



Advocating for Dance

Here are some key pieces of information and evidence to help you make the case for dance, under three main headings:

- Health
- Creativity
- Wellbeing

Health

Physical inactivity contributes to 1 in 10 deaths in the UK equal to smoking and costs the UK economy £7 billion a year. It is the fourth largest cause of disease and disability in the UK (PHE 2014)

In the UK, women and girls are more inactive than their male counterparts at every age across the life course. Only 38% of girls achieved the recommended hour of physical activity each day compared with 63% for boys (Griffiths 2013). 19% of men and 25% of women do less than 30 minutes a week (PHE 2014)

So, what can Dance do?

- People Dancing's surveys show 4.78 million people take part in dance each year in England and most of these are women and girls
- The Department for Culture Media and Sport Taking Part Survey 15/16 shows that 41% of girls aged 5 – 10 years old took part in dance outside of school compared to 18% being part in a sports club
- [The Sports premium 2015/16](#) reported that dance was the most commonly cited new extra-curricular activity and the second most common new curricular activity, because of investment from the Premium

Use our [One Minute Guide](#) to advocate for dance for Health.

Dr Imogen Aujla, Senior Lecturer in Dance and Course Coordinator of the MSc Dance Science at the University of Bedfordshire: *Dance has been suggested as one of the ways to increase physical activity levels among young people. A number of studies have investigated the health impacts of dance among school-aged young people with encouraging results. Specifically, research indicates that weekly creative and contemporary dance classes can significantly enhance aerobic fitness, lung capacity, flexibility and upper body strength. It also appears that such classes can improve self-esteem, social relationships and feelings of competence. Similarly, ballroom dance appears to develop self-esteem, self-confidence and social skills among primary and secondary school children. Dance seems to improve relationships between male and female students of all ages due to the teamwork that is required to perform successfully. Furthermore, there is evidence that participation in school-based dance interventions can result in healthy lifestyle changes outside of school.*

To see the full article on *People Dancing*, please click [here](#)

If you or students are interested in studying the benefits of dance on health: The MSc Dance Science at the University of Bedfordshire includes optional modules focusing on dance, exercise and health. To find more, click [here](#).

Creativity

Jo Hunter, co-founder and CEO, *64 million artists*:

A study from NASA, children at the age of five were tested on their ability to 'develop new, interesting and innovative ideas'. Ninety-eight percent of them were in the 'genius' category for this. By age 10 it had fallen to 30% and by 15 only 12%.

64 million artists will be trailing a series of whole-school experiments for reigniting or preserving creativity in a fun and easy way that allows it to be embedded in a school's day-to-day life. This year, 7500 people took part (including several teachers). The challenge was associated with a 90% increase in wellbeing, as well as reported improved connections between participants, a sense of community and collective endeavour and increased confidence in their creativity. You can read more about it in their [report](#).

Ken Robinson and *The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education: All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* found:

- Creative Potential: When individuals find their creative strengths, it can have an enormous impact on self-esteem and on overall achievement. Freedom and Control: Creative education involves a balance between teaching knowledge and skills, and encouraging innovation.
- Cultural Understanding: Education must enable them to understand and respect different cultural values and traditions and the processes of cultural change and development.
- A Systemic Approach: Creative and cultural education are not subjects in the curriculum, they are general functions of education. Promoting them effectively calls for a systemic strategy: one that addresses the balance of the school curriculum, teaching methods and assessment, how schools connect with other people and resources and the training and development of teachers and others.

Click to read the full report [here](#).

British artists: EBacc will damage creativity and self-expression: Artists including Tracey Emin, Grayson Perry, Wolfgang Tillmans and Sam Taylor-Johnson in The Guardian Newspaper:

We are writing to express our grave concern about the exclusion of arts and creative subjects from the new English baccalaureate, or Ebacc, for secondary school children, which we believe will seriously damage the future of many young people in this country...

...This places one of our largest and most successful global industries at risk, one worth £92bn a year to the UK economy. That is bigger than oil, gas, life sciences, automotive and aeronautics combined...

...We call on the government to reverse its decision to blindly press ahead with the Ebacc...If we care about social mobility, wellbeing and economic growth – and if we want our creative industries to continue to flourish – we need to rebalance our education system so that the arts are valued just as much as other subjects. Every child should have equal access to the benefits that the arts and culture bring, not just a privileged few.

Read Full article [here](#).

Wellbeing

Information from the Cultural Learning Alliance:

Research by the Scottish Government has shown that those who participated in a creative or cultural activity were 38% more likely to report good health compared to those who did not. For participants in dance, the figure reporting good health leapt to 62% (Leadbetter & O'Connor, 2013).

Arts Council England cites similar data with even higher recorded benefits: people who had attended a cultural place or event in the previous 12 months were almost 60% more likely to report good health compared to those who had not (Mowlah, et al. 2014).

Dance can be shown to improve the physical health and self-esteem of participants, in particular for girls who are not engaging in other physical activity (Connolly, et al. 2011).

Theatre, drama and group music making improve young people's social skills and emotional wellbeing (Schellenberg, et al. 2015 & Hughes & Wilson, 2004).

Participating in arts lowers cortisol levels in blood stream (lowers stress) (Kreutz, et al. 2004). Learning to play an instrument has been shown to help children better cope with stress (Roden, et al, 2016), with Hallam noting in the Power of Music (2015) 'Music has a particular role in the reduction of stress and anxiety'.

The act of making art (visual or performance) develops young people's sense of identity and self-efficacy and increases children and young people's resilience a key component of good mental health (Catterall & Peppler, 2007, Merrell & Tymms, 2002, Schellenberg, et al. 2015).

[Recently published](#) findings from Yorkshire Dance & the University of Leeds, showed recreational dance helped young people feel happier and more confident and supported them to take charge of their health and wellbeing.

Read Cultural Learning Alliance's Briefing on Arts and wellbeing [here](#).