

GuiDANCE Project Co-creation Workshop

12th July 2022



Linden Youth by Dani Bower Photography

INTRODUCTION

There is a paucity of research on the topic of growth and development specific to young people in dance. In the last 5 years there has been some progress in this area with previous papers on the topic dating back to the 1980s (Brooks-Gunn & Warren, 1985, 1989). Doctoral research provided evidence of contemporary experiences of maturation in a vocational dance training context and established the field as an area of interest warranting further research (Mitchell et al., 2016, 2017, 2020, 2021a, 2021b). Findings from this research suggest that puberty has implications for the physical and psychosocial adjustment of dancers and that these implications appear to differ for early, 'on time' and late maturing dancers. The research raised areas for further investigation, including education and practice across the sector. These areas have been explored further as part of the GuiDANCE project.

The GuiDANCE project (Growing up in dance: Enhancing education and creating sustainable practices in growth and maturation in the dance sector) is a collaboration between the University of Exeter, One Dance UK, the Royal Ballet School and the Royal Academy of Dance led by Dr Siobhan Mitchell. As a partnership, we aim to address the challenges associated with pubertal transition in dance for young people.

Over the past 18 months the project has involved reviewing practices and protocols in the dance sector around growth and development; completing an evaluation of the education available on this topic within the dance sector; and co-creating a set of guidelines for best practice for managing growth and development in dance.

The project has benefited from two advisory groups – a dance teacher advisory group and a vocational dance student advisory group who have helped to shape the project from the beginning- and collaborators spanning recreational and vocational dance settings. The project has focused on ballet training and ballet teacher education, however, the plan going forward is to broaden this out to encompass a more diverse range of dance involvement. As part of the project, two co-creation workshops were facilitated to bring collaborators together to develop guidelines for best practice in growth and maturation in the dance sector.

We worked with illustrator Laura Sorvala to capture the co-creation process whose work you will see throughout this document.



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AIM OF THE DAY

To co-create the basis of guidelines for best practice around growth and development in the dance sector

To co-create a method of disseminating best practice guidelines in the dance sector

SUMMARY OF THE DAY

Ten people across three partner organisations attended the workshop on 12th July. Findings from the GuiDANCE project, advisory group work and developing practice from the Royal Ballet School were shared and discussed. These presentations formed the starting point for discussions in the afternoon about what best practice in growth and maturation should look like in the wider dance sector. A world café approach was used to facilitate structured discussion in the afternoon. The group reflected on what to take forward from the talks in the morning and organised their ideas around themes generated from the advisory groups associated with the GuiDANCE project:

- Practice and implementation
- Feedback/reflect/evolve
- Education
- Resource/tools
- Awareness
- Communication



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Groups developed guidelines from their initial ideas and they were discussed and reviewed by the wider group. The co-creation process was captured by Laura Sorvala (see page 8).

Below are the guidelines produced by the collaborative as a result of the workshop. This document has been circulated for further review by those who attended and those who were unable to attend. The below guidelines have been agreed.



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AGREED BASIS FOR BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

PRACTICE AND IMPLEMENTATION AND FEEDBACK/ REFLECT/EVOLVE

TEACHER TRAINING ORGANISATIONS SHOULD COMMIT TO...

Providing opportunities for reflection and follow-up in growth and maturation CPD training to consolidate and advance learning and application e.g. Any training course should include a follow-up with opportunity for discussion, check-ins, and new information. Encourage larger dance organisations to enforce these practices and courses (ITT/CPD) to get smaller organisations more interested.



PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES:
REFLECTION
AND
FOLLOW-UP

Implementing a feedback strategy in order to share knowledge and inform evolving good practice e.g. two-way feedback between student and teacher; peer to peer feedback between teachers; and with education providers/dance orgs: ask for constructive feedback and work collaboratively with results. Utilisation of feedback to evaluate and ensure consistent delivery of education in this area. The collaborative will develop a template for this feedback in terms of what should be included.



IMPLEMENT:
FEEDBACK STRATEGY
SHARE KNOWLEDGE
&
EVOLVE GOOD PRACTICE

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS THE DANCE SECTOR WILL NEED TO PRIORITISE...

Making CPD training affordable and accessible to more teachers e.g., providing financial support for teachers to participate in training; supporting teachers to be advocates to share training with their school and providing them with support and resources to do this.



AFFORDABLE
&
ACCESSIBLE

CPD TRAINING

THIS WILL BE UNDERPINNED BY...

Dance sector commitment to work towards regulating dance teacher training e.g. FA regulates coaches/clubs training and infrastructure etc. Growth and maturation along with safeguarding should be part of the skills/knowledge all dance teachers have. Ambition for government level change.

Sector-wide promotion of the value of training, knowledge, and skills in this area e.g., through support of research in this area; through prioritisation of training in this area; awareness campaigns; incentivising training – use of levels (e.g., basic, intermediate, advocate/gold standard); providing access to resources for those who engage in training/ access to network; more broadly to promote benefits of a wide range of training formats and ways of engaging such as benefits of in-person training. Sector-wide – including university dance teacher courses as well as dance teacher training orgs.



SECTOR-WIDE PROMOTION
VALUE OF TRAINING,
KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Supporting dance schools to commit to engaging in reflection and implementation of growth and maturation CPD e.g. periodic peer review (informal/formal) by dance teachers.

EDUCATION AND RESOURCE/TOOLS

THE DANCE SECTOR WILL WORK TOWARDS...

Reaching a consensus of what constitutes minimum and gold standard knowledge in the area of growth and maturation i.e. a collaboration of dance organisations work together to come to a consensus and commit to it. This could include levels of training and recognition for this e.g. gold standard/advocate level being the highest. Borrow from PSHE and develop an understanding of what should be learned at each stage. Distinction between 'add-ons' and fundamentals. At the core: know what to expect during adolescence to normalise changes.



REACHING A CONSENSUS:
**MINIMUM
 AND
 GOLD
 STANDARDS
 OF KNOWLEDGE**

Initial teacher training including at least one module of growth and maturation in the dance context, addressing physical, psychological and cognitive aspects of development and CPD courses to build on this e.g. series of CPD sessions relevant to evolving practice and knowledge following on from ITT; ensuring neglected topics such as psychological development/mental health and wellbeing at adolescence are addressed fully.



INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING
 MIN **1x** MODULE
 ON
**GROWTH &
 MATURATION**
 IN THE DANCE CONTEXT

THIS INCLUDES A COMMITMENT TO WORK TOWARDS...

Integrating learning on growth and maturation throughout the curriculum and CPD offering e.g. Growth and maturation should be part of every CPD and ITT course for example offered alongside Intermediate syllabus CPD or weaved into other topic training such as mental health = G + M as a part of all health and wellbeing education.

Integrating theory and application, and mental and physical knowledge on growth and maturation i.e. ensuring the topic is examined holistically and from theoretical and practical perspectives e.g., specific examples of practical application and opportunities to rehearse strategies such as having difficult conversations, dealing with parents, opportunity to rehearse approaches.



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IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THIS WE WILL WORK TO...

Develop shared resources/collaborate to reduce cost and develop resources for all e.g., what would a typical growth trajectory look like from childhood to adolescence (mental and physical); specific resources on peak weight velocity to educate teachers, dancers and parents; promotion of existing resources training and information on growth, maturation and development.

Create a repository of well managed information and resources - Suggestion this is funded by bodies and collaborators to contribute data. Potential to be accessible to those who attended a course OR open source. Idea to get some funding to bring the collaborative together as a working group to design some initial resources in partnership with Laura Sorvala. Examples of potential resources to include resource cards/animation. Suggested name for repository 'Every body grows'. Create a 'pathway of information' at different levels, for a range of audiences (teachers/students).



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COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

THE DANCE SECTOR COMMITS TO NORMALISE (NOT STIGMATISE!) THE TOPIC OF GROWTH AND MATURATION BY...

Working to co-create accessible messages around growth and maturation for teachers, parents and students. For example, knee pain infographic highlighting OSD; explore the potential for using influencers to communicate with different groups; shared vocabulary as part of this.



CO-CREATE
**ACCESSIBLE
MESSAGES**
FOR TEACHERS,
PARENTS & STUDENTS

Supporting dance teachers to ensure that they understand the impact of growth and maturation on their students and make this part of dance practice and conversation e.g. incentivise good CPD training in person – access to shared resources; access to network; access to support.



SUPPORT TEACHERS:
UNDERSTAND
THE
IMPACT
ON
STUDENTS

IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THIS WE NEED TO ENSURE...

Strong communication with children and young people in dance, to seek their input and contribution e.g. Youth advisory panel to raise queries or issues of concern affecting them; promote benefits of dance student networking – ways to access support.

Create a workflow of information i.e. understanding what works for people and ability to direct them to the most appropriate guidelines.

Provide opportunities for discussion and networking amongst dance teachers e.g. A hub for dance teachers/educators to 'chat' 'discuss' and ask/answer questions; a network on growth and maturation teachers can join once they have attended training.



PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES:
DISCUSSION
AND
NETWORKING
AMONGST DANCE TEACHERS

Maintain continued collaboration across organisations including young people to reflect and evolve our practice as a sector.



The GuiDANCE project co-creation process

BEST PRACTICE IN GROWTH AND MATURATION IN THE DANCE SECTOR



WE ARE HERE TO LOOK THROUGH DIFFERENT LENSES

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

WE NEED TO ADDRESS THIS FULLY!

EDUCATION in GROWTH & MATURATION

I'M INTERESTED IN THIS SO I WILL KEEP LEARNING!

the ADOLESCENT DANCER

- PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
- PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING
- MENTAL HEALTH

IT IS MISSING FROM INITIAL TRAINING!

OTHER BARRIERS:

TIME + MONEY

£10-£50 PER SESSION WOULD BE OK?

NOW I UNDERSTAND!

UNDERSTANDING

PROVIDE VARIETY!

WHAT TO EXPECT...
SETTING GOALS
COMMUNICATION

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS!
TEACHING STRATEGIES

ACCESS to EXPERTISE & RESOURCES

DISCUSSION + NETWORKING

THIS NEEDS TO BE A CORE PILLAR of ITT!

WHO IS THE TRAINING FOR?

EVIDENCE BASED!

REGIONAL ADVOCATES!

ENGAGE FULLY WITH THE PROCESS OF LEARNING!

SHARING WISDOM & BEST PRACTICE

FOLLOW UPS + FEEDBACK

REFLECTION TIME!

STUDENT ADVISORY GROUPS

NORMALISE the topic!

- INFORMAL
- CONSISTENT
- FOLLOW-UPS
- REDUCE STIGMA
- FEEDBACK

WE NEED TO START THESE CONVERSATIONS BEFORE ADOLESCENCE!

TEACHERS CAN ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO DISCUSS GROWTH AND MATURITY ISSUES WITH THEIR PARENTS!

PARENTS NEED HELP...

We have a DUTY of CARE

TEACHER ADVISORY GROUP

CUSTOMISE & EVOLVE YOUR PRACTICE!

- WHAT'S APPROPRIATE!
- QUESTION YOURSELF
- EDUCATE YOURSELF (CULTURAL DIFFERENCES)

TEACHER CONFIDENCE

WE SHOULD GET TO KNOW YOUNG PEOPLE BETTER!

HOW DO I HAVE THESE CONVERSATIONS WITH STUDENTS?

PRACTICE AT RBS

WE ARE CAPTURING MORE DATA ON the LOAD

- JUMPS
- HOURS DANCED
- BIOLOGICAL AGE

MONITORING GROWTH & MATURITY

MANAGING LOAD

RISKS AND INJURIES

KNEE PAIN HERE? DON'T DANCE!

CAN LEAD TO MISSING TRAINING FOR A LONG PERIOD!

ADOLESCENT PERIOD

- AWKWARDNESS
- FLEXIBILITY ~
- INJURIES!
- CHANGE IN BODY SHAPE
- STRENGTH LEVELS

DISSEMINATION

- ASSOCIATE PROGRAMMES
- CROSS SPORT COLLABORATION
- EDUCATION (LIKE: PIV)

DATA

- ENSURE ACCURACY + CLARITY
- TALENT ID PROGRAMME
- SECURITY & STORAGE

Key concepts for best practice

AWARENESS - COMMUNICATION - EDUCATION

THERE IS NO REGULATION IN THE DANCE SECTOR!

WE NEED TO EDUCATE INSTITUTIONS!

G+M

GENERAL AWARENESS OF GROWTH AND MATURATION IN THE SOCIETY

RESOURCE/TOOLS · PRACTICE /IMPLEMENTATION · FEEDBACK / REFLECT /EVOLVE

SERIES

NOT JUST A ONE OFF!

CONSISTENT KNOWLEDGE & CONTENT

WE CAN KEEP ON IMPROVING!

DANCE INSTITUTIONS NEED TO IMPLEMENT A FEEDBACK STRATEGY

e.g. STUDENT/TEACHER AGREEMENT

EXPECTATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

Ideas for guidelines

DANCE INSTITUTIONS TO CREATE MINIMUM and GOLD STANDARDS IN DANCE TEACHER KNOWLEDGE



CO-CREATE ACCESSIBLE messages

like: an INFOGRAPHIC ABOUT KNEE PAIN (highlighting OSD)

ITT PROVIDERS SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST 1x MODULE ON G&M IN DANCE CONTEXTS!

THEN: CARRY ON TO SERIES OF CPD SESSIONS!

WE NEED TO CREATE SYSTEMS FOR CONSTRUCTIVE feedback

PERIODIC PEER REVIEW



ALL DANCE SCHOOLS COMMIT TO GROWTH AND MATURITY CPD

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

- FOLLOW UPS FOR ANY COURSES!

This needs to be a COLLABORATIVE EFFORT across the dance sector!