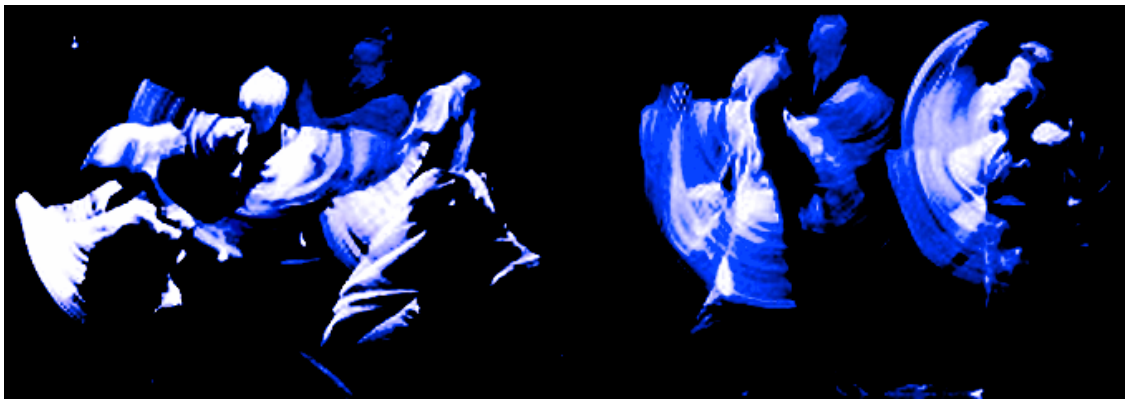

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Susanne Burns
February 2007

## 1. Introduction

There is a growing interest among performing arts departments in developing entrepreneurship and the related areas of equipping students for self-employment and 'portfolio' working within the creative industries sector. This has led to important initiatives in curriculum development, teaching and learning strategies and links to the sector. This report seeks to investigate the development of such initiatives within dance higher education provision.

In 2004 PALATINE (Performing Arts Learning and Teaching Innovation Network) received funds from the Department for Education and Skills to set up and run a project focusing on the development and enhancement of entrepreneurship in the performing arts. PALATINE's Performing Arts Creative Enterprise Project (PACE) aimed to support and promote curriculum innovation in the area of entrepreneurship across the performing arts sector nationally. This work included the publication of a guide, *Performing Arts Entrepreneurship*, a major conference in November 2005, Creative Enterprise in Higher Education, and a forthcoming publication documenting the conference.

As part of its ongoing work on entrepreneurship and enterprise, PALATINE wished to carry out a mapping exercise that would assess the scale of dance provision in the higher education sector with particular reference to how this provision developed employability and entrepreneurial skills in the student dancer. In March 2006, funding was secured from the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE) to carry out this research.

The work complements other NCGE mapping activity of the English regions; a UK study of practice that supports enterprise and entrepreneurship through HE; and comparisons with international studies of practice in HE. By mapping HE dance provision and identifying how courses encourage entrepreneurial thinking and behaviours, this work seeks to quantify and clarify what is currently being offered and, through this, to identify good practice.

The project was conducted between April and November 2006 with Susanne Burns as Lead Consultant.

## 2. Methodology

The aims of the research were threefold:

- To identify the scale and scope of practices across the dance HE sector
- To identify examples of good practice and pedagogical innovation
- To investigate the implications of this work for learning and teaching in HE

The methodology adopted was specifically designed to enable the team to achieve the aims within a relatively short time period. The work commenced in June 2006 and was completed by mid November 2006:

### Scope

We began with desk research and a literature review of dance employment-related literature and statistics. We researched course provision through Internet- and paper-based resources in order to establish the scale of dance HE provision. We also interviewed leading dance figures in order to add a qualitative layer to our understanding of the dance world.

We then developed a questionnaire which was circulated to all dance providers and which was designed to identify the scale and scope of practices. We chose to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative questions that would elicit a range of data and information that we would then be able to use for sampling. We adopted an on-line completion method using SurveyMonkey software as this was accessible and provided respondents with a simple completion mechanism. It also allowed the team to interrogate and mine the data easily. We used email and newsletters to alert course leaders to the survey.

### Identification of Good Practice

We carried out a sampling of respondents to the questionnaire through telephone interviews in order to explore examples of good practice and innovation that emerged from the data. This led to the creation of case studies that are used to illustrate our findings throughout this paper. In addition, we wished to share the outcomes of our research with the dance sector and decided to organise a symposium, *The Dancer's World of Work*, which took place on 16 November 2006 at Lancaster University and was attended by 70 people drawn from HE and the dance sector. This event afforded the opportunity to interrogate the implications of the findings with practitioners and HE providers and it is from this event that we drew many of our conclusions and have made recommendations for further research.

## 3. Entrepreneurship and the Dance World of Work

> **'Knowing what you want, knowing what you want to say, knowing how to say it and to whom, taking opportunities and having strong values and integrity will make for an entrepreneurial dancer.'**

The concept of enterprise is notoriously ambiguous. National strategies to promote enterprise have been a feature of government policy for many years. As far back as 1987, the Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative was launched to encourage curriculum change intended to enhance students' commercial awareness and work-related skills. Since the early 1990s we have been tackling this within our performing arts curricula in many different ways. The National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship was formed in 2004 in order to encourage more graduates to start up in business. But there is an emerging consensus within HE that enterprise is not simply about the administrative skills required to start up a business. Instead, enterprise can be interpreted as being more about ways of doing, seeing, feeling and communicating.[1]

In its original French meaning, the term entrepreneur literally means someone who undertakes an important task or project. The term then came to be associated with venturesome individuals who stimulated economic progress by finding new and better ways of doing things. The French economist Jean Baptiste Say (1767-1832) summed it up at the turn of the 19th Century in his *Treatise on Political Economy:*

> **'The entrepreneur shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield.'**

Schumpeter (1943) claimed that

> **'the function of entrepreneurs is to reform or revolutionise the pattern of production'.**

He stated that they do this by

> **'… producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way, by opening up a new source of supply of materials or a new outlet for products, by reorganising an industry and so on.'**

Thus, entrepreneurs create value through innovation. More recently Drucker (1985) described enterprise and entrepreneurship in this way:

> **'The entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it and exploits it as an opportunity.'**

So, entrepreneurs have what could be called an opportunity orientation. Distilling this suggests that entrepreneurs are innovative, opportunity orientated, resourceful, value-creating change agents. Thus it is possible to say that entrepreneurship is

[1] Gibb (1998), Brown (2004)

more about behaviours and attitudes than knowledge. It is a way of doing things, perhaps even a mindset. It is concerned with change, with the development and implementation of new ideas, with proactive responses to the wider environment and with risk taking. It is about taking the initiative, combining ideas creatively, and managing independence. An entrepreneur is one who makes things happen, a 'mover and shaker', a 'go-getter', a 'creative thinker, a 'noticer of opportunity'.

There is a great deal of evidence[2] to show that graduates from creative disciplines are more likely to become self-employed, set up businesses or undertake freelance work than their peers in other subject areas. There appear to be a number of reasons for this propensity towards self-employment:

- Firstly, graduates from creative courses are trained in the development of creative product and original content. This may often mean that they prefer to have the creative freedom of working for themselves rather than an employer.
- Secondly, it is clear that many creative graduates will become self-employed through necessity rather than choice. This is due to a number of factors. The preponderance of micro-businesses means that employment is often hard to find. The graduate therefore often has little choice but to set up alone. In addition, it is often the only means of taking their creative skills into the market place so businesses may be established as a by-product of the process of creative practice.
- Thirdly, creative programmes, including dance, tend to have a problem-solving, project-based focus to learning and teaching, which encourages students to think more entrepreneurially.

The dance world shares many characteristics with other sectors of the creative industries. The sector is highly fluid, characterised by rapid change. It comprises a small number of large enterprises and a large number of small enterprises and the workforce is predominantly self-employed.[3] Permanent employment is declining and self-employment and flexible employment is increasing, with multiple job holding and portfolio careers becoming a norm.[4] The sector exists in a state of uncertainty and complexity and therefore constant evolution and adaptation is required of its workforce, which needs to be multi-skilled with transferable skills, capable of managing portfolio working as well as able to carry out more than one role. This means that individuals who wish to pursue careers in these labour markets must be entrepreneurial and innovative. They have to create new styles of work, explore new ways of working that give them access to future employment opportunities or resources, diversify by finding new employment areas. This has been called 'career resilience'.[5]

[2] Richards (2006)

[3] Davies and Lindley (2003) found that 39% of those employed in cultural occupations as a main job are self-employed. This compares with 12% of those in non-cultural employment.

[4] Heeley and Pickard (2002)

[5] Waterman, Waterman and Collard (1994)

**Dancers work differently from 'entrepreneurs' in different sectors:**

Dancers work as part of a 'cluster', a creative community that brings the collective set of skills required to realise production and distribution. Collaboration lies at the heart of the dancer's world.

Dancers create products that are not always market orientated. Instead they need to find markets for it after creating it. This requires different approaches to marketing – creating demand rather than meeting it. This therefore requires an understanding of the market, its trends and an understanding of context and what has gone before.

It is therefore critical for those working in dance to possess the range of entrepreneurial skills suggested as being essential to the creative artist.[6]

- The ability to balance creative independence with the ability to work collaboratively
- The ability to manage artistic integrity within a market context
- The ability to manage self
- The ability to create financial self-sufficiency through the management of skills
- The ability to adopt a creative and lateral approach
- The ability to create networks, maintain and manage them and communicate effectively
- The ability to be proactive, pragmatic and flexible

[6] Although this list is my own it draws on the work of Freakley and Neelands (2003), Brown (2004), Raffo *et al.* (2000), Leadbeater and Oakley (1999), Richards (2006) (2006)

## 4. Working in the Dance World

> **'The dance profession comprises those people who earn a significant part of their living through dance. For too long it has been seen as those that perform and this creates a value system and hierarchy where most of the people working within the sector feel undervalued or, worse, feel they have failed as they have 'ended up' teaching. We must re-evaluate the notion of what it means to be a dance professional.'**

> **'Leadership of the sector is dominated by the smallest part of it – those who perform and choreograph.'**

> **'There is a hierarchy within the sector and power accrues to this – leading to a lower value being placed on dance in its wider manifestations. Much of HE provision appears to perpetuate this with its emphasis on training the body.'**

Dance deals in the generation of intellectual property through original choreography that is then performed by dancers in live, filmed and broadcast contexts. The performance is the result of many other processes that are essential to making it possible, including management, technical support and training and education. This means that the dance world of work is complex. It is multi-faceted with a framework of interconnected employment sectors characterised by complexity, creativity and dynamism. It is a socio-economic network.

In social terms the focus is on the interaction of the people who work together to make dance possible. It is an aggregation of many smaller micro-worlds or sub-communities, a social network emerging from the cooperation of these micro-worlds all with greater or lesser knowledge of the entire network. These sub-communities are best viewed as 'art worlds' that involve collective activities and shared conventions:

> **'The notion of art world is a technical way of viewing the network of people whose cooperative activity, organised by their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the kind of art works that art world is noted for.'**[7]

According to Becker (1984), the 'art world' comprises all the people whose activities are necessary for the production of the characteristic works that the world would define as art. He argues that we can define art by the collective activities that constitute the production of art, not by the end products (art works):

> **'All art works involve the cooperation of everyone whose activity has anything to do with the end result. That includes the people who make materials, instruments, and tools; the people who create the financial arrangements that make the work possible; the people who see to distributing the works that are made; the people who produced the tradition of forms, genres, and styles**

[7] Becker (1984)

> **the artist works with and against; and the audience. For symphonic music, the list of cooperating people might include composers, players, conductors, instrument makers and repairers, copyists, managers and fundraisers, designers of symphony halls, music publishers, booking agents, and audiences of various kinds … The artist thus works in the center of a network of cooperating people, all of whose work is essential to the final outcome. Wherever he depends on others a cooperative link exists.'**

The dance world can be understood in these terms. However, within the dance world, despite the necessity of cooperation, there is a complex process of legitimisation at play that creates a hierarchical notion of the primacy of the artist. Bourdieu (1994) posits the notion that any social formation is structured by way of a hierarchically organised series of fields, in this case, the dance field. Within the field there are laws of functioning. Agents will occupy different positions and compete for control of interests and resources specific to the field. According to Bourdieu (1994), authority within the field is inherent in recognition. It is evident that, within the dance field, the choreographer and the performing dancer attain recognition and therefore authority, whilst the teacher, manager, choreologist and physiotherapist rarely attain the same level of recognition.

There is therefore a tension within the dance world that must be understood if we are to seek to understand the nature of HE dance provision.

In economic terms, the concepts of supply and demand apply within the artistic labour market as in all markets. Thus, in providing artistic products and services, artists operate in a market place subject to supply and demand. It is widely recognised that artists' labour markets are different from other labour markets.[8]

Towse (1996a) provides a list of characteristics of the artist labour market that can be evidenced in the economic literature. In each case it is possible to illustrate the point with specific examples from within the dance sector:

**'Multi-sector working'**

By this we mean that artists may work in more than one artistic occupation. Dancers may act and sing and may work in both commercial and subsidised arts organisations in various media. They may perform live on stage, on TV and in film/video. They may operate in the mass art world/commercial sector as well as the high art world/subsidised sector.

**'Multiple job holding'**

Dancers may work in several media and art forms in a given period of time and may therefore hold several different jobs. Further, it is typical for dancers to do arts related work, such as teaching, alongside their performance work and they often work in non-arts work in order to earn an adequate living. Jackson *et al.* commented in 1994 that, 'The labour market in the arts is complex and far from self-contained. This is particularly the case for dance and drama where, although there is some segmentation, on the whole people move between occupations

[8] Towse (1996), Baumol and Bowen (1966) and Throsby(1996)

within each sector, moving between the two sectors themselves and often moving into and out of the arts altogether.'

**'Short term contracts'**

There are relatively few permanent contracts in dance. As Siddall (2001) pointed out, there were only around 240 dancers' jobs and these were with the four subsidised ballet companies. Our research suggests that there are now around 300 annual contracts. These represent only 13% of the total numbers estimated as being employed as performers. The rest appear to hold short-term contracts ranging from a few weeks to 10 months.

**'Unemployment and under-employment'**

Both of these concepts are difficult to define in artist labour markets due to gaps between contracts, lack of demand, unpaid rehearsal time and job search/audition time. However, it is clear that dancers are available to work more hours than they are hired for and are thus under-employed.

**'Demand for performers is derived from production demands'**

Taste and fashions are changeable and unpredictable and this will have an impact on the employment of dancers as demand for different dance styles and techniques will change. Technical developments will also affect demand.

**'Career structure'**

There is no real recognised career structure in the arts and although in the ballet companies there is progression from corps de ballet to principal, this is not reflected in other areas of the sector. Experience is a factor in getting work but is not usually reflected in pay. Equity minimum salaries[9] are the norm within project companies and indeed, much of the commercial sector, and this is often regardless of age and experience. There is a hierarchy based on talent and reputation but it is unrelated to age. There is no recognised age of retirement. Dancing as a profession is extremely physically demanding and injury levels are high so although there are some significant exceptions, retirement tends to be early for physical reasons and this leads to career changes and the need for the development of new skills.

[9] Currently £325 per week

**'Over-supply'**

Towse (1996b) finds that the artistic labour market is over-supplied. This manifests itself in unemployment and under-employment. However, it is also argued that this may be the result of 'market failure' (Creigh-Tyte and Stiven, 2001) where the goods and services being offered are not meeting the needs of the customers. Low earnings, the large numbers of dancers attending auditions and under-employment are further clear evidence of over-supply.

**'Job match problems'**

Both employers and performers expend significant time and resources on job searching. Auditions are used for hiring and these are costly. Talent is rated more highly than training and agents and other mediators are important in job matching.

The dance labour market is therefore highly fragmented and dancers must use their art form knowledge as a flexible resource for many purposes. For these reasons, it is notoriously difficult to measure employment within the sector. As Myerscough (1988) noted, 'The difficulties of measuring irregular and part time work and self-employment, which characterise many sectors of the arts, are virtually insurmountable.'

Davies and Lindley (2003) assert that the pool of cultural labour increased steadily during the 1990s. At the end of 1993, 610,000 people were employed in a cultural occupation whilst by the end of 2000 this figure had risen to 760,000. O'Brien and Fiest (1995) analysed the data from the 1991 census and found 53,400 'actors, entertainers, stage managers, producers and directors'. This figure disguises the complexity of the industries (high mobility of performers etc.) and in this context, Manton (2001) argues that the number of performers is almost double that recorded by the census. The most recent study to estimate dancers' employment, Jackson *et al.* (1994), estimated that in 1993 the numbers employed in dance performance at any one time was about 1,000–1,500 with a total workforce, including teachers of dance, of about 20,000–25,000.

As part of our research we sought to identify the current position, using a range of diverse sources in order to extrapolate employment data. Dance UK currently suggests on its web site that the sector employs a total of 30,000 people[10]. However, the numbers actually engaged as dancers appear to be relatively similar to those noted by Jackson *et al.* In the 52 small/medium-scale companies listed by the British Council Directory there are approximately 700 dancers. According to the recent Equity membership survey, 2,500 members described themselves as dancers. The major companies: Royal Ballet, English National Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Northern Ballet Theatre, Scottish Ballet and Rambert will employ approximately 300 dancers at any one time. 600 are estimated to be employed in commercial theatre productions.

When most people think of careers in dance, two possibilities immediately spring to mind: dancing professionally and teaching. These are undoubtedly the mainstays of the dance world and yet dance-related work extends beyond them, encompassing a range of interests and skills. The largest group employed in the

[10] http://www.danceuk.org/metadot/index.pl?id=22529&isa=Category&op=show

dance world (estimated at around 75%) is teachers of dance.[11] There are also a myriad people supporting dance including those managing, presenting and organising it, those offering dance therapy, journalists and critics.

From this data, we can therefore estimate and extrapolate the following figures relating to employment in dance-related work:

| | | SOURCE |
|---|---|---|
| TOTAL EMPLOYED IN DANCE SECTOR | 30,000 | Dance UK |
| TOTAL PERFORMERS | 2,500 | Equity Members' Survey |
| TOTAL TEACHERS | 22,500 | 75% of total; of which FCD estimate 4,500 are engaged in community dance |
| TOTAL 'SUPPORTING' DANCE – Management, choreology, notation, therapy, history/archive etc | 5,000 | Assume that remainder are engaged in this sector |

*Table 1: Employment in Dance-Related Work*

Despite the primacy often designated to the performer and choreographer, it is therefore evident that they make up a very small proportion of the dance labour market. The market demand appears to be for dance workers who can teach, facilitate dance work in community contexts, and manage and produce the work. Drawing from this, it is possible to depict the dance world as shown in Figure 1.

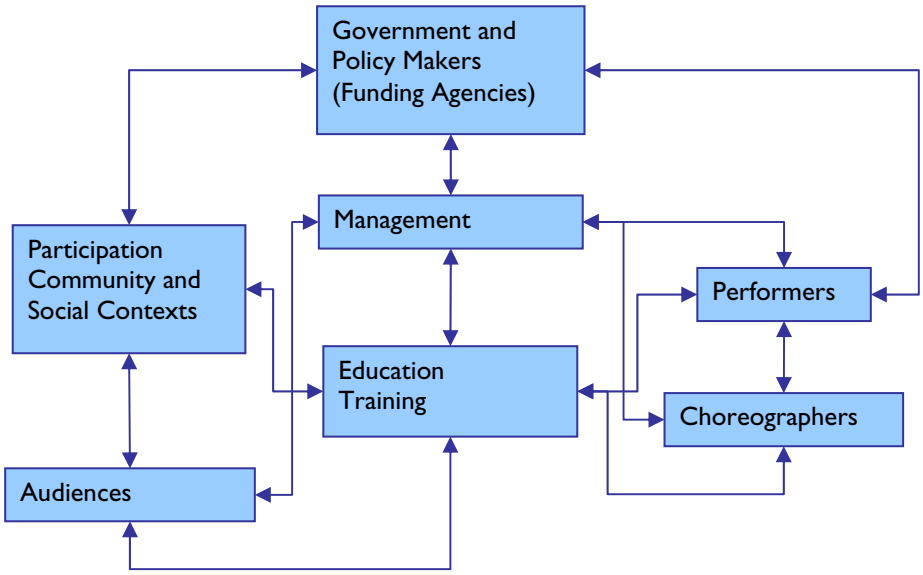


*Figure 1: A Way of Viewing the Dance World*

[11] One of the major successes of the dance sector has been the massive expansion of the community dance movement over the last 30 years. The sector has grown enormously and continues to expand and diversify. In turn, this has stimulated an enormous amount of activity in creating employment structures and opportunities. The Foundation for Community Dance has 1472 members: 1189 individuals and 283 organisations that represent some 4,500 professionals working within community dance.

The implications of this for HE provision are significant. The statistics highlight the imperative for HE provision to consider the need for students to have realistic expectations of the nature of the opportunities that exist within the dance world. It suggests that HE needs to consider the need for graduates to adopt flexible and entrepreneurial approaches to their careers.

> **'The HE sector must rise to the challenge and take a lead on the needs of portfolio dancers for a broader skills base.'**

If HE is to prepare dance students for employability within the dance world, it is clear that the emphasis needs to be placed on self-management, career management and market placement.

> **'Highly competent students who are ill-prepared for the reality of the industry can minimise their own employment prospects, thus reducing the pool of skills available to employers. Practical knowledge or understanding of: network structures, how each sector conducts its recruitment process, self-employment, tax systems and employment laws are proven to be imperative. The inclusion of business related and self management skills within training should equip and prepare a student with the necessary tools and understanding to withstand the pressures and demands of employment, particularly in the first year of seeking employment.'**[12]

Photo: Dennie Wilson

[12] Birch, Jackson and Towse (1996) (1998)

## 5. Tertiary level Dance Training and Education

Entry into the tertiary phase of dance education and training occurs through two principal pathways that are not necessarily exclusive, as young people will often take advantage of opportunities offered through both strands:

### Private and Voluntary Sector

This is most often a local ballet/dance school offering qualifications within the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD), Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance (ISTD) or British Ballet Organisation (BBO). All of these are accredited by the Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET). In addition, there is a plethora of community-based youth dance activity that is estimated as reaching upwards of 180,000 young people each year in England alone[13] and is carried out by dance practitioners within community contexts.

### State Sector

Students may study dance as part of the national curriculum (contained within physical education) and may have studied dance at GCSE, AS/A Level or GNVQ. Changes occurring with the development of specialist schools, as centres for excellence in a subject area, mean that opportunities and resources for dance may be increasing. The impact of the Creative Partnerships programme[14] has seen opportunities to engage with dance increase exponentially. In addition, the DfES and DCMS-funded PE School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy,[15] has led to an increase in opportunities. The National Dance Teachers Association (NDTA) represents the sector.

Young people then progress to tertiary level, where there is great diversity of provision. This can be broadly characterised as:

### Further Education (FE)

Funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) there are a number of courses on offer representing a range of awards such as BTEC, FEFC Certificates and Local Authority.

Adult Education certificate courses: some of this provision is regulated by FEFC quality assurance procedures and some by bodies such as the National Open College Network. In general, provision in this area does not focus on the professional performance context.

There are also a series of courses funded through the DfES Music and Dance Scheme, which funds the boarding schools: Arts Educational School at Tring, Elmhurst School for Dance, Hammond School and the Royal Ballet School. This provision is currently being expanded to

[13] Youth Dance England represents this sector and the figures are drawn from data collated during the evaluation of their two-year development project, Next Steps.

[14] More information can be found at http://www.creative-partnerships.com/

[15] The PESSCL initiative aims to 'enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by five- to sixteen-year-olds by increasing the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum from 25% in 2002 to 75% in 2006 and 85% by 2008.' More information can be found at http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/pe/nationalstrategy/

include pre-vocational work including the Centres for Advanced Training, which are aiming to develop exceptionally talented young dancers.

The Dance and Drama Awards scheme managed by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) offers funding to those aged 16–18 to support reduced fees for FE designed to 'ensure that the most talented students can complete high quality training at the country's leading private schools.'[16] The scheme tends to focus on musical theatre and much of the provision is accredited by CDET.[17]

### Higher Education (HE)

Funded by the Higher Education Funding Councils: although all BA degree provision in this sector conforms to Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmarks for dance, this area is divided into two distinct groups:

- The Conservatoires, which focus on intensive professional dance training
- The Universities, which include practical dance training but which also offer 'considerable contextual and theoretical study which facilitates entry into a wider range of careers.'[18]

The Standing Conference on Dance in Higher Education (SCODHE) represents the sector as a whole.

Thus, there is plethora of different routes that may be followed by the young dancer and it is arguable that this results in a distinct lack of cohesion and potential confusion for those seeking to pursue further training. Young people may not recognise the difference between the types of provision and, in recognition of this, much work is currently taking place to find ways of signposting young people in a more informed way.[19]

### The Provision

The research identified a wide range of available courses at different levels that can be summarised as follows. A full list of courses is contained in Appendix 1:

[16] http://www.dfes.gov.uk/

[17] The Council for Dance Education and Training is the national standards body of the professional dance industry. It accredits programmes of training in vocational dance schools and holds the Register of Dance Awarding Bodies – the directory of teaching societies whose syllabuses have been inspected and approved by the Council. It is the body of advocacy of the dance education and training communities and offers a free and comprehensive information service. It is a membership organisation.

[18] Working paper DCMS Dance Training and Education at Tertiary Level

[19] Hampshire Dance (http://www.hampshiredance.org.uk/ ) offered a weekend for young people called 'The Graduates' in order to expose aspiring young people to a range of provision through workshops and performance as well as a 'market place'. London Youth Dance ( http://www.londondance.com/ ) coordinated an event at Sadler's Wells in Autumn 2006 that attracted many young people interested in finding out about the major HE providers.

| TYPE | No. |
|---|---|
| Institutions offering Dance at FE/HE and Vocational Levels | 80 |
| HE Institutions | 43 |
| FE Institutions | 23 |
| Vocational Schools | 15 |
| Number of CDET Accredited Institutions | 15 |
| CDET Accreditation of HE Courses | 7 |
| BA Single Hons Programmes | 55 |
| BA Top-up Programmes | 8 |
| Foundation Courses | 22 |
| HND | 7 |
| National Diploma | 19 |

*Table 2: Tertiary Dance Provision*

Although our research focussed on HE provision, it is important to contextualise this within the wider picture of FE provision.

**Student numbers at HE level**

There has been a 43% increase in overall student numbers (51% in full time undergraduates) since 2002/03 and this denotes an unprecedented expansion in HE dance provision.

| | ALL | FT UGs | FT PGs | PT UGs | PT PGs | MALE | FEMALE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O2/O3 | 1850 | 1540 | 80 | 110 | 115 | 325 | 1520 |
| O3/O4 | 2115 | 1790 | 85 | 115 | 125 | 290 | 1825 |
| O4/O5 | 2640 | 2335 | 90 | 95 | 115 | 340 | 2300 |
| % increase | 43 | 51 | 10 | -14 | 0 | | |

*Table 3: Student Numbers*
*Source: http://www.hesa.ac.uk/holisdocs/pubinfo/student/subject*

When this is compared with the size and scale of the sector outlined above it is apparent that the number of graduates from the 2004/05 cohort will almost match the total number of dancers in work at any one given time. This suggests that HE must address the demand side of the equation in curricula if these graduates are to be employable. Our research sought to identify whether the sector was taking this into account and if so, what they were doing.

## 6. The Survey Findings

The questionnaire used to gather data is contained in Appendix 2. The response to the questionnaire was statistically sound with 41 responses of which 30 were fully completed. We drew our conclusions from only the completed questionnaires. The sample was reliable, as it comprised 37.5% of the total institutions we had identified during desk research as running dance FE/HE and vocational training. The sample contained responses from all sectors.

The combination of qualitative and quantitative questions elicited a range of data and information that was then used for sampling. The findings are presented in three sections, Entrepreneurship, Links with the Dance World and Graduate Destinations. These are illustrated with case studies of good practice.

### Entrepreneurship

The survey asked respondents to list the most important entrepreneurial and professional skills required of the dancer: A total of 22 respondents gave full answers to this question demonstrating a depth and breadth of understanding about the skills required. The responses were 'mined' and this identified the following key themes:

- Self-presentation and having something to present
- Self-management and self-motivation
- Marketing and the ability to 'sell' themselves
- Strategy and business planning
- Writing funding proposals 'Being able to present themselves in a convincing way when they apply for funding and remaining focussed on the particular issues funding bodies are interested in supporting.'
- Knowledge of funding bodies and funding opportunities
- Knowledge of arts policy
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Confidence and awareness of one's own potential, subject knowledge and its application to a range of situations
- Creativity
- Ability to diverge and work within associated industries and in new fields
- Communication, advocacy and promotion
- The ability to present confidently
- Critical reflection
- Evaluation
- Clarity of artistic purpose and creativity/Clarity of vision
- Project management
- Good knowledge of body management and the care of own and others' bodies
- Creative and critical thinking
- Initiative
- Leadership skills
- Collaborative and partnership working
- Ability to work with others both as a leader and as a collaborator
- Networking
- IT skills
- Identifying professional development needs
- Negotiation
- Setting up workshops and classes

*Table 4: Entrepreneurial Skills required of the Dancer*

It is clear that respondents recognise the need to develop the entrepreneurial skills required for a successful career in the sector. However, many respondents contextualised their reply to this question by stating that these skills had to be developed within the framework of a sound grasp of their technique as dancers:

> **'The most important entrepreneurial and professional skills required of the dancer are that they are highly skilled technicians, intelligent, creative, reflective artists able to work confidently and imaginatively with others able to transform ideas into the medium of movement as well as replicate, learn and interpret given vocabulary, and that they are confident advocates for the art form.'**

This perception of the importance of the core artistic skills appears to affect the importance given to different areas of teaching and learning in terms of time allocated. When asked to rank course content within the structure and delivery of their course in relation to the level of importance in terms of time allocated, respondents clearly indicated the primacy of choreography and composition, dance techniques and theoretical skills.

The response was weighted in relation to none (1), low (2), medium (3) and high (4) and this produced an average out of 4 points for all content areas listed.

| COURSE | Ave. |
|---|---|
| | |
| Choreography/Composition | 3.57 |
| Theoretical Skills | 3.57 |
| Dance Techniques | 3.47 |
| Improvisation | 3.14 |
| Teaching/Workshop Skills | 2.89 |
| Production | 2.76 |
| Management Skills | 2.72 |
| Other Performance Skills | 2.44 |
| Technical Skills (lighting, sound etc) | 2.36 |
| Other | 2.17 |
| Voice | 1.61 |
| Dance Therapy | 1.61 |
| Notation | 1.52 |
| Acting | 1.44 |

*Table 5: Importance in terms of time allocated*

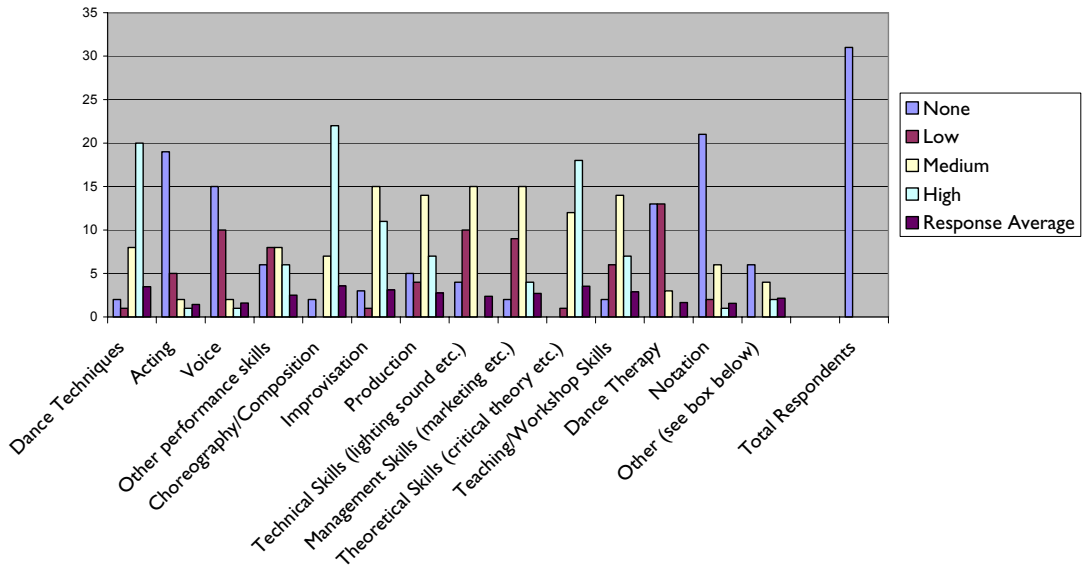


*Figure 2: Importance in terms of time allocated*

There is a recognition that graduates need teaching and workshop skills and management skills to equip them for the world of work, but less time is devoted to imparting them explicitly.

Whilst this may seem to be suggesting that there is an issue with HE provision appearing to be focusing curriculum learning and teaching time on core performance skills, and allocating less time to the skill areas which are in most demand within the profession, this may be misleading. The evidence suggests that innovative ways of developing the required entrepreneurial skills were being incorporated in implicit ways through teaching and learning strategies in the delivery of other parts of the curriculum. For example, at De Montfort University, the staff have developed an embedded approach to engendering entrepreneurial capacity and skill by underpinning the teaching, learning and assessment on all modules with key processes which promote and support change: problematisation, critical reflection and collaboration.

In her final report for the DCMS on Entrepreneurship in HE, Richards (2006) states:

> **'The Task Group has identified that there is a growing body of good practice across higher and further education and five distinct provider models for entrepreneurial learning and development have emerged. These emergent models provide a useful starting point and represent an increasing body of experience and understanding for further analysis to inform future developments and build relevant and sustainable opportunities. There is currently insufficient understanding about these different approaches, their effectiveness and impacts, although evidence suggests that the curriculum embedded 'assimilated' model appears to offer considerable benefits for both institutions and students. Different combinations of these models are in operation in different institutions, within different departments and courses and across various disciplines and they can be broadly categorised as follows:**
>
> - **Curriculum Embedded** Assimilated/Bolt-on
> - **Extra-curricular activities**
> - **Post-Graduate Courses**
> - **Continuing Professional Development**
> - **External Agency Provision'**

This categorisation is useful in assessing the provision, and we sought to identify from our data which models were being applied. We asked respondents to tell us whether their courses covered a range of skills, knowledge and aptitudes drawn from the literature as being crucial to entrepreneurial success and, if they did so, whether it was in an explicit or implicit way. We were interested in finding out whether skills, knowledge and aptitudes were being explicitly taught or whether their acquisition was deemed to be an implicit part of the teaching and learning process.

The results are shown in Figure 3 (below) and demonstrate that the HE programmes we surveyed are predominantly adopting a curriculum embedded approach (explicit delivery) as well as an assimilated approach (implicit delivery) through teaching and learning strategies.

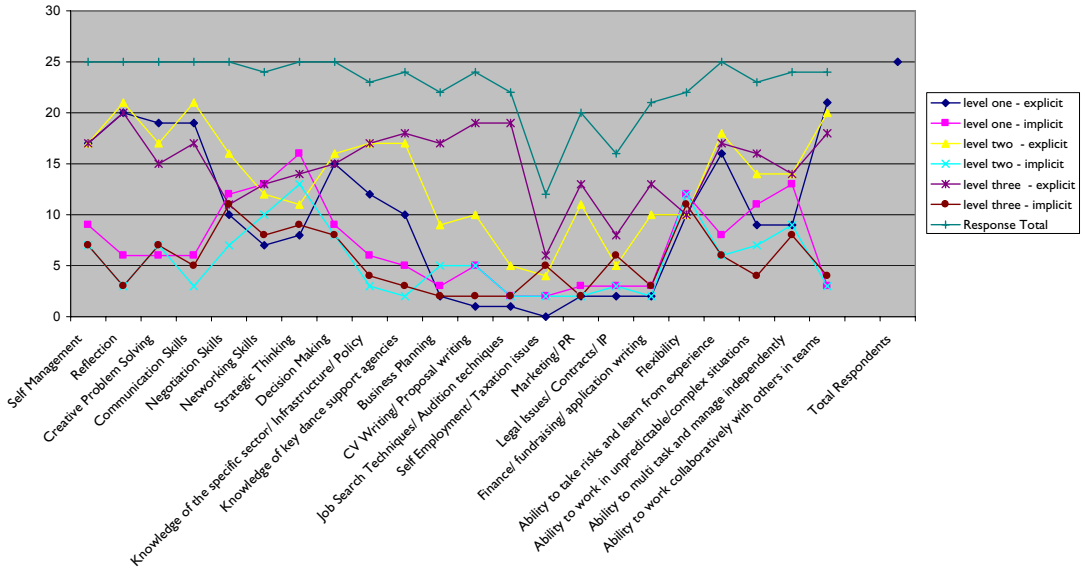


*Figure 3.*

We found that:

- The skills associated with entrepreneurship including self-management, reflection, creative problem solving, communication, negotiation and networking are all being taught in an explicit way by all courses over all three levels.
- Strategic thinking is more often covered in an implicit way (63%).
- Aptitudes such as flexibility, ability to take risks, working in complex situations, multi-tasking and managing independently are encouraged by the majority of courses at all levels.
- 87% of programmes explicitly encourage the ability to work collaboratively and in teams over all three levels.
- Knowledge of the sector (policy, infrastructure, support agencies etc.) is delivered in all three levels. However, only 74% of respondents cover this area explicitly, with the remainder covering it in an implicit way.
- Knowledge of business planning (76%), self-employment (45%), marketing (50%), finance (60%), CV writing, job search and audition techniques (86%) are mainly delivered at level 3 in an explicit way.

The case study showing the approach adopted by LIPA highlights the explicit approach well.

There was some evidence of extra curricular activities and external agency provision with respondents also citing examples of course content that highlighted a strong connection with the sector:

- Professional practice and work with professional artists
- Work experience with community groups and schools

This approach is illustrated well in the case study outlining Coventry University's approach to embedding professional practice within the curriculum.

Respondents highlighted further areas of content covered within programmes and this also suggested a dynamic understanding of developments within the field that need to be addressed in order to ensure students graduate with relevant and current skills:

- Digital media
- European performance tour
- Skill in 'handling' music: listening, putting in context, understanding the structures
- Alexander Technique
- Dance film/video
- Music dance relationship
- Design dance relationship

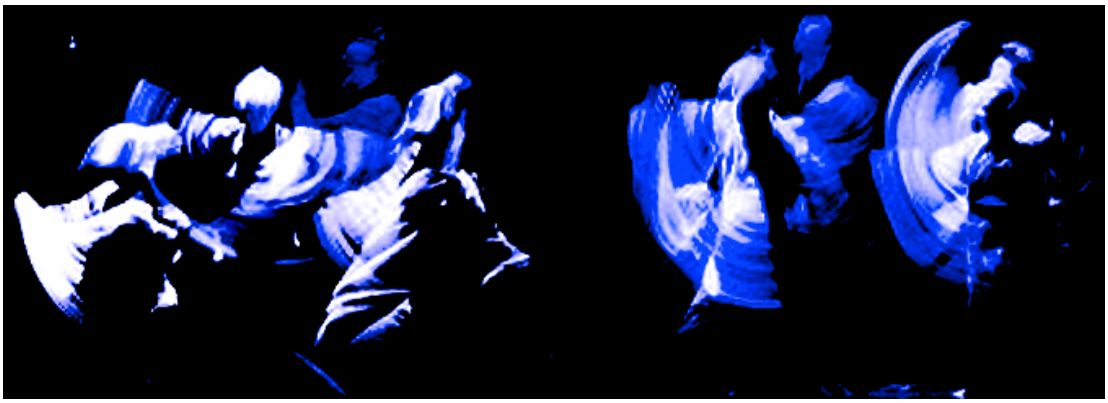

Image: Paul Kleiman

## CASE STUDY: De Montfort University

Designing for Entrepreneurial Learning

'The dance curriculum at De Montfort University (DMU) has responded in recent years to shifting patterns of employment and work opportunities arising from the demands of portfolio working and the impact of instrumental applications of the arts to broader political and social agendas including for example social inclusion, creative education, community development, youth work and, more recently, health promotion. All of these have affected module and course content.'

The impact of the entrepreneurial agenda and work environments within dance has had a profound effect on the fundamental pedagogic approach adopted on the BA (Hons) Dance programme at De Montfort University.

'The literature on entrepreneurialism recognises that its development relies not simply on acquiring knowledge of the work environment and learning a relevant set of business and financial skills; entrepreneurialism is the outcome of a fundamental way of thinking and acting in the world – a way of conceiving of oneself and one's sense of agency.'

'The pedagogic challenge as I see it is to educate for change… We could argue that all learning is a form of change but to base our teaching and design of learning at DMU on principles of change is a very deliberate and conscious choice. We are aware of the ethics involved: we need to teach for change, design safe opportunities to nurture change but not attempt in any way to force change. Change is often not immediate or direct. In most rites of passage the individual goes through a transitional stage before emerging in their new role with new status. This intermediate, hopefully temporary, stage may be characterized by disorientation and de-stabilisation (Atherton 2003). In pedagogic terms we are attempting to guide students into, through and out of this transitional stage. We have chosen to focus these attempts on level 2 (year 2) of the course.'

The modules taught at level 2 are:

- Dance: Principles in Practice 2
- Understanding Dance 2
- Image, Movement, Performance
- Understanding Balance and Coordination
- Negotiated Study 1
- Dance Artists in Education and the Community

Throughout these modules the staff team seek to take an embedded approach to engendering entrepreneurial capacity and skill. We have sought to cut across the student learning experience at this level and underpin the teaching, learning and assessment on all these modules with key processes which promote and support change. These processes form the basis of teaching, learning and assessment in all level 2 modules:

**Problematisation** **Critical reflection** **Collaboration**

'This approach … reflects a broad view of entrepreneurialism: entrepreneurialism as a capacity for individual change that has relevance and significance across the curriculum. It is in tune with the concept of the entrepreneur as a 'noticer of opportunity' (DCMS 2005:18). It supports the idea of social and cultural enterprise as well as commercial enterprise since wealth creation may not be the chief concern of dance artists and students: community involvement, artistic fulfilment, even social justice may be more important. Fundamental to developing this capacity (this 'entrepreneurial mind set') in students … is developing their ability to engage in processes that support and enable individual change. This benefits all students whether they move into work in the creative industries or not.'

*(All quotes taken from Jayne Stevens, Principal Lecturer in Dance, De Montfort University: Paper presented at PALATINE symposium, 16 November 2006.)*

**Assessment Methods**

The questionnaire asked respondents how they assessed their programmes. As assessment is a means of measuring attainment of learning outcomes, the methods used need to be appropriate to the learning outcomes in order to ensure a valid assessment process. We felt that knowing how courses were assessing attainment might highlight what they valued in relation to learning outcomes.

| | LEVEL ONE | LEVEL TWO | LEVEL THREE | TOTAL | % of SAMPLE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Continuous Assessment | 23 | 23 | 22 | 26 | 87% |
| Peer Assessment | 8 | 10 | 10 | 14 | 47% |
| Written Assessment | 27 | 28 | 27 | 30 | 100% |
| Seminar/Lecture Presentations | 23 | 25 | 25 | 30 | 100% |
| Technique Class | 24 | 24 | 22 | 27 | 90% |
| Performance | 23 | 27 | 27 | 29 | 97% |
| Reflective Journal/Notebook | 22 | 24 | 21 | 27 | 90% |
| Portfolio | 10 | 14 | 19 | 20 | 66% |
| Interviews | 3 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 37% |
| Phase Tests | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 10% |
| Mock Auditions | 1 | 0 | 6 | 7 | 23% |
| Other | 4 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 20% |

*Table 6: Assessment Methods*

Other methods of assessment cited were:

- Student self-assessment against criteria to support effective tutorials in technique
- Self- and peer-evaluation, which creates evidence of student learning and of reflective practice (with a 50% process and 50% outcome model). Journals are also used as evidence, with certain sections assessed that include formative and summative evaluations
- Assessments of practical teaching whilst on professional placements
- Open book examination
- Revealed topic examination
- Repertoire exams
- Portfolios and projects
- Open book examination
- Creative practice (choreography, dance video etc.) workshop delivery notation/repertoire
- Creative and production skills in choreography
- Viva-voce assessments
- Research file
- Examinations

It is interesting to note that all the respondents used written assessment and seminar/lecture presentations. The latter is clearly important in developing communication and presentation skills. The relatively low number of programmes using interviews and mock auditions is interesting in the context of the need for graduates to be prepared for seeking work.

**CASE STUDY: Coventry University**
***Embedding Professional Practice within the Curriculum***

'An enterprising spirit is … at the core of a lot of what the discipline of dance is about. It permeates what we do in organic ways. It is in the interaction of our work with students, in our students' work with others and in the applied nature of dance itself. But the challenge is how we encourage students to find an engagement with their art form that enables them to recognise the connections between creativity and enterprise, one supporting and facilitating the other.'

The roots of the BA (Hons) Dance and Professional Practice degree at Coventry stem from 1987, when a vocational Dance Foundation course was established within the Coventry Centre for the Performing Arts (CCPA). This programme was established to provide for students who were dancing in school and had no opportunity to further their training post-16 in the area. The course was built around skill building and provided opportunities for students to transfer and adapt their learning to different contexts. The course led to the creation of a BTEC Higher National Diploma in Dance in 1991, which ran successfully until CCPA's incorporation with the University in 1995, and the introduction of the undergraduate programme. This genesis meant that the programme grew from a strongly grounded sense of 'professional practice', through links with an annual programme of dance events, including annual New Dance Festivals, Youth Dance Festivals and various company residencies that drew participants and audiences from across the country. Dance students were directly involved in all aspects of this programme, not only as participants and audiences but also in the organisation, promotion, production and documentation. This legacy is clearly visible in course philosophy and content today.

Students on the BA (Hons) Dance and Professional Practice degree course are prepared for portfolio careers by being provided with opportunities to apply skills and knowledge in a variety of work-based situations throughout their three years of study. A number of partnerships with local and regional organisations, artists and companies, have been established to embed 'placement' experiences within the course. From 2006, Coventry University is introducing a new 'enterprise and employability' strand as a mandatory component in all courses within the institution. To accommodate this component, the dance course has moved further towards threading professional practice throughout the whole course. The model to date is not one where placements are formally identified within the curriculum but represent a 'golden thread' of experiences through and across a number of modules to provide students with work experience and a direct exposure to what it means to be a professional dance artist.

'The inclusion of 'Professional Practice' within the title of the course has worked well for us by identifying the course as one that provides a general emphasis on industry practice and the development of entrepreneurialism, and which values the student gaining confidence in teaching and facilitating dance throughout the course.'

'There are no reliable ways of testing the extent to which the students' experience on the course prepares them for work. Defining what it is to be in work is challenging enough in our industry. Portfolio careers are the norm and even those doing well often fail to be picked-up on the radar of those gathering graduate destination statistics.'

'The notion of graduate destinations is unhelpful when, for many dance graduates, trajectories are more interesting when a destination is a fluid, ever-changing position. What evidence there is can be summed up as follows:

- Students tell us that they are well-prepared for the work they do and regard the professional practice strand as being very important for their preparation for work
- Employers tell us that students are well-informed and have good knowledge of the professional context
- We have good communications with graduates who are demonstrating that they are confident and multi-skilled
- Career destinations indicate a range of employment paths both within and beyond the creative industries (teaching being a popular eventual career path)
- Many stay in and around Coventry, contributing to the dance economy (whether or not initially resident in the city or sub-region).'

*(All quotes taken from Sarah Whatley, Head of Dance, Coventry University: Paper presented at PALATINE symposium, 16 November 2006.)*

## CASE STUDY: Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA)
### *Instilling an Entrepreneurial Spirit*

LIPA's philosophy is that through their study, students should evolve to become highly tuned, entrepreneurial, multi-skilled, thinking practitioners. LIPA aims 'to offer students the best preparation possible for a lasting career in the arts rather than the ability to secure a single job' and 'to enable the growth of a specialist skill while developing general skills, multi-skilling, flexibility, enterprise and self-reliance.'

The BA (Hons) Performing Arts – Dance programme was therefore designed within a strong philosophical context to meet the varying demands of the dance profession.

'LIPA's programmes are designed to include real-world requirements related to entrepreneurial abilities, self-reliance and team-working skills. That is why versatility is at the heart of the training and education that it provides. Students are also made aware from the onset of their studies that they need to be responsible for their own learning, capitalise on opportunities, manage their own time and not rely on others to do things, be proactive and make things happen for themselves.'

The dance course works within the context of a specialist performing arts HEI that prioritises collaborative working and links with the profession. Entrepreneurial skills are therefore embedded in both the delivery and content of the programme. In some cases, skills are developed in an implicit way through the delivery of dance techniques, cross-disciplinary performance projects, choreography and complimentary performance skills such as acting and voice. Work placements and work based learning ensure real world experience whilst the use of learning contracts afford the individual student a high degree of flexibility to develop their own pathway through the programme.

Students are encouraged to take charge of their own learning; reflection and collaboration combine with real world working, including a national tour of final performance projects with musicians and technicians drawn from other programmes in the school.

In addition, there are two specialist modules where entrepreneurial skills are developed explicitly.

**Level One: Personal and Professional Development**

'This module develops both the generic study skills required of an undergraduate and the specialist skills required of a student of dance, including dance networks/structures, organisations, introduction to the industry, CV preparation, individual professional/career planning etc. This module is a core/shared module at LIPA, taken by all performing arts students. The interdisciplinary element is interwoven in both the content and delivery of the course. Students learn to understand and respect the differences between the art forms.'

**Level Three: Professional Preparation: the Independent Dancer**

'This module aims to direct the student to organise and present themselves and their work at a professional level, demonstrating a thorough range of management, performance and promotion skills. The module prepares them to seek out and create employment opportunities in and around their chosen dance field(s). They produce a portfolio, including personal and company business plan. They gain experience in audition preparation, interview techniques, presentation skills, how to promote themselves, self-employment and tax, equity and other useful networks, agents, how to set up their own company, project applications and leading community workshops. An important point here is that the institution has always maintained that it educates and trains artists for the broader performing arts world not, for example, just the dance industry.'

In order to deliver this programme, links with the sector are critical; 'Maintaining links with the industry is essential. All programmes have a range of master-classes, workshops, seminars, programme mentors etc. The students get the chance to meet those who have achieved and are willing to pass on their experience and expertise to the next generation of artists.'

Thus implicit and explicit delivery are balanced to ensure that students graduate with the skills required to 'achieve lasting employment in the arts and entertainment industry.'

*(All quotes taken from Evelyn Jamieson, Head of Dance, LIPA: Paper presented at PALATINE symposium, 16 November 2006.)*

## Links with the Dance World

We asked respondents what special characteristics of the dance world had informed the design of the programme.

The replies highlighted a strong awareness of the need for students to be developed as autonomous professionals capable of managing and sustaining a career within the sector where performing may be a difficult option and other opportunities exist:

- 'Although we concentrate on theatre dance and the 'serious' or 'art' side of this, focusing on creativity and the poetics of movement, we recognise that given the extreme difficulty of getting work as a professional dancer (particularly as a member of an existing company) we introduce the students to many different possible career routes, from forming their own companies and creating their own work, through all sorts of dance education, arts administration etc. to being able to enter a completely different career at graduate level.'
- 'The need in today's dance world to be able to handle a portfolio career and fit into the wider picture, including the political, social and personal agenda.'
- 'Growth in portfolio working.'
- 'The independent dance practitioner needs to be versatile and multi-skilled. We include workshop facilitation and community practice and emphasise the need for the student to become a reflective practitioner with an inclusive approach to dance, particularly dance and disability.'
- 'Diversity of practice and new developments e.g. impact of visual culture, video work.'
- 'Opportunities for working in partnership with educational, community development and health organisations.'
- 'The breadth of activity in community dance.'

We asked about the ways in which courses linked with the professional dance sector. The findings are presented in Figure 5.

We found that:

- 75% of courses surveyed offer placements at level 2 and 60% at level 3.
- All courses work with dance practitioners in teaching, assessing or as guest choreographers.
- Case studies are used as a method of teaching and learning with 72% of courses citing them at level 2 and 78% at level 3.
- 53% of the courses surveyed use professional artists as mentors for students at level 1. This grew to 68% at level 3.

From this we were able to conclude that:

- The majority of courses surveyed have close links with professional dance organisations and/or professional dance companies.
- Students are gaining professional practice through projects which appear to support the dance world's need for resources.
- There are few 'pure' academics working in the field. This practitioner emphasis suggests courses are well connected to the dance world and respond and adapt rapidly to its needs.
- There is a direct connection between research, teaching and learning and knowledge transfer within many courses.
- Of the 10 courses sampled, 5 have recently revalidated or are about to revalidate to ensure the course remains 'relevant'.

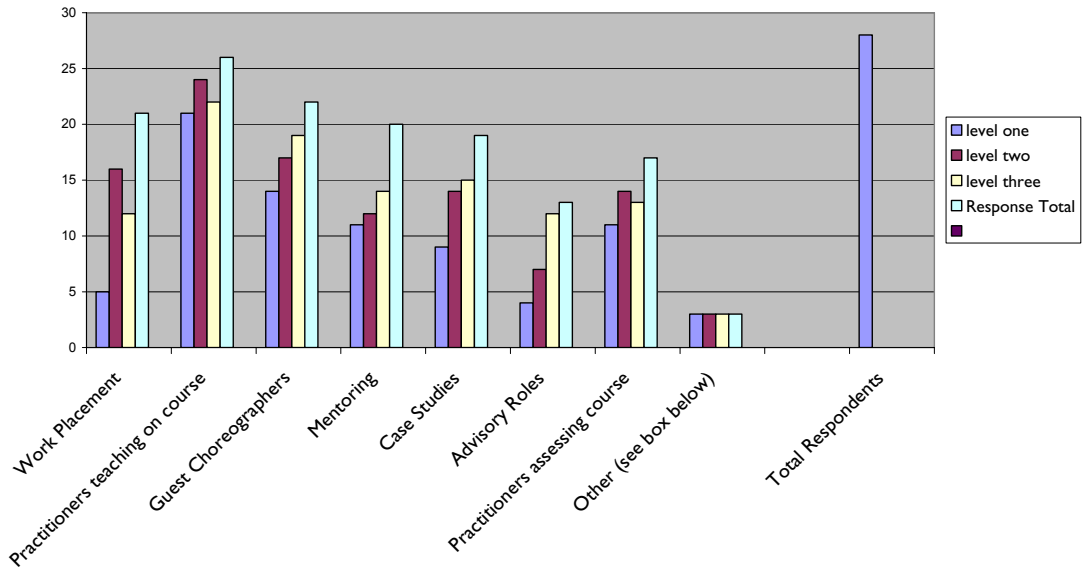


*Figure 5: Links with the Dance World*

Respondents were asked to give us some examples of good partnership working and these were many and varied. We found examples of partnership working that included the development of collaborative programmes. The case study of Northumbria University's partnership programme with Dance City is a good example of this practice. We found many examples of programmes that have built strong connections with the sector through student placements, professional practice and work experience and the case study of the University of Sunderland highlights an approach to this way of working.

Image: Amanda Nield

## CASE STUDY: University of Northumbria
### *BA (Hons) Dance Choreography: Partnering Pedagogy and Professional Practice*

The BA (Hons) Dance Choreography is a partnership between the University of Northumbria and Dance City, the National Dance Agency for the North East. The course is designed to enable students to develop as choreographers/contemporary performance makers. It aims to develop a foundation that will enable graduates to develop a sustainable career in dance. The collaboration enables a synthesis of the values of professional practice and university education. The professional concerns of Dance City, which arise through their role as a producer of contemporary dance performance and curator of regional, national and international artists, inform curriculum design.

Teaching Artists, resident at Dance City, lead in many areas of the programme, where their knowledge of professional practice supports students in their artistic development. Teaching Artists and Dance City staff lead in areas such as performance and dance management. In addition, artists and companies visiting Dance City also contribute to the programme.

From the beginning of the course students are encouraged to dialogue-build support networks with Dance City staff and visiting artists. This dialogue becomes more structured as the course progresses. Transition beyond the degree is discussed in tutorial and Dance City offer support in this area. In addition, Dance City's Dance Connect Scheme offers a programme of professional support for emerging artists. This includes mentoring, regular classes/workshops and advice on managing a dance career. Students staying in the region often take advantage of this programme when they graduate.

Entrepreneurial and professional skills are offered through specific modules as well as through implicit delivery within choreography, technique and theory courses. Courses encourage students to develop clarity in their ideas, require them to practice leading and collaborating at different times and through writing, discussion, presentations and directing encourage students to develop their communication skills. Students are able to develop leadership skills at all levels of the programme. In year 1, for example, students direct a small group piece of choreography and also take on production responsibilities for the end of year shows. Year 1 students also produce and promote their own studio showing. Under direction, year 2 students financially manage an arts project and continue to develop skills in leading others as they develop their dance ideas. Year 3 students organise and lead auditions for their final performance works, work with all years of students in the development of their final projects, lead workshops in the community and contribute to the organisation of department activities such as schools touring, master class workshops and marketing of larger scale department events. In their final year, students are also encouraged to network with professionals and perhaps shadow someone whose work is of interest to them. Specific modules include a level 2 course, Dance Management, where students work under the direction of a Dance City member of staff. This module introduces students to project development and administration and allows them to practice grant writing. In year 3, students attend workshops on publicity, CV writing, career advice and finances/being self-employed.

'The collaboration is not without its challenges as we exist in a shared space which involves transition between one space and the other. This 'in between-ness' is exciting, ambiguous and encourages changes and growth.'

*(Case based on conversations, questionnaire and presentation at PALATINE symposium on 16 November 2006 by Janet Archer, Director, Dance City, and Tamara Ashley, Course Leader, University of Northumbria)*

**CASE STUDY: University of Sunderland**
***Dance&US.Com***

**Dance&US.Com** (*Dance and the University of Sunderland and Community*) grew out of the A4All lottery-funded 'Sunderland Dance Initiative'. The aim was to establish the University as a centre of excellence for dance activity in the city. The project is guided by a steering group.

The project has allowed the University to become an active community dance provider and has increased opportunities for the community whilst increasing the opportunity for BA (Hons) Dance students to gain 'real life' work experience and employment. The project has also afforded the opportunity for a unique post to be created in HE, Dance Entrepreneur. This post administers, delivers and co-ordinates community projects and facilitates curriculum links. This in turn is generating employment for dance graduates. The Dance Entrepreneur also acts as mentor for students.

The dance team is currently working on bids for new projects which will also have a research outcome. For example, 'Small Steps, Giant Jumps' – Healthy Nurseries, is a project that will work in conjunction with the City of Sunderland Family Learning Unit to develop dance work with nurseries across the city. Another example is 'Down our Street' a tripartite University project for URBAN II funding which will address engaging young people specifically through linking education to employment. The dance element will focus on raising aspirations and self esteem.

By linking with its communities in this way, the University of Sunderland has created a distinctive programme that enables students to build real world experience whilst also providing directly for the needs of its local community. Progression routes are enhanced for the community and the employability of students is enhanced. The projects link students with a variety of employers and professional dancers. The programme of open evening classes provides additional opportunities to experience different genres such as Bollywood, Salsa & Street, Capoeira and Adult Break. But perhaps most importantly, students have been encouraged to assess their own position in relation to a career in dance. The degree also seeks to provide insight into a range of career opportunities. Students (through progress files/professional development) assess their strengths and interests and 'map' these onto potential vocational pathways.

The expanded opportunities offered by Dance&US.Com necessitated modifications to the curriculum through adjustments to a core module (DAN316 Dance Preparation & Application) in order to better facilitate the student's ability to apply their subject knowledge and skills more effectively.

*(Case based on conversations, questionnaire and presentation at PALATINE symposium on 16 November 2006 by Lesley Younger, Principal Lecturer, Head of Dance, Learning Teaching and Retention Co-ordinator in the School of Arts, Design, Media & Culture, and Sarah Riach, Dance lecturer and Dance Entrepreneur)*

## Graduate Destinations

The survey asked respondents to tell us about some of their successful graduates. Whilst some HEIs, not unexpectedly, flagged the graduates that had achieved a level of fame within the performing profession, other HEIs highlighted a breadth of destinations:

> **'The most successful graduates from the dance programme have been the ones who have been able to go from performance work, to teaching, to apply for funding, set up and run their own projects etc. Graduates who have been able to apply not just their dance technical abilities but all the other skills they have learned.'**

> **'Our course is four years old and so our graduates are recent and most of them are in the early stages of their careers.**
> **A graduate from 2005 has been awarded funding from the Arts Council to develop her work and has also been produced by the Dancing the World Festival in Newcastle.**
> **A graduate from BA (Hons) Dance (completion) was accepted for a PhD at Durham University on the strength of her undergraduate dissertation.**
> **A 2006 graduate was offered a job with Essex Dance in her last semester with us.'**

> **'Mike: went on to dance with Ludus then work at Arts Council England;**
> **Mark: lecturing in HE;**
> **Victoria, Suzie, Ellie (and many more): teaching at secondary and FE;**
> **Monique: working at English National Ballet in the education team.'**

> **'Student A: progressing to PhD studies;**
> **Student B: progressing to PGCE programme (Primary Teaching);**
> **Student C: professional dancer completing studies while still performing.'**

The responses all bear out the general picture of a graduate cohort that works in many different areas of the sector often balancing different types of work and contexts.

One respondent encapsulated the notion of a successful graduate as follows:

> **'Those who have embodied the ethos of the programme and become self-sufficient, creative and reflective practitioners.'**

It would appear that the majority of the HEIs surveyed see 'success' as being about achieving a career in the wider dance world and are approaching their programmes from this perspective. Whilst there were some significant differences between the responses of the conservatoires and the universities to this question, it is apparent that the former also recognise that a career in dance is more than simply performing.

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations for further research

> **'Entrepreneurialism is an alternative way of viewing the world to the analytical and critical viewpoints that are taught within HE and FE and which enables students to make the transition from academic theory and creative practice to understanding and capitalising on the wider application of their work in society.' (Richards, 2006)**

It is apparent from the research that HE dance programmes are increasingly recognising that working in the dance world requires the student to understand and capitalise on their skills within the context of the wider application of their work within society. When this is done well, the conceptual grasp of the value of dance and its application in social contexts means that the 'dancer' is able to view their work in the round. This allows the graduate to set about creating a sustainable career. When this is absent the student will graduate unaware of what they have to offer the market place.

Graduate destinations are diverse and it is clear that value must be placed on all areas of work within the dance world. For performers, early retirement from performance often means retraining and this can create a sense of loss and failure. In the early interviews one dance manager stated that:

'Career transition from performance seems to be starting earlier and there is a need to develop the notion that this is a further stage to your career not the end of it.'

This is indicative of the notion that there is a hierarchy within the world of dance and HE can play a key role in reversing this by ensuring that all undergraduates develop a more sophisticated notion of what constitutes a dance career. In 1998 Clarke and Gibson pointed out that there was:

'a need to dismantle the many hierarchies which exist within the sector and to move towards an approach that values diversity and the contribution that each individual makes to the wider picture and the development of the art form.'

This remains as true today as it was then.

The numbers speak for themselves. The demand side of the equation suggests that the dance world needs graduates with diverse skills. The research indicates that HE dance providers are seeking to address this in innovative and often inspiring ways. There is little evidence yet to allow us to assess how well this is working, as there has been no research on assessing the quality of the graduate on 'exit' from HE. Indeed, the view gathered during the early interviews from the dance world, suggested that the impact of the approaches being adopted by many HEIs is not yet being felt within the profession. There was a view that HE is not yet sending graduates out into the world of work equipped for employment within it:

'The profession is picking up the gaps in initial training. The HE sector must rise to the challenge and take a lead on the needs of portfolio dancers for a broader skills base.'

'There is a long gap between graduation and employability.'

'HEIs are not responding to the needs of the sector and are not producing people we want to employ so we have to grow our own.'

As a result, there is a plethora of Continuing Professional Development opportunities being developed for graduates by dance agencies and training providers: examples include the Dance Leaders awards accredited through the Open College Network and Youth Dance England and NDTA's training programme, Making Links, targeted at dance practitioners wishing to work in schools.

Furthermore, given the significant increase in opportunities for work in schools created by Creative Partnerships and the PESSCL initiatives, and the resulting need for artists able to teach on such programmes, we are now seeing a need for the creation of standards and the accreditation of skills. HE and the sector must work closely together to address this and it is encouraging to note that there are a number of initiatives currently underway to do so. Laban are working closely with a group of dance agencies including Dance UK, Youth Dance England and the Foundation for Community Dance to develop a programme that will provide structured training for dancers working with young people and in schools. The Foundation for Community Dance is currently developing a framework for CPD for the profession and is working closely with HE providers on this initiative. Within a wider arts context Arts Council England recently launched its strategy for working in partnership with HE, Arts, Enterprise and Excellence.[20]

During the research we considered what further research would benefit the dance world. The symposium provided the opportunity to gather the views of both HE practitioners and sector leaders and the following themes emerged:

- Data and statistics are out of date and there is no robust up to date data on the numbers of people working within the profession. The most recent survey was that conducted in 1994 by Jackson *et al.*
- The numbers working within education are significantly high but it is difficult to assess where these people are teaching. More robust data on this would assist the sector in developing training provision.
- The research took no account of the student voice. What do our undergraduates think about the programmes? What do graduates feel after graduation and how has their education impacted on their career?
- It would be illuminating to track graduates from a number of different HEIs in a longitudinal study in order to understand better their experiences and the trajectory of a career in the dance world post graduation.
- Are there models within an international context that we could learn from?

It is to be hoped that this mapping exercise has acted as a catalyst to further development and that the dance world can collectively address the issues it raises. The research has highlighted that there is great scope and will to join up provision. The HE sector is strategically placed to assist the wider sector. It is a relatively small economy and the links are intense between different parts of the 'world'. To link the profession increasingly closely to HE would ensure a collective approach is achieved, which maximises resources and ensures that dance graduates are better able to enjoy long-term sustainable careers within the dance world of work.

20 Arts, enterprise and excellence: strategy for higher education: Arts Council England (2006) http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/subjects/publications.php?sid=9

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# APPENDICES

# Tertiary and HE dance courses in the UK

(apologies for any inadvertent omissions)

| INSTITUTION | COURSE | TYPE | CDET |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arts Educational Schools | Dance and Theatre Performance | BA | YES |
| Arts Educational Schools | Musical Theatre | ND | YES |
| Arts Educational Schools | Ballet | National Certificate | YES |
| Barking College | Performing Arts | ND/GNVQ | NO |
| Barking College | Dance Teachers (ISTD) | Certificate of Higher Education | NO |
| Barnet College | Performing Arts (Dance and Theatre Production) | Foundation | NO |
| Bath Spa University | Dance | BA | NO |
| Bird College | Dance and Theatre Performance | BA | YES |
| Bird College | Professional Music Theatre | ND | YES |
| Birkbeck College | Contemporary Dance | Foundation | NO |
| Blackpool and Fylde College | Dance | HND | NO |
| Bolton Institute of Higher Education | Community Performance | Foundation | NO |
| Bolton Institute of Higher Education | Arts in the Community | BA (top up) | NO |
| Bournemouth University | Performing Arts with pathways in Contemporary Theatre Performance, Dance and Music Theatre | Foundation | NO |
| Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College | Dance Teaching | Foundation | NO |
| Canterbury Christ Church University | Dance Education | BA | NO |
| Central School of Ballet | Professional Dance and Performance | BA | YES |
| Central School of Ballet | Classical Ballet | National Certificate | YES |
| Central School of Ballet | Professional Performers | ND | YES |
| City of Liverpool Community College | Dance | HND | NO |
| City of Bristol College | Dance Theatre Performance | Foundation | NO |
| Colchester Institute | Musical Theatre | BA (Top-Up) | NO |
| Colchester Institute | Musical Theatre | Foundation | NO |
| Coventry University | Dance and Professional Practice | BA | NO |
| Coventry University | Dance, Theatre and Professional Practice | BA | NO |
| Cumbria Institute for the Arts | Dance and Contemporary Culture | BA | NO |
| Cumbria Institute for the Arts | Dance and Drama | BA | NO |
| Cumbria Institute for the Arts | Dance and Musical Theatre | BA | NO |
| Cumbria Institute for the Arts | Dance and Technical Theatre | BA | NO |
| Dartington College of the Arts | Choreography with Textual Practices | BA | NO |
| Dartington College of the Arts | Choreography | BA | NO |
| De Montfort University | Dance | BA | NO |
| Doncaster College | Dance Practice with Digital Performance | BA | NO |
| Edge Hill University | Dance | BA | NO |
| Elmhurst School for Dance | Classical Ballet | ND | YES |
| Grimsby Institute | Performing Arts | Foundation | NO |
| Hammond School | Professional Dance | ND | YES |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Harlow College | Performing Arts | ND | NO |
| Herefordshire College of Art and Design | Performing Arts | Foundation | NO |
| Herefordshire College of Art and Design | Performing Arts | BA (top up) | NO |
| Hull College | Performing Arts (Dance) | BA (Top up) | NO |
| Hull College | Performing Arts (Dance) | Foundation | NO |
| Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts | Performing Arts | ND | YES |
| Laban | Dance Theatre | BA | YES |
| Laban | Dance Studies | Professional Diploma | YES |
| Laban | Community Dance Studies | Professional Diploma | YES |
| Laine Theatre Arts | Musical Theatre | ND | YES |
| Laine Theatre Arts | Teachers Course (MT or Dance) | ND | YES |
| LIPA | Performing Arts (Dance) | BA | NO |
| Liverpool Hope University | Dance | BA | NO |
| Liverpool John Moores University | Dance Studies | BA | NO |
| London Studio Centre | Theatre Dance | Diploma | YES |
| London Studio Centre | Theatre Dance | BA | YES |
| Manchester Metropolitan University | Dance | BA | NO |
| Middlesex University | Dance Performance | BA | NO |
| Middlesex University | Dance with Performing Arts | BA | NO |
| Middlesex University | Dance Studies | BA | NO |
| Middlesex University | Dance Studies (Choreography) | BA | NO |
| Middlesex University | Dance Studies (Community Dance) | BA | NO |
| Middlesex University | Dance Studies (Dance Science) | BA | NO |
| New College, Telford | Performing Arts | ND | NO |
| New College Nottingham | Performing Arts (Dance) | HND | NO |
| New College Nottingham | Performing Arts (Dance) | Foundation | NO |
| Newcastle College | Dance | Foundation | NO |
| Northbrook College, Sussex | Contemporary Dance | Foundation | NO |
| Northbrook College, Sussex | Theatre Arts Choreography | Foundation | NO |
| Northbrook College, Sussex | Contemporary Dance/Physical Theatre | BA (Top Up) | NO |
| Northern Ballet School | Professional Dance | ND | YES |
| Northern Ballet School | Performers with Teaching | ND | YES |
| Northern School of Contemporary Dance | Contemporary Dance | BPA | NO |
| Northern School of Contemporary Dance | Contemporary Dance | Foundation | NO |
| Northumbria University | Dance | BA (Top Up) | NO |
| Northumbria University | Dance: Choreography | BA | NO |
| Performers College | Musical Theatre | ND | YES |
| Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance | Ballet and Contemporary Dance | Foundation | NO |
| Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance | Ballet and Contemporary Dance | BA (Top Up) | NO |
| Roehampton University | Dance Studies | BA | NO |
| Royal Academy of Dance | Ballet Education | BA | YES |
| Royal Academy of Dance | Dance Education | BA | YES |
| Scottish School of Contemporary Dance | Contemporary Dance | HND | NO |
| Scottish School of | Contemporary Dance | Foundation | NO |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Contemporary Dance | | | |
| Shrewsbury College | Performing Arts | HND | NO |
| South Downs College | Dance | ND | NO |
| South East Essex College | Performance with pathways in Music Practice, Dance and Acting | Foundation | NO |
| Stella Mann College | Professional Dance | ND | YES |
| Stella Mann College | Musical Theatre | ND | YES |
| Thames Valley University | Dance | Foundation | NO |
| The Place | Contemporary Dance | BA | YES |
| The Place | Contemporary Dance | Certificate of Higher Education | YES |
| The University of Hull | Creative Music Technology with Dance | BA | NO |
| The University of Leeds | Dance | BA | NO |
| The University of Surrey | Dance and Culture | BA | NO |
| | Dance and Culture with Professional Training | BA | NO |
| The University of Surrey | | | |
| Truro College | Dance | Foundation | NO |
| University College Chichester | Dance | BA | NO |
| University of Brighton | Performance and Visual Arts (Dance) | BA | NO |
| University of Central Lancashire | Dance, Performance and Teaching | BA | NO |
| University of Chester | Dance | BA | NO |
| University of Chichester | Dance | BA | NO |
| University of Derby | Dance and Movement Studies | BA | NO |
| University of East London | Dance | | NO |
| University of Hertfordshire | Arts Therapies | Foundation | NO |
| University of Hertfordshire | Performing Arts/Dance | BA | NO |
| University of Hull | Dance | BA | NO |
| University of Lincoln | Dance | BA | NO |
| University of Northampton | Dance | BA | NO |
| University of Plymouth | Theatre and Performance | BA | NO |
| University of Salford | Physical Theatre and Dance | HND | NO |
| University of Sunderland | Dance | BA | NO |
| University of Sunderland | Dance | BA (top up) | NO |
| University of Sunderland | Performing Arts Studies | Foundation | NO |
| University of Ulster | Dance | BA | NO |
| University of Wales Institute, Cardiff | Dance | BA | NO |
| University of Winchester | Choreography and Dance | BA | NO |
| University of Wolverhampton | Dance Practice and Performance | BA | NO |
| Urdang Academy | Musical Theatre | ND | YES |
| West Cheshire College | Dance | ND | NO |
| Wakefield College | Dance | HND | NO |
| York St John University College | Performance: Dance | BA | NO |

# MAPPING DANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

PALATINE has been funded by the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship to map enterprise and entrepreneurship within HE Dance programmes. The project is a multi-dimensional mapping exercise that is seeking to investigate approaches to enterprise and professional practice in dance. We are seeking to identify the scale of provision and by investigating a sample will identify models of good practice and examples of partnership between the dance sector and HE.

We would be very grateful if you could assist us with this work by completing the questionnaire and enabling us to gather details on the nature of your programmes.

The outcomes of this research will be published in the autumn on the PALATINE website, and will be presented at *The Dancer's World of Work* symposium organised by PALATINE at Lancaster University on 16 November 2006.

We believe this work will prove very useful, and thank you for your time and support for this project.

With many thanks for your time

Susanne Burns Ralph Brown
Lead Consultant Projects Officer, PALATINE

***The information gathered through this survey will be treated with sensitivity and in confidence at all times. The data processed in any reports will always be anonymous and no information about you personally will be available in any documents or reports generated by this project.***

Please return to: Ralph Brown, Projects Officer, PALATINE, The Great Hall, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YW

---

**SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND**

| | |
|---|---|
| NAME OF INSTITUTION | |
| NAME OF CORRESPONDENT | |
| ADDRESS | |
| TELEPHONE NUMBER | |
| EMAIL ADDRESS | |
| NAME OF DANCE COURSE(S) OFFERED BY INSTITUTION: Please include single and joint degrees and specify | |

Is your course accredited by CDET? YES ……. NO ……..

## THE COURSE:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| NUMBER OF STUDENTS | Level 1 | |
| | Level 2 | |
| | Level 3 | |

### COURSE CONTENT

We would like to know more about the content of the course. Please estimate the percentage of time spent in the following key areas at each level. If you find it impossible to estimate just tick to say you do it! :

| | % Level One | % Level Two | % Level Three | Notes/Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dance Techniques | | | | |
| Acting | | | | |
| Voice | | | | |
| Other performance skills | | | | |
| Choreography/Composition | | | | |
| Improvisation | | | | |
| Production | | | | |
| Technical Skills (e.g. lighting, sound, digital technology, design) | | | | |
| Management Skills (e.g. legal, marketing, self-management) | | | | |
| Theoretical Skills (e.g. dance history, critical theory, aesthetics) | | | | |
| Teaching/Workshop skills | | | | |
| Dance Therapy | | | | |
| Notation | | | | |
| Other: | | | | |
| | | | | |

**ASSESSMENT METHODS**

We are interested in knowing how you assess your programme. Please tick all that apply:

| | Level One | Level Two | Level Three |
|---|---|---|---|
| CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT | | | |
| PEER ASSESSMENT | | | |
| WRITTEN ASSESSMENT | | | |
| SEMINAR/LECTURE PRESENTATIONS | | | |
| TECHNIQUE CLASS | | | |
| PERFORMANCE | | | |
| REFLECTIVE JOURNAL/NOTEBOOOK | | | |
| PORTFOLIO | | | |
| INTERVIEWS | | | |
| PHASE TESTS | | | |
| MOCK AUDITIONS | | | |
| OTHER: | | | |

## SECTION TWO: ENTREPRENEURSHIP

| |
|---|
| In your view are there any special characteristics of the dance profession that have informed the design of your programme? |

| |
|---|
| In your view what are the 'entrepreneurial' skills required of the dancer? |

| |
|---|
| When and why do your students begin to move away from thinking in terms of a definite job and start to consider making their own work? How do students' attitudes develop and change from the first to the third year? |

| |
|---|
| How does their interaction with the industry change students' aspirations, how is that change then met by the teaching in your current curriculum? |

The following skills, knowledge and aptitudes are often associated with creating environments and conditions that are conducive to developing more 'enterprising' graduates. Could you tell us whether you cover these in your course in an explicit way (built into the course/taught in a specific module or class), in an implicit way, (embedded/not specifically taught), or not at all?

| | Explicit | Implicit | Not at all | LEVEL (1, 2, 3, all levels) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***1. SKILLS*** | | | | |
| Self Management | | | | |
| Reflection | | | | |
| Creative Problem Solving | | | | |
| Communication Skills | | | | |
| Negotiation Skills | | | | |
| Networking Skills | | | | |
| Strategic Thinking | | | | |
| Decision Making | | | | |
| Other: | | | | |
| | | | | |
| ***2. KNOWLEDGE*** | | | | |
| Knowledge of the specific sector/Infrastructure/Policy | | | | |
| Knowledge of key dance support agencies | | | | |
| Business Planning | | | | |
| CV Writing/Proposal writing | | | | |
| Job Search Techniques/Audition techniques | | | | |
| Self Employment/Taxation issues | | | | |
| Marketing/PR | | | | |
| Legal Issues/Contracts/IP | | | | |
| Finance/fundraising/application writing | | | | |
| Other: | | | | |
| | | | | |
| ***3. APTITUDES/Behaviours*** | | | | |
| Flexibility | | | | |
| Ability to take risks and learn from experience | | | | |
| Ability to work in unpredictable/complex situations | | | | |
| Ability to multi task and manage independently | | | | |
| Ability to work collaboratively with others in teams | | | | |
| Ability to take the initiative | | | | |
| Other: | | | | |
| | | | | |

## LINKS WITH DANCE SECTOR

Please tick any of the following ways in which your course links with the professional dance sector?

| | LEVEL ONE | LEVEL TWO | LEVEL THREE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Work Placement | | | |
| Practitioners teaching on course | | | |
| Guest Choreographers | | | |
| Mentoring | | | |
| Case Studies | | | |
| Advisory Roles | | | |
| Practitioners assessing course | | | |
| Other: | | | |

Give us any good examples of partnership working that you have developed with the sector. We may follow this information up for our sample:

### GRADUATE DATA:

We have the HESA statistics but are more interested in your views on graduate destinations.

In your view are the HESA statistics a true reflection of your graduate destinations? If not, why not?

Could you give us a one or two examples of people you deem to be successful graduates from your programme?

WE ARE INTERESTED IN IDENTIFYING ANY PARTICULAR EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE/NOTABLE PRACTICE. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT ANYTHING THAT YOU FEEL IS PARTICULARLY GOOD ABOUT YOUR COURSE.

# The Dancer's World of Work:
## Entrepreneurship and Professional Practice in Dance HE

**Conference Centre, Lancaster University**
**16 November 2006**

**Programme**

| | |
|---|---|
| 10.00 – 10.30 | Tea and Coffee / Registration |
| 10.30 – 10.45 | ***'Welcome and Introduction'*** |
| 10.45 – 11.15 | ***'Mapping the Terrain – Entrepreneurship and Professional Practice in Dance Higher Education'***<br>Susanne Burns (Lead Consultant, Dance Mapping Project) |
| 11.15 – 11.45 | **Keynote Presentation**<br>Jeanette Siddall (Director of Dance, Arts Council England) |
| 11.45 – 12.00 | Tea and Coffee |
| 12.00 – 13.00 | **Session One – Pedagogical Approaches**<br>**Chair** – Sally Doughty (Senior Lecturer in Dance, De Montfort University)<br>***'Instilling an Entrepreneurial Spirit'***<br>Evelyn Jamieson (Head of Dance, Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts)<br>***'Designing for Entrepreneurial Learning'***<br>Jayne Stevens (Principal Lecturer in Dance, De Montfort University)<br>***'Engagement and Empowerment through Pedagogical and Disciplinary Innovations'***<br>Chrissie Harrington (Principal Lecturer and Head of Department of Dance, Bath Spa University) |
| 13.00 – 13.45 | **Lunch** |
| 13.45 – 14.45 | **Session Two – Links with the World of Work**<br>**Chair** – Jane Scott Barrett (Director, Ludus Dance)<br>***'Projecting Performance'***<br>Sita Popat (Programme Manager for BA (Hons.) Dance, University of Leeds)<br>***'Partnership Based Delivery'***<br>Janet Archer (Director, Dance City) and Tamara Ashley (Programme Leader, BA (Hons.) Dance Choreography, Northumbria University)<br>***'Taking a different slant: A view from the dance world'***<br>Sue Akroyd (Head of Professional Development, Foundation for Community Dance) |
| 14.45 – 15.00 | Tea and Coffee |
| 15.00 – 16.00 | **Session Three – Embedding Professional Practice**<br>**Chair** – Colin Bourne (Vice-Principal (Academic), Northern School of Contemporary Dance)<br>***'Embedding Professional Practice within the Curriculum'***<br>Sarah Whatley (Professor in Dance and Head of Performing Arts, Coventry University)<br>***'Dance and US.Com / Dance Entrepreneur'***<br>Lesley Younger (Dance Programme Leader, University of Sunderland)<br>***'New Ventures 2006'***<br>Anita Wadsworth (Lecturer in Dance Education, Royal Academy of Dance) |
| 16.00 – 16.30 | Plenary and Finish |

**Keynote Address to PALATINE Symposium:**
**The Dancer's World of Work:**
**16 November 2006**

**Jeannette Siddall**

## Working in the Dance World

I see my job this morning as offering an overview of some current key issues and changes, to be gently provocative along the way – and to conclude with my vision for the future of higher education in the wider 'world of dance work'.

> **I want to start by saying how much I welcome this conference, and particularly Susanne's research. It provides a solid foundation of research and data from which to reflect and rethink. While I recognise the value system and hierarchy that Susanne refers to – and even understand the reasons for it – I stand before you proud to call myself a dance professional and a dance leader who neither choreographs nor dances.**

By way of illustrating the speed of change and fluid nature of work in the 'dance world', I am going to start with my story.

I began dancing late – around the age of 19 – but fortunately, that was early in the developments in contemporary (with a small, rather than capital 'c') dance. After initially training as a teacher, I did a one-year postgraduate course at Laban in the late 1970s – the year that Laban moved to its last new building. None of the jobs that I have done since existed at the time I left Laban.

I began doing freelance teaching. That stood me in good stead for later jobs dancing and choreographing for dance in education companies – most of which have now gone – and eventually for the then-new job of dance animateur – some of which have also gone, while others have become national dance agencies.

I was the first dance officer for South East Arts Association, now part of Arts Council England, and much later, the first full-time Director of Dance UK. Until a couple of weeks ago, I was Director of Dance for Arts Council England and am now launching a new freelance career – which makes me another statistic to add to the growth in self-employment.

So what qualities do I consider have stood me in good stead for a lengthy career in dance? My list includes many of those that Susanne outlined, and - in no particular order - would be:

- Flexibility – having a sense of goal but being flexible about routes to achieving it, and reflection and pragmatism - being prepared to change the goal in the light of new information or circumstances
- Assessing risk and sensing the degree of risk that I'm prepared to take – what provides me with the confidence to take risks
- Networking, negotiation and communication – empathy and being able to see issues from the other person's perspective
- Self-management, multi-tasking, working in complex situations
- Being curious, open to opportunities and continual learning
- Being proactive – this more often feels akin to being an inveterate volunteer
- I would also add judgement – this might be political or marketplace, but it certainly involves a sense of the bigger picture, spotting possible congruencies, opportunities and gaps – and finding ways of moving into them, you could call it strategic opportunism

Looking at this list – it occurs to me that the practice of dancing and making dance can also develop many of these qualities – and I know that I learned to 'think' through doing Labanotation – it gave me a mental framework on which to hang, shape and develop data and concepts. So I wonder whether

there is more we can do to make explicit the connections between practice and theory in terms of understanding transferable skills?

I can see a shape and structure to my career, but only in hindsight and I am very aware that the conditions that pertained during that time are unlikely to be repeated. Luckily for me, the world of work in dance has expanded - but, even at this relatively advanced stage of my working life, I do not know how beneficial the next wave of change will be for me.

The rate and direction of change is rarely predictable, small pebbles create ripples across oceans and butterflies flapping their wings cause hurricanes. For example, artists doing new things and working in new directions can have a huge impact on employment opportunities – Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake* created a major shortage of male dancers when it was first produced, resulting in at least one other company cancelling a tour due to the lack of male dancers who weren't being swans.

More recently, my 3 years at the Arts Council has seen a distinct shift in interest in dance across government, demonstrated through:

- the Select Committee Inquiry leading to
- the DCMS Dance Forum and
- the expansion of the DfES Music and Dance Scheme that I'll talk about in more detail later
- and growing interest in the contribution that dance can make to health

Beyond government, initiatives such as the Rayne Fellowships for Choreographers bear testament to growing appreciation that dance can change people's lives, build bridges across communities and impact on the wellbeing of society.

As the Dance Manifesto, published earlier this year, states:

'Never before has the public's engagement with movement, in all its forms, been so strong. There is a great appetite for the kind of enrichment that dance provides – watching dance, we feel a connection with the bodies on stage that goes beyond anything that can be expressed in words. Participating in dance provides us with all the benefits of physical exercise whilst at the same time experiencing the expressive qualities that the art form can provide. Dance is truly multicultural, can unify communities and is open to all ages and abilities.'

And only a couple of weeks ago, *The Observer* announced the appointment of a 'Dance Tsar' – Tony Hall, Chief Executive of the Royal Opera House who has been jointly appointed by Andrew Adonis and David Lammy – respectively ministers for schools and the arts – to review provision and opportunity for young people. A couple of comments had particular resonance:

Tony is quoted as saying 'Dance and ballet have suffered too long by being the poor relation of music'. If we want evidence of the wealth of our richer relation that dance might aspire to - we can look to the music advisory services, numbers of orchestras and concert halls and the £10 million a year that supports Youth Music, compared to the £100k that supports the fledgling Youth Dance England. The article also describes growing interest in dance – second only to football in popularity among 50,000 14 year olds, 13%of the population attending dance, 4.8 million participating and over 15,000 taking dance at GCSE last year.

All of this illustrates Susanne's point about there being many more ways of being a dance professional than ever before – and by professional I mean able to earn a significant proportion, if not all, of one's living through dance as artistic practice – this can include performer, choreographer, teacher, promoter, manager, funder – and the list goes on.

So I want to quibble with the specific title of this conference – and its reference to the dancer's world of work. Dancers are commonly understood to be dance performers, and we know that performers are a small subset of workers in the dance world. There are almost 10 times more teachers and twice as many people supporting dance in other ways. In this context, preferencing the 'dancer' perpetuates that hegemony and outdated notion of what working in dance is really about.

Pragmatically, with around 2,500 jobs in total and nearly as many graduates in 2004/05 – the sums don't add up. The dancer's world of work would have to be very short-lived – to last no longer than a year if enough jobs were to be created for new graduates.

Hardly surprising then that competition for 'dancer' jobs is fierce. And standards have risen dramatically – and are set to rise further as better access to dance becomes available to more young people across the country. This is a good moment to reflect on changes in the pre-graduate's world of dance.

Currently, provision for young people is fragmented. Dance is part of PE in the national curriculum, compulsory until the age of 11, when schools can decide whether or not to offer it. So, for many, dance is something you grow out of and a matter of luck whether you have the chance to encounter dance as artistic practice in school.

Local private dance schools may prepare young people with the technical skills to go on to one of the specialist boarding schools or professional training. We know this is rarely a route for boys or young people from diverse backgrounds – most are white, female and middle class.

There are a smattering of Associate schemes, Chance to Dance, community dance programmes and access programmes provided by professional schools, companies and artists, but no coherent approach to provision of initial experience or a framework for progression.

The DfES Music and Dance Scheme (MDS) was set up to provide means-tested grants for young people attending the specialist boarding schools – and in dance this means 4 ballet schools. A couple of more recent initiatives are fundamentally changing this picture – it is still early days but the impact could be dramatic over the next 5 to 10 years. As a member of the MDS Advisory Group, I might be expected to be enthusiastic about these changes – but I really do believe they are the most exciting and radical shifts for the future of dance.

The first is Youth Dance England – set up with core funding from the Music and Dance Scheme and now setting up regional youth dance co-ordinators across the country with project funding from Arts Council England. Youth Dance England is working in partnership with the National Association for Dance Teachers on Dance Links – building links between dance in and beyond schools – and funded through the Physical Education and Sport School Club Links initiative (PESSCL). For the first time ever, this could provide a kind of hub and cluster model that would bring quality dance experience within the reach of every young person. And Youth Dance England is providing professional development, information, regional and national festivals and conferences – and currently starring in Channel 4's *Three-Minute Wonder* series with dance films made by young choreographers and film-makers.

The second initiative is the new Centres for Advanced Training for exceptionally talented young people aged 11 to 18. The aim is for a national network, of around 12 centres, offering prevocational dance education in a wider range of genres, and for a wider range of talented young people. Working out what it means to identify talent, and the experiences and understandings young people need to fully realise that talent in this context is challenging. The aim is not to expand the number of dancers – which will be driven by market demand rather than provision of supply – but to better prepare young people for full time, professional dance training.

The first ones are only just becoming established, and are rooted in the professional dance world. They are:

- Newcastle – Dance City
- Leeds – Northern Ballet Theatre and Northern School of Contemporary Dance
- London – The Place (learning and access with LCDS) and Laban
- Swindon – Swindon Dance

Others are in planning stage – Ipswich to coincide with the opening of Dance East's new building and Nottingham led by Dance 4. And last week a meeting in Birmingham identified the exciting possibilities of a coalition of dance organisations across the City. Geographically, the big gap is in the North West, but the further East, South East and South West areas might also need further attention.

There has been a focus on providing high-level pre-vocational training in contemporary dance, to complement existing provision in ballet – and South Asian dance is in the sights of developments in the West Midlands. Each young person has an individual learning plan, and the MDS provides means tested grants to individual students. There have been several meetings of the CATs, where they are sharing experiences, knowledge and challenges – facilitating the beginnings of a coherent, national programme. When fully established, there could be around 1,500 young people benefiting, a couple of hundred of whom might be looking for higher education places each year.

Together, Dance Links and the CATs, will mean that in the future more prospective students will be more experienced and better prepared. With a dizzying array of choice, how do they know which of the 80 HEIs might be right for them?

HE sits between the aspirations of students and the realities of the market place. But the reality for HEIs is that prospective students are their prime market, and what they do on graduation is of secondary interest. Of course, those that go on to become stars are useful in marketing courses to future prospective students. And courses that have a consistent track record in employment acquire an excellent reputation among employers, but that message may not reach prospective students until it is too late. Most young people aspire to be dancers, and are likely to be attracted to courses that offer at least a glimpse of hope of realising their dreams. But if the majority of HEIs are developing 'conceptual dancers', do the same students understand that there is no discernable market for such a thing?

The total of 80 HEIs is misleading – they are not all the same kind of animal. Simply, some are funded to provide the kind of intensive training a professional dancer needs while others lack the funding, facilities and expertise to do so. If we perpetuate the hegemony of the dancer, then the latter group might feel like second-class citizens in the world of dance work. I would rather they saw the strengths in their differences and themselves took a more entrepreneurial approach to identifying their 'unique selling points' (usp) and differentiating their offer to prospective students. Understanding what makes us different is helpful in understanding our unique identity and 'attractor factors'.

To move on to what happens after graduation. The working life of most dancers will be a portfolio career – made up of different strands that may include the practice of dance as a performer and/or choreographer, and is likely to include less performance work from the age of 35. Career transition has traditionally been seen in the context of full-time performers ceasing to perform, requiring psychological intervention. In fact it is an issue for most dance workers, and rather more practical as new skills are needed to move into new careers. Opportunities such as the Clore Leadership Programme are providing this for a few, and there have been some notable dance examples. But there must be more opportunities in the marketplace for post graduate and post professional higher education.

There are certainly gaps in the dance work world. Examples include in teaching and facilitating, particularly at more senior leadership or managerial levels, and in dance management at nearly all levels. Then there are the areas that do drive up demand for dancers – and here I'm thinking about programming, promoting and marketing. One of the issues for a maturing art form is that there is a huge need for a, as yet, small number of specialists – and this may be an unrealistic job for higher education. But it can play a role in – and perhaps has a responsibility to – prepare their graduates to read the market, spot opportunities and determine career paths that may be less well trodden.
The world of dance teaching is changing too. The law of unexpected consequences is unfortunate in that overall school numbers are falling and so teacher training places in dance are being cut across the board at a time when demand for dance teachers is growing.

The notion that everyone can dance, and by inference that every dancer can teach may have done us a disservice, as we seem to be lagging behind in differentiating between contexts and purposes. There is a growing need for specialisation – teaching young people, or in schools, is different to teaching dance for health, through GP referral for mild depressive disorders or to reduce the incidence of falls in older people, and from teaching aspiring professional dancers or in prisons. Some of you may have heard me get passionate about my dream of a real partnership between HE dance and criminology departments, where the research into effective strategies, interventions and outcomes can provide the knowledge to underpin advocacy, learning and training in and beyond the institution.

While I am in dream mode, I will conclude by summarising my vision of the current opportunities for dance in higher education:

- Developing confidence in the individual 'usp', more explicit differentiation between HEIs and greater pride in specialisms
- More of those specialisms meeting the needs of the market place, the wider dance world and feeding the advocacy and knowledge needs of that world
- Providing a stronger bridge between aspiring students, undergraduates and the wider dance world – in part through differentiating their offer and making it clearer to potential students and in part through maintaining an overview of the whole dance world and building stronger partnerships with the prevocational and graduate worlds
- Being a beacon for dance in their geographical location
- Curricula that are less focused on creating conceptual dancers, more focus on making transferable skills explicit and more opportunities for students to gain real experience of the outside world
- A wider diversity of post graduate learning opportunities

This is a vision from the outside, and it may be that you are all sitting there thinking you are doing this already, that I am telling you things that you already know. If so - that is great but, from the outside, you can always go further – and I hope today will bring you new inspiration and energy, and an even longer list of opportunities to pursue in the future.

Jeannette Siddall
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