

Greenwich Dance: Teaching online to children and young people

As the dance world continues delivering dance online, how can we make sure we are reaching the young people who need it most?

It is a question we, as dance facilitators, have been faced with since the country went into lockdown. However, the dance community has risen to the challenge and there is some amazing and creative dance teaching taking place on many different platforms. At Greenwich Dance we developed an online series of dance tutorials on our YouTube channel, expanding our reach to young people who may not have experienced our classes before.

With that in mind, here are my top tips to develop your online offer and reach those young dancers:

Understand your reasons for moving online. Producing dance activity online is a challenge; having the right motivation will keep you pushing forward.

Find the right platform. Should you go with Zoom or YouTube? Instagram Live or Facebook? Zoom is great for my Adult Jazz classes at Greenwich Dance, however you then need to make sure you get the link out to your participants and get their correct details. Delivering our NRgDance Online on YouTube taps into young people's social media awareness. Whichever platform you choose try to make it as stress-free as possible. Young dancers may feel more self-conscious on Zoom than adults; we've found it more useful as a pastoral check-in for them than a delivery platform.

Embrace new technology. Yes, it's a big undertaking and we are all using technology and platforms that we never thought would feature in our teaching, but do not be afraid. In many ways, as everyone is learning this together, there is no expectation that content will be perfect. We have permission for things to be at 'beta' stage and we can develop them as we get feedback and evaluate their success and reach. As dance practitioners we should always be challenging how we can deliver the best possible activity for our young people. Use this time to learn something new; you may then be able to incorporate your new skills into your sessions once you are back in the studio.

Up your social media game. Some people love it and some people hate it, but social media is now the best way to reach as many people as possible. It doesn't have to all be about advertising either. Share an article that you found interesting or a new dance video that you have come across. That dance video might just give someone that much needed lift they have been missing.

Promote and celebrate other people's work. This is not the time for competition. We need to pull together as a community and see the bigger picture. You are not alone in the challenges you face, and we must celebrate everyone's work at this time, no matter how small.

Daniel Heley is Learning and Participation Coordinator for Greenwich Dance. Head over to the website to learn more about the work they do and their NRgDance Online series.

www.greenwichdance.org.uk