

# Ethical Issues in the Training and Development of Dance Teachers in the Private Sector

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## Abstract

One leading researcher into the training of dancers and safe dance practice accurately characterised traditional, authoritarian, dance teaching methods as 'teaching by terror'. This project considered evidence for the widely-voiced claim that dance teaching, and particularly the private dance teaching sector, has rejected these methods and moved towards more ethical teaching practices. So selected teachers from the past and the present of the field were interviewed (see below); in addition, an autoethnography was produced. The project's methodological complexity is important, as these are topics requiring delicate, inter-personal treatment. The investigation also involved examining current codes of conduct and practice, to consider their purpose and influence relating to dance teaching practices. The discussion demonstrates that 'paying lip service' to codes is all too common. Greater importance appears to be put on having the codes on the shelf (for the outside world to see) rather than on valuing their possible influences towards changing practice. This is consistent with the findings from video interviews conducted with dance teachers about their experiences of learning to dance and learning to teach. Focusing on three key areas of (a) learning to dance, (b) discipline and teacher behaviour in class and (c) learning to teach, the findings highlighted clearly the typical teaching behaviour from dance's past; and show little evidence to demonstrate any significant move towards ethical practice in its present. Without a proper commitment to codes for dance teachers, something else is needed to positively influence teaching behaviour. It is no longer acceptable for dance teachers to say (referring to their own training), 'well it never did me any harm', using this as a rationale for continuing with unethical practice. Today's dance teachers must understand the impact of their teaching behaviour on those they teach; and recognise their moral obligations to those people. In pursuit of this aim, two key moral obligations are identified and considered as ways of positively affecting dance teaching practices.

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### Previously published work included in this thesis:

Botham, S. (2005). *Do dance teachers have a moral obligation to allow students with anorexia to participate in dance classes?* Conference proceedings of 15th Annual Meeting of IADMS, Stockholm, Sweden, IADMS.

Chapter Six draws heavily on this paper and a copy of it has been incorporated into the appendices: Appendix E.

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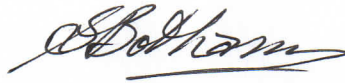
My thanks must also go to everyone who has contributed in some way to this project – interviewees, teachers, students – your assistance is valued.

Finally, I must thank my late, mother and dance teacher. I am sure that if she were around today, we would both be embracing the new knowledge and understanding available to dance teachers today.

## Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any materials already submitted for a degree.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Boham', written over a horizontal line.

Dated: 14 September 2012



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 *Autobiographical preamble*

The approach to technique training in both dance and music reflects the educational models of previous centuries in which the teacher was an experienced professional learning at the feet of the master. Traditionally dance has been taught from this hierarchical, teacher-centred perspective.....We must change the intent of our dance education from producing obedient tools adept at following external commands to empowering self-directed, knowledgeable artists capable of artistic depth and creative collaboration. These goals are served by learner-centred, whole-person education that provides dancers with conceptual, perceptual and personal tools for continued growth.

(Daniels 2009 p 614)

I was struck some years ago by a phrase used to describe dance teacher behaviour, 'teaching by terror' (Geeves, 1993, p 8). There was no need for further explanation because it acted like a trigger: I was instantly transported back to my own memories of learning to dance and learning to teach and to the deep seated fear of not getting it right in case I was accused of not trying. Oh yes, been there, done that, got the T-shirt and seen the video too. From that point I was reminded constantly, through witnessing teaching sessions, discussions and other means, that these methods were still evident in current practice despite claims to the contrary. This led to me asking a question fundamental to this research investigation: What influence, if any, does ethics have on dance teaching in the private sector? That is, should teaching in this style dominate the preparation of teachers for public-sector dance? This led me to the questions that form the basis of this investigation:

- What is the present situation in private sector dance teaching?
- How did we arrive at this situation?
- Is there something here that we should be concerned about?

These, in turn, structure much of what follows.

I stress the personal nature of these issues for two reasons. First when I came to investigate them, I drew (in part) on my own experiences, by employing autoethnographic methods (see 3.3; 5.1 below). But second, and more importantly, these issues have been at the centre of my professional life.

The private dance teaching sector has been part of my life since I was about eight or nine years old. My experiences in the dance profession have come from being, first of all, a dance student then a professional dancer, choreographer, dance teacher and now to my involvement with training and developing dance teachers in my current role as a dance and health education consultant. Like so many others, I accepted, for a long time, how things were done in the preparation of dancers, how dance was taught, even although I knew deep down that certain things were not right. But I did nothing of any consequence to address what I felt was wrong. This was not because I was not concerned or did not care. It had more to do with not realising that I could do something. Or even that others also had similar concerns to me about how things were done. I did not realise that I could highlight the issues of concern with a view to working towards encouraging changes in understanding and practice. My interest in how dancers are trained and treated never waned and, from time to time, something would remind me that things were not right – it might be watching a class where students were poked and prodded in intimate places by teachers who clearly believed they were correcting faults and improving technique. But seeing the looks on the faces of these students when this happened would cut me to the core. These looks seemed to say to me that they were putting a brave face on things when inside they were crying with frustration and embarrassment. I would find myself remembering when I was that student, which would make me angry inside when I witnessed these scenes. And my concerns would be raised even more if I listened afterwards to the comments from the students trying to justify the teacher behaviour with comments such as ‘it’s all part of the training’. Looking at this teacher behaviour with my new (slightly more educated) eyes, I saw that these scenes were all too common and that they would not be acceptable in other learning situations. The attitude of those

doing the poking and prodding was ignorant of the impact of such methods – they saw nothing wrong with what they were doing. It was a case of ‘if I learned this way and it didn’t do me any harm then it is good enough for my students too’. We know now that this statement is simply not true, as will become clear in the following chapters. For as we shall suggest, there is a reason to believe that the teachers who make the claim above do not come through the process entirely unscathed – at the least, their sensitivities to the plight of others have been coarsened.

Over time I recognised that others who witnessed what to others was unacceptable teacher behaviour (dance teachers, dance professionals and examiners, for example) also did not see anything wrong with what they were observing. Indeed these witnesses would often praise the teacher behaviour and make comment that the students needed to ‘toughen up’ if they wanted to make it in the dance profession.

I did not know back then that it was possible for someone like me to make a real contribution to improve the way dance students and dancers are treated or that it might be possible one day for traditional dance practices to be changed. Therefore things remained like this until about 20 years ago when I decided to follow my interest in health and began studying for a number of qualifications that eventually led to me taking a Masters degree in Health Education (Europe) in the mid 1990s. This degree was the real turning point for me. In studying principles and models of health education and promotion, psychology and ethics amongst other topics, I could see that my concerns in dance were not without foundation. Indeed it opened my eyes to what was happening (and not happening) in the dance world. As my interest was dance and particularly dance teaching I was able to focus my research for my dissertation on health education and dance teaching and I carried out a comparative study about the training of dance teachers in Russia.

Looking at my own profession through the eyes of health education made me realise how much of the dance profession functions behind closed doors using for example, traditional dance teaching methods of the past. It also made me realise that when these methods were viewed from the outside

world they were no longer acceptable. Wearing my health education hat, some problems concerning dance teaching became more obvious, making me want to highlight these issues and to change the way that dance students and dancers are trained and treated. It was and still is my belief that learning to dance should not be at the expense of being a person. That is, that in one's interactions here, one should be recognised as a person, and treated accordingly. That means treated ethically. One does not have to give up on the person one is in order to dance. It follows that if my account of past practice was correct, changes were needed so that teaching is encouraging and positive rather than destructive and damaging. To move forward, in ways that this investigation came to required a catalyst. And I found that in some responses from the field.

It turned out that what was needed was that I meet others who also recognised that the traditional methods of the past were problematic and that changes needed to be made in order to prevent the damage to the person. For there are a significant number of people who believe that the way dancers and dance teachers are treated and educated should be improved and continue to improve into the future. Many of them are members of organisations such as the International Association for Dance Medicine & Science (IADMS) which was formed 20 years ago by a group of dance medicine practitioners, dance educators, dance scientists and dancers (IADMS 2004 [www.iadms.org](http://www.iadms.org)).

Clearly the role of dance teachers is recognised as fundamentally important to this organisation. In support of this recognition of the dance teacher's role, a 'Day for Teachers' has been held before or after the annual conference since 1997. This commitment is further supported by the more recent publication of The IADMS Bulletin for Teachers with articles addressing a whole range of practical dance teaching problems and current scientific knowledge aimed at enlightening dance teaching practices. These articles might consider aspects of psychology for dancers (Nordin and McGill 2009 pp 4-6), applying science to dance training (Batson 2010 pp 14-16) and training specific physical challenges such as hypermobility (McCormack 2010

pp 5-8). In addition to this bulletin, there are resource papers applying current knowledge in a useable format for dancers and dance teachers (Clarkson and IADMS Education Committee 2003-2005). All of these resources are available free online from the IADMS website and there are other resources available for purchase too<sup>1</sup>. So when I joined IADMS in 1999 I met others who were concerned about dancers' health and wellbeing. This led me to 'do something about it'. I presented a poster presentation at the conference that year held at Tring in England about an aspect of my previous research - ethical issues in dance. This led to a conversation about ethics and dance with Julia Buckroyd who was at that time writing what was to become her very popular book, *The Student Dancer: Emotional Aspects of the Teaching and Learning of Dance* (2000). This conversation raised the ethical issues of concern to me again and ultimately led me to make the decision to pursue this investigation.

## **1.2 Rationale for this investigation**

A recent story about the experiences of dance students could easily be mistaken as being from the past. However, this story appeared in an online article at NYTimes.com (Levy 2010) in 2010 and tells the story of young Americans studying at the famous Bolshoi School or to give it its full title: Moscow State Academy of Choreography. These young dance students are so keen to experience learning ballet from the teachers at the school that they are prepared to put up with the sorts of teaching methods that are recognised in UK and USA as being from the past: where the teachers physically pound on the students' thighs leaving finger impressions on the skin when repositioning their bodies. These methods were something of a shock to the new American students and one called Joy was reported to have said (Levy 2010):

I had never had a teacher come up to me and say, 'Use your bottom muscles, use your shoulders, use your abs,' and touch me there.' Joy

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<sup>1</sup> [www.iadms.org](http://www.iadms.org)

said, later adding 'In America it is more about, O.K, this is what I would like you to do.

One of the Bolshoi teachers explained that when he worked in California it was all but taboo for teachers to touch ballet students and he was surprised to discover that insurance policies are needed in case a parent of a student sued him. He discussed the difference with the teaching methods at the Bolshoi emphasising the need for the sorts of teaching practices that include rigorous practice and physical contact. According to him this explains why the students at the school do so well. When discussing the students at the Bolshoi, he was reported to have said (Levy 2010):

I can give them a very, very, very, very hard time, and still they will be happy with that. Their parents will say, 'You can kill him, but just teach him.

This was a very strict regime of intense training. For instance, Joy, a young Texan student (Dressner et al. 2010) suffered a severe foot injury but had to continue dancing on it as there was no-one to replace her, for a gala performance. So a method of freezing the injury was used for the performance so she could dance and following the performance her injury was assessed. She required surgery on her foot as it was broken.

This article is perhaps an extreme example of the authoritarian dance teaching world. Although it is not suggested that this is what is happening in the private dance teaching sector which is the focus of this study, this tale will no doubt, strike a chord, reminding some, of the typical, strict, dance teacher figures of the past.

In a sense, the experiences described above draw attention to what many others might, anecdotally, see as the norm in the training of dancers – the sort of anecdotal evidence provided by, say, seeing the film *The Red Shoes!* But has this actually been, in the past, the reality of the training of private sector dance teachers? And did it persist? For (as we will see) some organisations central to the training of such dance teachers have more recently expressed the hope to improve not only the standards, but also the methods, of such training. So these were two key issues to be addressed in this investigation. In effect, then, the investigation could be conceptualised in

two main parts; first that confirming, elucidating and expanding the present situation with respect to the training of dance teachers for the private sector. And, second, a consideration of possible strategies for the future (to include some recommendations). And the first part – roughly co-extensive with the empirical investigation, including the study of ‘syllabi’ and the pronouncements of the relevant bodies, such as the British Ballet Organization (BBO): see 2.4.1; 2.4.2 - would consider both the ever-changing present situation and the past that gave rise to it. For it was clear that the impact of the anecdotal view of the teaching methods deployed in training dancers and dance teachers (were it confirmed) would be discovered in the past training of those dancers: and hence in what they brought to present training. The initial hope that the contemporary scene would reflect a more positive view of dominant teaching styles proved not to be the case.

In addition to explaining the past of the training of the dance teachers, the unethical treatment (and other examples of inequality or inappropriateness) discovered would expand the picture and the motivations for conducting this investigation.

Certainly that investigation required consideration of three key themes: learning to dance; the discipline and teacher behaviour, especially in the class where the dance learning took place (although elaboration here will include glancing across at public sector dance teaching); and their present experiences in learning to teach – although the question of discipline and teacher behaviour might recur here too (as suggested by some insights from the sociology of the body: see 2.6.3).

We begin from a sense of dancing of the past, the traditional ways that dance was taught and learned. Typical methods would include ‘teaching by terror’ (Geeves 1993 p 8). Although this slogan and also another one, ‘invisible big sticks’, are used here to describe and refer to these overly authoritarian methods, this does not mean that, for example, terror is literally used in the teaching or big sticks were regularly wielded - these slogans refer to any teaching that is unethical by way of being too authoritarian or body-centred. However, the slogans were not chosen lightly. Some students were

motivated by fear, some teachers did carry sticks. Clearly this style of teaching was unsatisfactory in that it did not respect those taught: it was unethical. But was such a style of teaching widespread? Many people have an idea how dance teachers are trained and someone with the background of the researcher here has direct experience of training as a dance teacher as well as being involved in the training and development of other dance teachers. So claims that the past situation has been remedied could be scrutinised. This 'insider' knowledge and understanding led me to question some of the claims made for the new way of doing things.

### **1.3 Plan of this work**

Fundamental to the conception of the methodology of this project is that one should only introduce such concepts as are needed: there is no point in a presentation of literature only there to show readers that the author is familiar with these works. Hence there is no *literature review*, as formally conceived. Rather, these concepts are introduced and considered as and when they seem useful: there is no attempt at an all-encompassing review (of the meagre literature), but rather attention to specific contrasts and comparisons as they arise naturally connects one set of explanatory concepts with other sets (see especially 2.6). So that discussions appear in their normal places, rather than collected into one discussion of *all* the relevant concepts.

In Chapter Two, some background to the project is also provided beginning with a short history of dance teaching in the private sector going back just over 100 years to when the dance societies of today first emerged. We look back over key aspects of the history of dance teaching in the private sector and learn something of, what it is, how it functions and how it has evolved to where it is today with its idealised models of fault correction.

However, the discussion of the history of private sector dance teaching since the early part of the twentieth century – which was explored partly through addressing the development of BBO – raises two specific interventions of theory for comparative purposes. First a presentation of the



methodology of dance teaching (and relatedly of PE teaching) in the twentieth century, in Chapter Two (2.2), offers an object of comparison for the developmental picture of the dance syllabi, and their associated conceptions of the relationship between pedagogy and content. Second, interventions from aspects of the sociology of the body are addressed, as they relate to the private dance-teaching context; and especially through Foucault's idea of docility (2.6.3). This too clarifies the prospective project here.

Looking back at how the private dance teaching sector began, we discover that a key motivation was to improve standards of teaching. When compared to the motivations for the recent and ongoing changes in dance teaching qualifications in the private sector today there are a lot of similarities. Although, recently, some of these societies have been keen to gain recognition for their qualifications on the national framework used by the public sector, another, continuing, vital aspect of these changes is to improve the standards of dance teaching in the private sector.

Current dance teaching practices include reflecting on changes that have been made to, for example, the age when pointe work might reasonably be begun. That is, to changes in the treatment of those taught; and perhaps to changes in how they were regarded. The problem with dance teaching in the private sector introduces the idea that dance teaching is a largely unregulated profession with little to prevent the sorts of teacher behaviour that we are concerned about. So Chapter Two includes (2.5) a review of the recommendations of previous research that developed a 'theory of health education for dance teachers', and updates them in light of current practice.

In order to find out more about how the methods of dance teaching of the past contrast with methods of today written materials such as syllabi from dance teaching societies, were considered, together with statements by the societies, as well as reflective logs from teaching students studying on one of the new style teaching qualifications. More importantly, interview data was gathered by means of video interviews conducted with four interviewees plus an autoethnography of the researcher's own experiences of learning to

dance and learning to teach. Further data in the form of some anecdotal/participant observation type data add to the mix along with a brief explanation of how the ethicsdance website (Botham 2010) which emerged during this research project, has contributed to the promotion of ethical practices in dance (a role that might be expected to expand in the future). Matters of informed consent are addressed for each of the different forms of data collection used.

Such data collection methods are the topic of Chapter Three. Here an explanation is offered as to why qualitative rather than quantitative research methods were chosen for this project, as well as the various types of data gathered to present a picture of training and development of dance teachers in the private sector both from the past and the present. We learn that three, key, data collection methods (written material, semi-structured interviews and autoethnography) were used in this qualitative study, and also what led to using this combination of methods. The semi-structured interviews were recorded on video and therefore the concept of video interviewing is considered in some detail, as is autoethnography. Some thought is given to visual communication and in particular Best's (1978 pp 138-162) two distinct types of non-verbal communication, 'lingcom and percom'. Important issues of informed consent and confidentiality are also considered here. In its final part, this chapter explores matters concerning informed consent in relation to this research, in light of the decision by one interviewee to allow use of her video interview images, which enriched the presentation of her data.

Chapter Four shares some of the ups and downs of conducting the empirical dimension of this research design. The discussion explores the problems that arose despite having a plan in place, and what was done in an attempt to salvage the project and to make the best of the data collected. This is where a discussion of what worked well and what did not takes place: for example, when the data collection did not quite go according to plan, there was a need to change tack so that the study could continue and still have sufficient data in the end to enable the project to be completed. This

chapter also highlights some of the problems that arise when a research project takes longer than initially anticipated.

Chapter Five introduces the central data from the empirical part of the study, to offer a snapshot of how dance teaching was in the past and how it is now. Revealing parts of the data provide insight into a world that for many years functioned behind closed doors. A world that, when viewed through eyes unfamiliar with dance teaching in the private sector, appears unduly harsh, where ritual humiliation is common, and discipline is often controlled by a 'big stick' - real or invisible. The data presented in Chapter Five show that, despite claims to the contrary, the ways of the past are still with us. Further, teachers of today are still being exposed to these ways of the past that are supposed to have been abandoned for more ethical methods and approaches to the learning and teaching of dance in the private sector. Ethical issues are highlighted concerning the sort of picture presented to the outside world compared with what the reality is.

Now, the investigation moves to its conceptual heart: given the picture provided by the empirical enquiry, as sketched thus far, what should one do? How might the situation thereby described be improved? Consideration is given to what this means in practice and especially in relation to ethical codes which are addressed in the next chapter.

In looking for a solution for improving standards, Chapter Six explores the nature and roles of codes of practice in relation to dance teaching, ethical behaviour and the ethics of 'teaching by terror'. The discussion shows us that there are a variety of codes<sup>2</sup> in existence in the private dance sector. Whilst this might be a good thing, it is not clear from simply having the codes what their impact or influence, if any, is on dance teaching practice in this sector. Therefore this chapter considers in some depth the purpose of codes, their limitations and raises matters that need to be addressed when devising or adopting a code of practice or conduct. The problems of trying to change practice with codes are considered and in particular, paying lip service to

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<sup>2</sup> The term codes is used to cover all codes such as, codes of practice, codes of conduct, codes of ethics and so on.

codes. This leads on to two examples of discussions concerning the moral obligations of dance teachers.

Chapter Seven looks at the conclusions of the research including the need for recognition of lip service being paid to the ethical aspects of teacher training, teaching and the codes of practice. Recommendations include that the societies of the private dance teaching sector work with their teaching members to move away from viewing ethics negatively and commit themselves to embodying ethics in practice - taking the codes to heart - in an effort to truly leave 'teaching by terror' and body-centred practices in the past and embrace person-centred practices for the future. And some recognition of the impacts of this enquiry while it was ongoing are mentioned.

As the description just given makes clear, this investigation is not presented here in terms of the 'standard form' for social scientific enquiries. For example, it develops the concepts necessary for the enquiry as and when they are needed (see especially 2.6): in that sense, it has no literature review as such, although it does address key concepts from that literature. And its conclusions do not flow directly from the empirical work. Rather, the empirical investigations provide a background for the conceptual investigations in Chapter Six. In that sense, it is not strictly a social-scientific investigation at all: it uses its reflections on history (and especially the experiences that history produces) as a basis for conceptual investigations. So its distinctive format captures what is crucial to *this* investigation, as conceptualised here. And one aspect of that conceptualisation is the connection of the researcher's experiences to the enquiry as a whole, both as motivation and as evidence-base.

#### **1.4 Ethics statement**

As with all research involving human being it is necessary to ensure that the ethics of carrying out the research study have been addressed. Ethics approval for this research was dealt with at school level in May of 2003. As the research was not deemed to present more than the usual, minimal ethical

risk, it did not have to go before the University Research Ethics Committee (now called University Research Ethics and Governance Committee) for formal approval.

Complying with all the usual requirements of this type of research required that certain things be in place relating to good research practice. These include for example :-

- Informing the participants verbally and in writing about the study – providing an information sheet for participants about the study, its purpose and the research methods to be used and also what involvement in the study will entail for participants.
- Seeking and gaining informed consent.
- Ensuring that participants understand that their participation is voluntary and that they can pull out at any point without giving a reason.
- Ensuring that issues of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity have been adequately addressed.

As all of these, usual, ethical requirements were in place there was no need for the research to be referred to a higher level for further approval.

It should be noted that as the research progressed an ethical issue regarding an interviewee who decided to relinquish her anonymity and change the terms of her consent arose. This is discussed in detail in Chapter Three. Awareness should be raised here of ethical guidance being sought from the supervisor about how to deal with the matter. Only once the matter had been discussed and satisfied that there were no ethical concerns were the changes made concerning the use of this participant's data. Doing this demonstrates that concern for the ethics of doing this study was an ongoing process throughout the project.

Acknowledging help from BBO

The willingness of the British Ballet Organization (BBO) and allowing access to potential participants and course work such as reflective logs is

acknowledged. This is really appreciated and the data gathered has contributed to helping us understand more about the private dance teaching sector at a time of great change. It is not the intention of this investigation to criticise the BBO, although it is hoped that that they would take note of its recommendations. Other dance organisations in the private sector are in a similar situation, and, although the participants for this study came from BBO because the researcher had access to them, they could just as equally have come from one of the other societies in the private sector with similar results.

## **2 Background to Project: A Vision of Private Sector Dance Teaching**

### ***2.1 Introduction: the issue of regulation***

The private dance teaching profession is largely an unregulated profession. This means that there is little to prevent the sort of overly authoritarian teaching referred to as 'teaching by terror' (Buckroyd 2003, Geeves 1993) or indeed the bullying tactics. What regulation there is has typically been provided through societies such as the British Ballet Organisation (BBO) and the Imperial Society of the Teaching of Dancing (ISTD). And it is to their histories we turn later, to offer a more detailed background to private sector dance teaching in the UK (focusing on BBO).

It is different for teachers working in statutory education as they are subject to specific legislation (Dance UK 2002 p 56) concerning all aspects of their practice. In the private sector, increasing amounts of indirect legislation affect all dance teachers from once-a-week hobby teachers to those who are teaching full-time. Child protection, risk management, health and safety, equal opportunities and such like, affect all working dance teachers. Of course these topics are all important but, as they are legal issues and our focus is on ethical concerns, they will not be discussed explicitly here. Instead the focus will be on the teaching methods and approaches that are employed by teachers and those who are training and developing the teachers. Lack of regulation should not prevent teachers being professionally competent to teach. Nor should it prevent good standards of practice. Dance teachers have in recent years been increasingly encouraged (or, in some cases, required) to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding to incorporate for example, understanding about anatomy, physiology, psychology, injury prevention, health and so on.

So here the situation in the public sector is first sketched (2.2), before the history of the private sector is explored (2.3), by looking first at the

founding of the societies that regulated the content of dance teaching, as well as exercising what control there was over pedagogy. That thought will be expanded by a consideration of the changing syllabi of these societies; which in turn will allow us to highlight some key concepts for fuller treatment.

## ***2.2 A contrast: reflections on pedagogy — four moments in the development of training of dance teachers in the public sector***

The nature of dance teaching has always been contentious. Thus, Agnes de Mille (1991 p 263) reports that Martha Graham advised her:-

“Never tell anyone he has no talent. That you may not say. That you do not know. That is the one prohibition laid down.” De Mille comments ruefully, “Oh my ballet teachers who have not heeded that.”

The idea of dance pedagogy is more familiar to those in the academic sector rather than the private dance teaching sector. In the private sector, it is usual to refer to dance teaching rather than dance pedagogy. In reading around this topic one realises that the terms ‘dance teaching’ and ‘dance pedagogy’ are, at times, used as if they were interchangeable. However, this really is not the case. The differences are much more than the title of the practice. Pedagogy relates more to understanding what is being taught rather than simply being able to reproduce the dance.

In looking back at how pedagogy in dance has developed in distinctly different ways in the public as opposed to the private sectors, as will become apparent as this discussion progresses. In part these differences have resulted from the fact that dance in the public sector developed as part of the physical education area where it was initially viewed as a means by which students could improve their health. And dance in the private sector has until very recent times been almost totally focused on developing teachers having great knowledge of dance content rather than pedagogical practices.

In the public sector, dance is taught as part of the physical education (PE) curriculum. In their textbook aimed at physical education undergraduate



and postgraduate students and teachers, Stidder and Hayes (2011 p xv) offer the following revealing, definition:

Physical education is the planned, progressive learning that takes place in school curriculum timetabled time and which is delivered to all pupils. This involves both 'learning to move' (ie becoming more physically competent) and 'moving to learn' (eg learning through movement, a range of skills and understandings beyond physical activity, such as co-operating with others). The context for the learning is physical activity, with children experiencing a broad range of activities, including sport and dance.

(AfPE (Association for Physical Education) 2008 p xv)

The dance taught under the banner of physical education is generally quite different when compared to the dance taught in the private dance teaching sector and these differences will be explored later in the discussion of this thesis. In part, the explanation here reflects differing practices with school physical education (and its predecessors) in contrast to a comparatively more static conception of the role of teacher in the private sector, at least until fairly recently.

It would be useful to have before us an accepted history of what, for convenience, we can call "PE". However, that seems impossible, since what had been stressed in one place or for one component of PE, such as gymnastics, might not find a place in some other area (for instance, diving — a good example occurs later). For this reason, the history is best sketched in terms of four key moments, from its recent history, as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> moment – the 1933 teaching syllabus and physical training syllabus
- 2<sup>nd</sup> moment – when PT became PE
- 3<sup>rd</sup> moment – the rationale of health related fitness and educating teachers about health matters
- 4<sup>th</sup> moment – beginning the National Curriculum

### **2.2.1 First moment - Physical Training Syllabus 1933**

Physical training in elementary schools in Great Britain developed over a period of about 100 years leading up to the implementation of the Physical Training Syllabus in 1933. This syllabus was based on the Swedish gymnastics developed by Per Henrick Ling with the addition of games, swimming and dancing (Kirk et al. 2002 pp 136-141). Ling's name, reflected in the name of the Ling Physical Education Association established in 1899 (Bailey and Vamplew 1999 p 1), is implicitly maintained since that body over time evolved to become the Physical Education Association of the United Kingdom in 1992.

As Kirk et al. (2002 pp 136-141) explain, although the Ling system of gymnastics was used by the British Navy from the mid 1800s as their programme of physical fitness, it was originally devised for health-related therapeutic purposes. The attraction of this system to education authorities was that it came with a formal pedagogy – a pedagogy that required disciplined response to commands and standardised activity for all pupils. The exercise system aimed to improve the health of working class children with a view to them being better prepared for work. The drill-type formula of lessons or syllabus had to be memorised and adhered to by teachers in order that they could deliver precise commands to their pupils who in turn had to respond immediately in a highly disciplined, militaristic manner. This method of delivering physical education enabled teachers to also use it as a method of disciplining the children.

All pupils had to perform the exercises exactly as the teacher required. Also the whole class had to perform the exercises together. The emphasis was on precision and complete obedience to the word of command.

(Kirk et al. 2002 p 137)

These Swedish gymnastic sequences were related to the major joints and muscle groups according to the age and experience of the pupils. They offered a systematic progression of exercises that built on the exercises in a structured and methodical way. Swedish gymnasts claimed that progressing exercises in this way led to physical development that was symmetrical and

provided benefits relating to physical fitness, health and skill (Kirk et al. 2002 p 136).

The 1933 Syllabus, published under the direction of Chief Medical Officer Dr George Newman (later Sir George) of the School of Medical Service within the Board of Education promoted physical training as a way to positively impact on health including posture and general carriage of children (Kirk et al. 2002 pp 141-142). In the years leading up to the 1933 Syllabus, there was considerable pre-occupation with the deterioration of the physical health of the working classes; and the 1933 Syllabus reflected this.

In exceptional conditions of unemployment, poverty or economic distress it is particularly necessary to safeguard mental and physical health by means of wisely directed physical education of the body, which will lay the foundations of wholesome out-of-door recreation as well as protect normal growth, health and strength.

(Newman, 1933 p 6 cited in Kirk et al. 2002 p 141)

We might, then, highlight three features of this Syllabus: first, its primary rationale was medical:

The object of Physical Education and Training is to help in the production and maintenance of health in body and mind.

(The Syllabus of Physical Training for Schools, quoted Webb 1999 p 53)

Second, it recognised the connection between the general health and as widespread participation as was possible. Hence, as a result of the implementation of the Syllabus in schools:

Nationally, there was emphasis on physical fitness resulting in growth in the demand for physical recreation.

(Webb 1999 p 53)

But satisfactory physical recreation would be facilitated if participants were skilful, and if they knew the rules. Hence there was an emphasis on the teaching of techniques for sports and games. This might well be thought *content*, as opposed to pedagogy; and was an enduring feature of the syllabi both in schools and (as a consequence) of the training of teachers. Indeed, a revealing article in the Bulletin of Physical Education from over twenty years

later (Sarsfield 1961) is still offering advice as to the teaching of the technique for diving; and, in particular, for preferring the 'Plain Header' to the 'English Header' — as being both easier to learn and better preparation for later dives. The detail is all on the technical points for the dive: indeed, when the teacher is advised to "... give his pupils every encouragement" (Sarsfield 1961 p 30), it turns out to be encouragement to use more advanced dives if he has them at his disposal. Here, then, we see a concern with techniques to be performed, with little or no regard for the teaching of those techniques as such. It is this moment that is most reflective of the attitudes within the private dance sector: the emphasis is on getting the techniques *right*. So we might reasonably see this as an enduring contribution to dance teaching in both sectors from (at least) the 1933 Syllabus: at the least, at this moment this conception seems shared between these sectors.

Third, although there was some contrast here with the attitude of some involved in the teaching of gymnastics, and especially women's gymnastics (and also dance), it was typically after this moment narrowly conceived. Thus, for students training to become women's PE teachers at Chelsea College of Education in the early 1940s, "... Miss Diana Jordan lectured on central European dance (forerunner of modern educational dance) in 1940-41" (Webb 1999 p 59) ; while "... Rudolf Von Laban and Lisa Ullmann ... took modern dance classes" (Webb 1999 p 59). But these ideas were neither as widespread nor as child-centred as they were to become. As Thornton (1971 p v) accurately notes:

The growth of 'movement education' in Britain ... is due to the spread of the work and theories of Rudolf Laban. Before 1938, in Britain, little was known of Laban's studies in the field of human movement ...  
Dance/movement education is not the logical development of the 1933 Syllabus.

Laban's British *Art of Movement Guild Magazine* did not publish its first issue until 1948 (Thornton 1971 p 19).

### **2.2.2 Second moment - Moving from PT to PE**

Following on from the 1933 Syllabus, Swedish gymnastics gradually fell out of favour. This happened around the same time as the term “physical training” was replaced by the term “physical education”, although notice that the 1933 Syllabus (as quoted above) uses both terms. This was an important change in the whole concept of physical education, since it identified the project as centrally educational. That permitted PE to be seen alongside other activities, with an educational direction: it was no longer merely offering training. This was also the period where child-centred learning became a key focus of the learning and teaching of physical education — although, as our discussion above of the 1956 article on diving highlighted, there remained considerable emphasis on the acquisition of technical skills associated with particular sports. So the primary changes (and especially the first ones to take hold) were in gymnastics and dance, and especially for women. As Kirk et al. (2002 p 157) urged:

Educational gymnastics made a rapid and dramatic impact on women’s physical education from the first appearance of Rudolf Laban’s ideas on movement and dance in Britain in the 1930s. Modern dance was built on a radical critique of ‘unnatural’ movement patterns in industrial society that had, in Laban’s opinion, much to do with the presence of mental illness and other personality disorders. Laban’s philosophy argued for the release of dangerously pent up and inhibited energies through free, spontaneous movement.

In the child-centred approach to educational gymnastics the focus was the teaching of the child. This approach was not compatible with the militaristic style of formal exercises so much a part of the Swedish gymnastics. This new method encouraged children to explore and experiment with space and ways of moving and to be creative in finding their own ways of meeting the challenges set by their teachers. This new way of teaching involved teaching individuals rather than groups. In contrast with the old system where specific exercises were performed with military precision by all taking part, the new system involved movements that were viewed as natural where the quality was not measured in drill-type responses and uniformity but instead it was based upon understanding of dimensions such as time, weight, space and flow (Kirk et al. 2002 pp 157-160).

Before moving on, it is worth stressing again some of the differences here: not all of the PE curriculum was transformed as quickly as Kirk's claim might seem to suggest. Thus, even as our final 'movement' was approached, there were still debates about the place of 'games for understanding', although by that time the debate was on *how* such understanding-based syllabi were to be implemented, not whether they were to be. But it was accepted that previously, "The tendency was for children to be taught to perform a skill, but they did not understand when, why and where to perform the skill" (Chappell 1990 p 45): and this was recognised as inappropriate precisely because its emphasis was on skill training. Of course, it was never easy to find an expression which captured the appropriate attitude. Thus, 'games for understanding' seemed to prioritise the particular game or sport. In particular, one might prefer the generic expression 'teaching for understanding' (Bunker and Thorpe 1986 p 25), since it places due emphasis on the role of the teacher in actively facilitating child-centred learning, rather than something content-based; that is, away from something rooted in the game or sport itself. If this transition to a fully educational conception of PE took a time, here at least we see its motivation as reflected in the term "*physical education*".

### **2.2.3 Third moment - The rationale from health related fitness?**

As we have seen, from its beginnings (the details of which we have located via the 1933 Syllabus), physical activity has been widely recognised and accepted as making a positive contribution to health. In writing about health and fitness in the National Curriculum for PE, Wallis and Harley (2011 pp 131-135) explain that it would be premature to think that the inclusion of health, exercise and fitness means that it is equal with the other aspects that were traditionally viewed as PE. They point out that subject inspections have found that the teaching of the health and fitness stand of PE to be the weakest of the subjects. Wallis and Harley also highlight the very real issue of school staff being role models and that their actions and behaviours concerning for example, healthy lifestyles, have an impact on the students.

This not only impacts on the students but it has implications for teachers and staff too. With a long history of awareness and promotion within the National Curriculum of health related fitness (HRF) or health related education (HRE) one would reasonably expect that the outcome would be positive when it comes to influencing long term health and health choices. However, the reality is that this is not the case and that having such a high expectation of HRE is unrealistic especially when one considers the short amount of time devoted to PE in schools (Wallis and Harley 2011 p 132).

Maintenance of health has always been important to physical educators. At the beginning of the twentieth century, physical education was dominated by this idea: 'The primary object of any course of physical exercise in schools is to maintain, and if possible, improve the health and physique of the children'.

(Board of Education, 1905 p 9 cited by Sleep in Armstrong 1990 p 17)

Thus, writing in 1974, David Smith characterised the situation in physical education in England by asserting:

The era of therapeutic physical education was drawing to a close.

(Smith 1974 p 150)

He clearly thought that broadly health-related conceptions of physical education, which had been in the offing for many years (see Kirk 1992 p 131), were to be superseded. With hindsight, we can see that this has not come about. On the contrary, a concern with the role (if any) of physical education in the health of the nation's children was again on the agenda in the 1980s. But, as Kirk (1992 p 13) points out and as we have seen above, the situation of physical education was not clear before *that* rise of health-related concerns:

Nor was 'physical education' a clearly articulated school subject, with broadly agreed aims, content and pedagogy, until this equilibrium was upset in the early 1980s by the arrival of ... HRF (Health-Related Fitness).

So the (re) appearance of a health-related concern should provide an opportunity to think-through just what we are to do in schools under the title "physical education", and why, for instance, as Kirk (1992 p 9) puts it:

The overarching concerns of HRF are for physical fitness and wellbeing, for 'looking good and feeling good'. ... [I]ts proponents often cast themselves in a paramedical role, as 'fitness consultants'...

This seems the very view whose demise Smith trumpeted, in a passage quoted above (even if the trumpeting was premature!). In the same vein, Kirk (1992 p 131) notes, of the UK:

The changes to the education system and physical education after the war broke the medical stranglehold on physical education, and ... undermined the physical educator's *de facto* status as health educator.

But a physiological rationale will re-instate that medical model. Further, one view of the detail here is offered by Armstrong (1991 p 151), when he says that:

British children's current level of physical activity is a cause for grave concern. Many children seldom experience the intensity and duration of physical activity that are believed to promote health-related outcomes.

So the *direction* of his thinking, rather than being aimed at the child's education, is instead really towards the individual health of the children in front of the teacher: that concern really will be some version of the medical one dismissed above.

Here, then, a return of the health-related or medical agenda that had been under pressure since the 1933 Syllabus has been plotted. Further, we saw that Syllabus also embodying a concern with content; with the teaching of particular sports for techniques for sports or games (even if these ideas were given less emphasis in gymnastics or dance for the public sector).

#### **2.2.4 Fourth moment -- beginning the National Curriculum**

The Education Reform Act of 1988 legislated for the development and implementation of a National Curriculum for all State Schools in England and Wales. The purpose of this National Curriculum was to provide a standard but flexible framework for curricula to ensure that pupils across England and Wales were ensured a minimum entitlement (Kirk et al. 2002 pp 212-219). In his summary of the Education Reform Act 1988, Gillard (2011 Ch 8) explains



that the National Curriculum set out targets for the knowledge, skills and understanding that children would be expected to have by the end of each key stage. And that these attainment targets included programmes of study to be taught at each key stage and the arrangements for assessing pupils at the end of each key stage. In addition to the three core subjects in the National Curriculum of mathematics, English and science, there were also six foundation subjects – history, geography, technology, music, art and physical education. And at key stages 3 and 4 there was a modern language. As this demonstrates physical education was a foundation subject when the National Curriculum was introduced.

Some of the National Curriculum documents suggest a 'body management' style of answer to questions about the nature of physical education. We are told, for example:

Physical education educates young people in and through the use and knowledge of the body and its movement. It ... enables pupils to engage in worthwhile physical activities. [It] promotes physical development...

(DES 1991 §3.1)

This passage shows how far we have come, at least in terms of rhetoric, since 1933. It stresses that the direction here is *educational*; and that it should be *enabling* of pupils — which seems a long way from training them into some set of narrowly focused skills or techniques. So a conception of this sort embodies much that might follow from adopting the features identified above: 'games for understanding' (or, better, 'teaching for understanding') as preferable to training in the skills of this or that dance.

Even this brief extract highlights the kinds of problems to be addressed here. The term "physical activities" is in danger of becoming a technical expression, especially since these must be *worthwhile* also. Can a clear policy of what to do (especially *what* activities) and why develop from this idea?

When PE found a (somewhat temporary) place at the core of the National Curriculum in England and Wales, something was then required by way of commentary on the place of dance, since dance had traditionally been

(something like) a part of PE — or, anyway, the province of the PE teacher or department. In discussing ‘the art of dance’ model dominant in dance education in the UK National Curriculum, Smith-Autard (2002 pp 3-8) compares features retained from two predecessors of this model. First, she describes the ‘modern educational dance’ or ‘creative dance’ mentioned above, as an approach derived from Rudolf Laban’s ideas in the late 1940s. This child-centred model emphasised the process of dancing (or movement) and its contribution to the development of a moving and feeling being. In this model, the focus was on development of the personality through interaction of movement rather than any artistic outcome. This contrasts with the second model which she refers to as ‘the professional model’. This model focused on the artistic and dance skills outcome and influenced dance education in the public sector from secondary schools and above in the 1960s and 1970s. The key aim or product of the professional model was to attain a theatrically-styled and skilled performance level something that according to Smith-Autard (2002 p 7) was lacking in the educational model.

It is clear to see from the following chart (Smith-Autard 2002 p 6) that the educational model is concerned with the process, creativity and problem-solving aspects connected with dance learning – there appears to be no emphasis on the dance content itself. And in the professional model the emphasis is on the outcome – the knowledge of dance technique or content together with bodies trained for the purpose and no emphasis on how this outcome might be achieved.

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**Table of features retained from the educational and professional models**

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Educational Model	Professional Model
Emphasis on the process Emphasis on development of creativity, imagination and individuality	Emphasis on the product Emphasis on knowledge of theatre dance as the model towards which to aspire
Emphasis on feelings – subjectivity of experience	Emphasis on objective ends – eg trained bodies for performance of dances
Emphasis on a set of principles as a source of content	Emphasis on stylistically defined dance techniques as content
Emphasis on problem-solving approach to teaching – teacher as guide, pupil as agent in own learning	Emphasis on directed teaching – teacher as expert, pupil as apprentice

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**Figure 1: Table of education and professional models**

Smith-Autard (2002, pp 3-8) highlights the *process versus product* features of these two models. And one can see that the private dance teaching sector clearly follows the principles of the professional model where the emphasis is on the product of what is learned. This is in keeping with the examination and medal test systems of the private sector as discussed below (section 2.3.1) in this chapter. Whereas the educational model, being process focused is not concerned with the skill level achieved, instead it sees the personal gains that learning to dance offers as the objective. Smith-Autard goes on to say that the art of dance in education model should have equal emphasis on process and product. So in effect, this means that learning to dance should offer a wider range of opportunities and outcomes. Therefore the creativity and feelings of joy experienced with the educational model of learning to dance should be encouraged together with technical skills and level of performance. And the directed teaching style so favoured in the professional model should be adapted, opening up the opportunity for a more

balanced exploration and sharing of the learning experience between students and teacher.

Pocknell and Smith (2011 pp 62-63) explain that the aims of teaching dance in education are to meet the broader aims of the national curriculum. So the focus, unlike the private dance teaching sector, is not on how well they learn to dance but how well they develop a whole range of other skills using dance as the learning vehicle. These *other* skills range from developing:- confidence and competency in physical activity; an awareness of healthy lifestyles; personal and social skills; literacy and language skills to providing opportunities for learning across the curriculum and meeting government initiatives such as tackling the increase in childhood obesity (Pocknell and Smith 2011 p 63).

### **2.2.5 Professional knowledge**

The preceding sections (2.2) have described the changing conceptions of pedagogy for (especially) PE in the UK in the twentieth century: it is harder to find convincing explanations of all the changes sketched. Certainly, one such must lie with what Donald Schön (1983 p 3) has called “the crisis of confidence in professional knowledge”. To tell that story briefly, one can begin by recognising that, at one time, the situation in education in the UK generally stressed the *content-knowledge* required of secondary school teachers. (This always left obscure the place of PE and dance.) So, until the mid-1970s, a first degree in history qualified one as a history teacher for secondary schools. But that situation changed (for graduates after 1973): it became necessary to pay attention to the *delivery* of the content as well as to the content itself. This division into *content* and its *delivery* introduces, in effect, a concern with pedagogy: the pedagogy seemed to relate just to teaching, as though there was no connection between *what* was taught and *how*. And, obviously, this might seem most problematic for practical subjects: to make sense of the contrast might be to see the ‘knowledge’ imparted solely in terms of the knowledge (of rules, skills, and techniques) thereby

acquired. Yet, equally, what distinguishes teaching from brain-washing, propaganda, and mere training is precisely the manner in which the acquisition of knowledge takes place: one may acquire it if someone beats it into them, but this will not count as education. And this desire to move away from (mindless?) training may be one factor in the move from PT to PE, sketched above.

Still, it makes sense in some subjects to distinguish the *content* (historical knowledge, say) from the practical delivery of that knowledge. On this view, the knowledge (the content) was primarily viewed as collections of facts. On a more sophisticated view, space was also given to knowledge manifest in closed skills; the knowledge *how* to ride a bicycle, for instance. But Schön's recognition was that the practices in professions (the practices of professionals, in that sense — contrasted with tradespeople) were ill-served by such a conception of knowledge. With only the resources of (a) knowledge of practice-independent facts and (b) knowledge of closed skills at our disposal, it would be difficult to theorise professional knowledge, as manifested by doctors, lawyers, teachers, architects — and (especially revealing of Schön's studies) pianists. Of course, we require that our doctors, lawyers, and architects know certain facts and have certain closed skills. But practicing in these professions seems to require, in addition, a kind of knowledge manifest in their ability to treat each of their clients/patients in a way appropriate to the context — to the individual needs of those people.

There are two related points here: first, teachers (in at least some of their traditional role) count as professionals in this sense — hence the situation just described would reflect a crisis in making sense of the professional knowledge of teachers. But, second, in PE (and dance) the *content*-knowledge also seemed to resemble the professional/practical knowledge at issue: so ideas from Schön's account of professional knowledge might be used again to address the situation of these teachers. Once they leave the relative security of teaching closed skills ("the plain header"), a proper theorisation of their situation may undermine the simplest

versions of the content/pedagogy or content/delivery contrasts, such that these come to seem mistaken conceptualisations.

Given that our project is not to offer a conceptualisation of that teaching of mastery involved in the education of, say, a concert pianist, we need not try to follow through here. Still, it is worth noting that mastery in general, artistic mastery in particular, will require the training in various techniques (say, of piano player) but that, once mastered, these can be set aside. For the professional knowledge of the student dancers reflects that required of, say, an elite dancer (and the same was true of both the pianist who gives Schön's master class, Franc, the one who receives it, Amnon: (Schön 1987 pp 182-216)). In this respect, there may be no brief account of pedagogic mastery to be offered here. So one cannot expect to import into the training private sector dance teaching a simple formula, or set of them, from the public sector context. But that does not mean that there are not insights here from granting to the private sector dance teacher professional mastery as modelled by, say, Schön. For, as we now know:

It is clear that 'good' teachers not only possess competences – the totality of which is more than the sum of the parts – but also that they have the ability to apply them selectively and differentially. This is carried out within a framework of values and relationships in which affective qualities play a vital role. Teaching is not simply about 'delivery' of knowledge and skills, but about transactions. There is a moral/ethical dimension in teacher training which must not be lost. The possession of competences is a necessary but not sufficient condition for quality teaching.

(Gough 1999 p 2)

### **2.2.6 Summary to date**

Thus far, we have looked at some of the key ideas from the recent history of the physical education curriculum in the public sector, with England as our primary model. It has shown us a gradual process emphasising the move away from the techniques and skills of a content-centred programme to the exploratory ideas of a child-centred one. In its starting point, it has reflected both a health concern and an awareness of the importance of those

techniques and skills for the particular sports and games. It has also reflected a process — or a number of them — occurring in an overlapping or criss-crossing way: we can see where our first moment locates us as a starting point, and where our final moment leaves us, although we have deliberately drawn all of these with broad brush strokes. Our other two moments reflect at best trends we can distinguish.

Much of this story aligns very readily with the history of the private-sector dance teaching organisations, as we will see below, drawing especially on the BBO.

If we are to consider the training and development of dance teachers in the private sector and the changes that have occurred in recent years it is essential to have some understanding of the character of this sector, to provide an insight into the world of private dance teachers and the sorts of experiences and challenges which they have to deal with in this sector.

We began by considering the history of the private dance teaching sector (2.3) since exploring this history helps us to understand the role and place that the private dance teaching societies have regarding supporting private dance teachers and their students. This helps us understand how the private dance sector developed into what it is today.

So this chapter next looks back over key aspects of the history of how the private dance teaching sector emerged in the UK over 100 years ago. Dance teaching in the private sector, as we know it, with its dance societies or examining bodies, began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In exploring the journey of the private dance teaching sector from where it began to where it is today, we learn something about how it functions as well as how it has evolved. We also learn something about its autonomy in the world of dance and of the many thousands of dance teachers produced from the private sector who go on to run dance classes and dancing schools the length and breadth of the UK as well as overseas.

In this way, we introduce some of the key concepts for this investigation. But these concepts will also be clarified through the contrast, already drawn, with the development of pedagogic ideas within the public

sector, especially as they apply to physical education. For related concerns with the relation of syllabus to technique, and to pedagogy were found there.<sup>3</sup>

### **2.3 History of dance teaching in the private sector**

Teachers working in the private sector are usually self-employed, based in premises like leisure centres, village halls or in private premises.

(CDET 2010)<sup>4</sup>

The private dance teaching sector includes all the small, medium and large dance schools that operate from church halls, community venues as well as private studios. These are the dancing schools that are not part of the public or state sector and therefore not governed by for example, the government run, education sector provided by primary and secondary schools. Many private dance teachers are self-employed. They are sole-traders running their own small dance school businesses. Others are employed by the larger private dance schools to teach and some will have an arrangement whereby they teach at a private dance school but as a self-employed teacher running his/her own classes. Some dance teachers in the private sector are full-time dance teachers and others teach dance in addition to their main career. Central here is the place of the societies that function as examining bodies for the students of the private dance teachers. Many of these teachers are members of one or more of a number of dance examining bodies and below is a brief sketch of the history of these societies.

Although the private dance teaching sector can be traced back to at least when the first dance teaching societies began over 100 years ago, it was some years before these societies started to resemble the societies as we know them today. In the beginning, for example, membership to some societies was gained through recommendation of one full-time professional dance teacher by other full-time professionals already members of the society. This contrasts with today's entry requirement, to the same societies,

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<sup>3</sup> See section 2.2

<sup>4</sup> Accessed on 30 April 2010.



by professional teaching examination. Although some of these societies recognise qualifications from the other societies, accepting proof of those qualifications as an acceptable entry route into the society (upon payment of the appropriate joining and membership fees). There were no examinations or syllabi in the early days but the practice of holding a conference for members to attend and participate in lectures and the like was recorded as early as 1903 (Roberts 2002 p 4).

The first of the private dance teaching societies in the UK to be formed was the British Association of Teachers of Dancing (BATD) founded in 1892 with 24 founder members. So it became:

... the first dancing society to encourage professionals of the day to organise themselves into a society to improve and develop the art of dancing, in many forms.

*([www.batd.co.uk/pages/our\\_history\\_pt1.asp](http://www.batd.co.uk/pages/our_history_pt1.asp))<sup>5</sup>*

Another early society, the United Kingdom Alliance of Professional Teachers of Dancing and Kindred Arts (UKA), was founded in 1902 when a group of dance teachers from the North of England decided to bond together in order to provide stability to what was taught. It is not clear exactly when examinations, medal tests and syllabi began in the UKA. But by the 1930s, examinations and medal tests were firmly established and they continue to this day in a vast variety of dance styles covering all the different branches including ballroom, ballet, theatre, highland, freestyle, hip hop and social dancing.

The Imperial Society of Dance Teachers was formed in London in 1904 and held its first congress in 1906. In 1924 it started to separate the different branches of dance and developed the basis of a structure similar to that which still remains today. The name was changed in 1925 to the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) and the organisation became an incorporated body in 1945. Over the following decade the branches (now called faculties) were established. New faculties have continued to be added

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<sup>5</sup> Accessed 11 June 2009.

with, for example, the Club Dance Faculty in 1999 (<http://www.istd.org/about/history.html>)<sup>6</sup>.

A key role in the private dance teaching sector was played by Edouard Espinosa (known widely as Espy), who was taught by his father Léon Espinosa, who in turn learned from ballet greats, such as Marius Pepita and Philippe Taglioni – see table below (BBO 1980 p 9).



**Figure 2: Table of Masters**

While Espy had a wonderful career as a dancer, choreographer and teacher, the work for which he is most remembered is his effort to improve standards of dance teaching in England and around the world. The following extract explains:

His most enduring work, however, was, that which he did to improve standards of dance teaching in England and throughout the world.

Steeped as he was in the traditional technique of the classical ballet he was horrified at the lack of knowledge of his technique shown by the majority of British teachers – a lack of knowledge which resulted

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<sup>6</sup> Accessed 12 June 2009.

not only in faulty teaching but frequently in actual physical injury to the pupils. He founded his British Normal School of Dancing in 1896: this was the first school in England to hold examinations and issue certificates, Espy, thus becoming the originator in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth of ballet examinations.

(BBO 1980 p 4)

The article further identifies how the then editor of the *Dancing Times*, Philip Richardson, played a highly significant role in bringing teachers together to discuss how to move dance teaching in the UK forward:

It was because of Espy's continued complaints about bad teaching and his repeated demands for some kind of authoritative examining body that Philip Richardson arranged the first "Dancers' Circle Dinner" in July 1920 so that leading teachers of all the different schools could meet in friendly fashion to discuss the matter. Out of these preliminary talks grew the Association of Operatic Dancing now the Royal Academy of Dancing. It was founded on the last day of 1920 and Espy's proposed syllabus, with a few alterations, was adopted.

After 10 years, Espy, the co-founder of the Association of Operatic Dancing and its principle examiner, broke away from the Association and founded the British Ballet Organization (BBO) in 1930 with his wife Louise Kay. Apparently Espy's artistic temperament was instrumental in him leaving the Association of Operatic Dancing. Membership of BBO at that time consisted largely of students of Espinosa who had by that time become prominent teachers throughout the UK. Very quickly the BBO spread to South Africa and Australasia. Espy's book, *The Elementary Technique of Operatic Dancing*, had been published in 1928 and many editions followed over the years.<sup>7</sup> This book, a first of its kind, gave teachers and student teachers the technique in detail. Espy's children, Edward Kelland-Espinosa and Yvette Espinosa, followed in their parents' footsteps, devoting their careers to the BBO and to raising standards of teaching in UK and overseas (<http://bbo.org.uk/BBO/Default.asp>)<sup>8</sup>.

As these dance teaching societies developed and expanded, considerable focus was put on the technique of each dance genre. Over

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<sup>7</sup> My own copy, which is a tenth edition published in September 1964, was my mother's personal copy and it still has her (very useful) handwritten notes on many of the pages.

<sup>8</sup> Accessed 11 June 2009.

time, technical syllabi were created in the various dance disciplines and these formed the basis for all examinations and, to some extent, medal tests. Knowledge of these syllabi and the technique in them was vital for the working dance teacher and student dance teachers because technical achievement was highly valued as a measurement of how good a dancer was. Dancers on stage and in films were valued for their technical prowess and their ability to make the technically difficult seem effortless. Hollywood dancers like Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly were technically brilliant as well as wonderful performers. Therefore much of the teaching revolved around the technical intricacies of each step or movement and technical prowess was, for many, the goal to which they aspired, as student dancers.

### **2.3.1 Exams and medals; and a sight of the future?**

For those not familiar with the examination and medal test systems of the private dance teaching sector, it might be useful to pause here to offer some clarification of the differences between examinations and medal tests (which used to be called 'amateur medal tests' but along the way the term 'amateur' was dropped and they became just medal tests) for student dancers. The main difference between the systems is the content required for assessment. During an examination, for example, candidates are required to demonstrate the technique and exercises for the grade or level being taken. They may also, but not always, be required to perform a dance or combination created from the work contained in that grade. Medal tests in contrast are usually dances without demonstration of any of the exercises. They are performance-based rather than technique-based. That is not to say that the dances should not incorporate technique. A candidate dancing a medal dance can demonstrate an excellent standard of technique as well as a high level of performance. Likewise, it is perfectly possible to have examination candidates whose performance and artistic skills are as good as their technical skills. The issue of concern for some is the fact that it is not compulsory for teachers to teach their medal candidates to learn and practise all the syllabus work in addition to their medal dances. So it is possible to

have the scenario where some medal candidates have a technical grounding in the work they are performing and others will not. Without a strong technical base some may argue that the work has not been developed in the traditional, syllabus structured way and therefore it may give rise to concerns about its ability to contribute to the development of the fully rounded dancer. Those who view the syllabus and grade examination structure as vitally important and, in some cases, the only way to do things, might see medal tests as not important or even worthless. But this is a very narrow view of something that can be a very worthwhile form of assessment for students and teachers. Some children, for example, want to dance for fun and leisure purposes and they may not want the very structured form of learning offered by the syllabus route. Others may enjoy splitting their learning between some syllabus work and some medal test work. Whatever one's view, the dual system of examination and medal tests offers teachers and their students flexible learning opportunities that can be adapted to suit the needs of the majority of private dance sector schools. But the private dance teaching sector covers a wide range of dance genres from classical ballet, to ballroom, to Hip Hop and a whole lot more. And some of these genres are aimed at social dancers. In social dancing the enjoyment is often the main reason for dancers attending classes and they do not necessarily want to learn in depth technique. They might respond well to some technique but they do not want the class to be predominately about technique. They enjoy dancing for fun. In contrast syllabus classes are largely about technique. The focus of the class is on building up a strong technical base and knowledge of all the individual movements and steps required in the syllabus for the level they are at. Where the dance genre offers both examination syllabus and medal test options, teachers often use the examination syllabus content as a guide to the sort of content that medal test dances should contain. For example, if a grade one examination syllabus in ballet contains simple glissades and jetés in the centre work, then teachers can (or may by some societies be required to) include them in, say, a Bronze or Silver medal dance. The different societies each provide their own guidelines as to how the grade examination levels relate to the medal test content. Indeed many theatre branch teachers

will encourage their students to do both examinations and medal tests so that they benefit from having the technical base as well as developing their performance skills through the medal test dances. Some of the more social dance genres for example (ballroom or salsa) might only use medal tests. This is often the norm in social dance genres, whereas ballet and theatre genres usually use both examination and medal systems. Whether a teacher is teaching examination or medal test work it is perfectly possible to teach both systems well, individually or combined. Now that is hopefully clearer, we can return to the history.

Although changes happened over time, many of these changes were fairly minor insofar as teaching methods and technique but there have also been major changes of the sort that have impacted on the private dance teaching profession generally. One significant change happened when the BBO stopped using its ballet syllabus based on Espinosa's technique books. This happened around 1986 when John Field and Anna Heaton were appointed as Director and Artistic Director respectively. During the next five or six years, in order (they claimed) to raise standards, they devised a new ballet syllabus (and had music composed for it) (<http://bbo.org.uk/BBO/Default.asp>)<sup>9</sup>. The new syllabus moved away from the very strict technical base of Espinosa's technique to focus on a much more artistic syllabus. So, where the focus had been on achieving the exacting detail required in order to, develop dancers with a strong technical ability, the new syllabus focused on the artistic qualities resulting in a reduction of attention to the technical standards of the work. That is not to say that the new syllabus with its artistry was not appreciated: it certainly was. Many teachers and their students liked the new focus and the challenges it brought, as indicated by the following statement from one of the interviewees here (see Chapter Five):

.... the biggest change came for us all in the BBO when John Field and Anna Heaton came in and we learned, or I learned, so much just from observing them. Particularly Anna I have to say and it was just "wow" wonderful and thought I'd never thought about that, I mean

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<sup>9</sup> Accessed 12 June 2009.

there is one thing that I, that, that the only thing I could fault Miss Amber on in her teaching was, but again it was the times. When we were doing développés we, it wasn't done except to use this but we use that, we never, ever thought to use the back muscles and then suddenly we were thinking, and that was the old BBO way I think, it wasn't just her because a lot of us said "Oh, right." So we use the back thigh muscle you know, all that stuff. And so that was a huge change.

And then since then there have been so many other people coming into Concourse... like the Miss Brown, like, oh what's her name? Doesn't matter, but there's loads of those people who are coming in to do classes with us and also then I got a huge boost when I moved down south, times have changed, you know positions for ... for pirouettes, all that changes and you've got to keep doing all that and moving with it, with the times.

This was a time of considerable change for the organisation and its teachers which had, since its conception, been steeped in Espinosa's technique. The changes were too radical for some and not all the BBO teachers followed the transition through to its conclusion. Conversations with BBO members suggest that some major fallings-out occurred between the organisation and some of the teachers resulting in a parting of the ways for some. There is no firm evidence of how many teachers or schools this affected but anecdotal evidence suggests that some of the larger, long established schools left during this time.

As one of the smaller societies, this would have been a blow to BBO. Whilst there was a lot of support for the new ballet syllabus and its artistic qualities, there are also those who believe that some technical standards have been lost with the loss of Espinosa's technique. Although no hard evidence has been found, written evidence for example, this matter has been mentioned in a number of conversations with others connected with BBO. From what was said, it is almost as if some wished that the artistry of the new syllabus was merged together with the technique of the original syllabus, rather than losing altogether Espinosa's emphasis on technique. These changes were thought to be major at the time but little did BBO and its teachers know that there were much bigger changes ahead, for not only the BBO, but for all the main dance teaching societies in the private sector in the UK.

Along with the long-standing history of, say, ballet and its technique, one must remember that other, newer dance genres have very recently come onto the private dance teaching scene. Dance genres like hip-hop and street dance might have been around for quite some time in the sense of having been danced in the streets and clubs. But, as far as being in the dance studio and having a recognised dance society style technique, then it must count as one of the newer dance genres. In fact the first technique book on hip-hop and street dance for the private dance teaching sector (in UK) was published by the UKA in 2009. There are those who believe that hip hop and street dancers are all untrained: that is it all comes naturally to these dancers when they get together with like-minded individuals and challenge each other to do the moves. However, the current trend for dance teams or crews in hip-hop and street dance (becoming popular on television and such) is not for untrained dancers, as is apparent from the extract below, which appeared in the Independent Newspaper 1 June 2009:

Wayne Sleep might seem like an unlikely inspiration for a group of young urban street dancers from Dagenham in East London. But then ballet was just as important to the 11-strong troupe that unexpectedly lifted the Britain's Got Talent crown in front of an audience of 19 million viewers on Saturday night as youth culture. Key to the 11-strong group's win was Danielle Banjo, mother of 20-year-old choreographer, Ashley, who trained at the Royal Academy of Dance. Her influence and that of his ex-boxer father Funso, who introduced him to opera and Wayne Sleep's television shows, meant Banjo and his younger brother Jordan were steeped in dance from an early age. "I was watching routines in my pram", he says.

Growing up around Dagenham, Banjo learnt the rudiments of ballet, tap and jazz from his mother in her Rainham studio, where he was joined by a close-knit group of friends with whom he later formed his troupe.

Growing older, they switched their attentions to the street dance of the American R&B acts which stormed the UK club scene around 1999.

Towards the end of the same article (Independent Newspaper, 1 June 2009) British Street dance choreographer, Jr Timey, confirms the need for dancers to be trained by teachers who know what they are doing and understand about risk:



British Street dance choreographer Jr Timey said” There’s a huge interest. A lot of kids want to have a dance group and to perform. I’d say it’s only a matter of time before there is something like America’s Best Dance Crew in the UK”.

Timey who trained at the Northern Ballet School, said street dance teachers needed to be properly trained not least to understand the risks of the acrobatics now common in the genre. “it’s not like ballet in that there’s no governing body, and with street dancing anything goes. It’s really a mime to music,” he said.

We see here what it is hoped a governing body might offer: some regulation over what is taught, with safety (and legal considerations) to the forefront. But, of course, that thought merely intensifies the need to consider the ‘how’ of teaching, as well as the ‘what’ – for teaching will be inappropriate (arguably unethical) if it fails to give proper attention to the student.

To understand these changes more fully, we must return to ballet, and to an activity at the heart of these societies. Teaching examinations and qualifications in the private dance societies were in the main based on a model of fault identification and correction together with syllabus and technical knowledge. Teaching examinations, or professional examinations as they are often referred to, tended to focus on the teaching candidate being able to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the syllabus being examined through either physical demonstration or explanation, plus, an ability to exemplify knowledge of common faults and their corrections. The examiner<sup>10</sup> in a teaching examination in ballet might, for example, ask the candidate about pirouette en dehors from a preparation in 4th. Following a demonstration of the pirouette (to music) the candidate could then be asked to identify the common faults that students might display when performing this pirouette. Then he/she would also be expected to be able to discuss ways of correcting the identified faults. Similarly, in say, a highland teaching examination, the candidate would demonstrate a particular movement, step or dance and then be asked about faults and corrections. This method of examination relies on theoretical identification and correction of faults

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<sup>10</sup> Teaching examinations in some of the private dance teaching societies involved the teaching candidate being examined by one or two examiners depending on the level being taken. This is still the case for this style of examinations today.

because there is no class of students for the candidate to teach. Therefore the candidate's ability to recognise and analyse the work cannot be tested in this style of examination simply because there are no students for the prospective teacher to teach.

In other societies, the teaching examination was conducted, at least in part, as a class where the teaching candidate was observed teaching a small class of volunteer dance students. A fundamental difference between these two methods of examining is that candidates in one style of examination are tested on their theoretical knowledge and understanding of common faults and corrections whilst, in the other, they are tested practically. Commenting as an examiner, it is fair to say that being able to observe a teacher teaching gives a more accurate picture of their ability to teach than having to rely on theory alone. Therefore the class format provides a much more realistic situation (especially when the students in the mock class are not known to the candidate), which enables examiners to see the teacher in action and to discover for themselves whether or not the candidate both knows the theory and is able to put it into his/her teaching practice. It also enables examiners to see the candidate's general approach to teaching and helping his/her students to learn - and importantly if he/she is able to identify the key points for correction - the ones that, when addressed, can improve a number of faults or problems rather than just one individual issue that may in fact be secondary to the fundamental issues needing to be addressed. For example, suppose a teacher identifies that a student is not turning out his/her supporting or standing leg when balanced on one leg. To simply tell the student to turn their supporting foot out (which is often what happens) is to ignore the possibility that the problem might lie in the hip area - the muscles surrounding the hip might not be strong enough to hold the hip in the correct alignment. If this is the case then the issue that needs to be addressed concerns the hip and not the foot. Properly addressing the alignment of the hip will in the long term help all work suffering because of the poor alignment of the hip. In contrast, superficially correcting the foot might work fairly okay in the very short term but it has not tackled the root of the problem. In other words it has not addressed the cause of the problem.

## **2.4 Syllabi and other documents**

We have seen, then, that there is room for improvement in pedagogic practice here: in particular that the traditional authoritarian teaching styles persist. Yet this is contrary to the contemporary aspirations of the governing organisations or societies. If we consider some of the written material from the organisations we can see that there are claims that the new courses promote ethical practice:

### ***Example from BBO - Diploma: from Unit 2 Dance Teaching and Learning – Indicative Content***

- VI Motivation of learners through teacher's enthusiasm and support, positive verbal and non-verbal communication, use of praise, pace of lesson, and ability to show respect for candidates

Certificate: from Unit 1 Observation of Dance Teaching and Learning Techniques

This unit is about the interaction, which takes place between teachers and learners and learners and teachers. The ethics and values of teaching underpin such interactions. Recognising students' needs and aspirations will involve dance teachers in using a wide range of teaching techniques. The aim of the unit is to develop observational skills in order to detect how teachers and learners learn.

Diploma: Student Handbook – Equal Opportunities Policy

In the interests of everyone involved in delivering and accessing British Ballet Organization qualifications the Organization has willingly embraced an Equal Opportunities Policy.....

...The BBO aims to achieve this by:

- 1 Addressing the right and need for everyone to be treated with respect and dignity in an atmosphere free from threat or abuse.

### ***Example from ISTD - CDE<sup>16</sup>: Unit 2 Dance Teaching Practice (Evidence)***

Learning object 6

Identify, implement and evaluate feedback to learners

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<sup>16</sup> The ISTD CDE or Certificate in Dance Education is equivalent to the BBO Diploma in Dance Teaching. A fuller explanation about how these differences came about is provided later in this chapter.

Candidates should:

- provide frequent feedback to learners during the lesson
- ensure feedback given during the lesson is supportive
- evaluate the effectiveness of their own feedback given in the lesson

Learning object 9

Identify and evaluate teaching and learning methods

Candidates should:

- demonstrate teaching strategies that motivate the students
- demonstrate a range of teaching and learning methods
- demonstrate an effective use of the range of methods employed
- demonstrate teaching and learning methods that ensure the active involvement of students
- demonstrate effective differentiation strategies in the class

Both the BBO and ISTD documentation refer to Codes of Conduct and as both societies are Awarding Organisations of CDET they support and promote the CDET Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for Teachers of Dance 2008/2009.

You will also recall that the key motivation for change to the way dance is taught within the private sector has emerged from a wish to improve standards.

### **2.4.1 Older syllabi**

To clarify these syllabi it is worthwhile to draw some contrasts here, considering how syllabi have changed. Thus syllabi were requested from the major governing organisations.

In response to a written request, data were received from all but BBO (which was apparently making some changes to its syllabi at that time and

the latest syllabi were not yet available). Analysis of this data separated the societies into the following two types of examining bodies:-

- 1 Dance organisation whereby professional qualification is gained by examination and there is no compulsory teacher training programme run by the organisation. Teacher training can be arranged with appropriate teachers or examiners of the organisation.
- 2 Dance organisations whereby professional qualification is gained by examination in addition to following a compulsory, specified teacher training programme.

Four of the organisations were in the first category:- the ISTD; IDTA; BATD and UKA. Each of these organisations offered a wide range of dance subjects for serious and social dancers as well as teaching qualifications in most subjects. Candidates for teaching examinations could apply to take their examination once they had completed their preparations and in some cases, had the required practical teaching experience stipulated. The IDTA recommended that a graduate examination in the appropriate branch was held before taking a teaching examination. The ISTD required that candidates have achieved a certain level prior to being eligible to enter for a teaching examination. In contrast, the other two societies in the first category did not stipulate or require a particular level of practical achievement prior to taking a professional examination.

The second category contained the remaining two societies. The RAD and BTA both required teaching candidates to complete teacher training programmes of somewhere between one and three years dependent on the course and in the case of the RAD previous experience as a professional dancer. Before candidates could be accepted onto these courses they would be required to either have successfully gained a certain level of dance examinations or pass an eligibility examination. They would also be expected to have some prior teaching experience.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that the RAD specialises in the training of classical ballet and does not offer qualifications in other dance subjects.

From the syllabus data it was deduced that those in category 2 appeared to have more in depth requirements than those in category 1 although it is acknowledged that the data did not include any information about the training programmes of individual teacher trainers in category 1. This training could possibly be very comprehensive and cover more than the minimum required for examination or indeed it might offer the absolute minimum in order to pass the professional examination.

There were some consistencies between all the societies as the following extracts (Botham 1997 pp 54-56) demonstrates:-

... consistency between all of the participating organisations where the main concern for all levels of the teaching examinations appears to lie in the knowledge of the technical areas of dance and teaching methodology, appears, from the data, to focus on the practical side, for example, knowledge of steps and movements, fault correction, correct body placement and so on.....

.... As the theories being verbally assessed focus on the correction of faults rather than developing a critical approach to teaching skills, they agree with Geeves' (1993) criticism of current teaching methodology as concentrating on 'what' is in the syllabus instead of concentrating on 'how' to teach what is in the syllabus....

It was further noted that all of the organisations expected some knowledge of anatomy and physiology and that this topic was in some way viewed as the health input thereby raising questions about what the societies perceive to be health in relation to the teaching of dance.

So the problem solving approaches to dance teaching at that time focused on the teacher's ability to identify and correct faults and such approaches disregard the emotional welfare and the impact of negative assessment. Furthermore, they do not encourage the positive aspects of dance teaching such as encouraging a healthy self-esteem, autonomy and respect for others. All of which are consistent with the sorts of ethical teaching practices referred to in the theory of health education for dance teachers identified in this study (Botham 1997 p 57)

One of the recommendations of this previous research (Botham 1997 p 72) was:

- Encouragement be given to the educators of student dance teachers by examining bodies and dance organisations to promote the benefits of a cognitive approach to the training of dance teachers in addition to practical approaches.

Therefore it is understandable that there was a real sense of excitement when the new teaching syllabi that began to emerge in 2004 offering all of this and more as the following section will demonstrate.

### **2.4.2 New style syllabi**

Human beings ask questions. Traditionally this aspect of human nature has not been encouraged or even tolerated by the teachers of dance. Do dance teachers demand unquestioning obedience from their students in order to retain their mystery, similar to secret societies where the initiated hold all the power?...

... The aim is for student-centred learning, taking forward useful traditional teaching methods, embracing new knowledge and enabling students to reach their full potential.

(Geeves 2000 p 18)

One of the biggest changes for societies like the BBO and ISTD was that the introduction of the new teaching syllabi changed the fundamental way that teachers were trained for their qualifications. As mentioned above, instead of individual members of these societies training student teachers and teachers for professional examinations, the new syllabi required the society itself, to become the trainer of teachers. In other words, these societies would become training organisations as well as being examining bodies. As a result, all teacher training by individual members of these societies would stop in favour of teacher training delivered directly by the society. This would have a considerable impact on those members whose training business was taken away by their own examining body. Exactly to what extent this loss of business has affected these teacher trainers is not clear. We should also bear in mind that a few of these new qualifications, in some of the societies, can be studied in various centres around the UK and others for example, the BBO, offer training at its headquarters in London

(there was talk of offering the teaching qualification courses regionally in addition to the London courses but this does not appear to have materialised as yet). Therefore, when individual teachers trained others for teaching qualifications, the trainee could choose to go to a trainer locally (if available) or to travel to a specific trainer further away. Under the new system, the choice would be to attend an approved centre or to travel to London perhaps a dozen or more times for the necessary training sessions.

When reading the following sections, we need to bear in mind that the philosophy of these new teaching syllabi is about a model that promotes holistic or ethical dance teaching practices and training, as well as development of person-centred approaches to the learning and teaching of dance (Botham 2000a, 2001a, 2004a)

From the start, it seems that some problems could have been avoided. For example, the naming of the qualifications syllabi did not happen quite in the way intended. This resulted in the first societies giving their qualifications different names, causing a degree of confusion for anyone seeking information about qualifications available. Yet one aim of these new qualifications was to move towards some degree of consistency that would enable the outside world to better understand dance teaching qualifications. However, by giving qualifications different names, it seems reasonable to deduce that this aim has not been achieved and the outside world (as well as many in the dance profession) are still confused as to what qualifications in the private dance teaching sector mean. The new BBO qualifications, for example, are called:

*Certificate in Introduction to Dance Teaching*

*Diploma in Dance Teaching*

In contrast the same two levels of qualification offered by the ISTD are called:-

*Foundation in Dance Instruction*

*Certificate in Dance Education*



Similarly to the BBO, the BTDA also offers Certificate and Diploma levels. The potential confusion arises from the higher qualification being called a Diploma by BBO and BTDA but called a Certificate by ISTD. That said, agreement was reached concerning the general content to be included in each of the units that make up the individual qualifications. This means in essence that although the names of the qualifications might be different the number of units and content that make up the qualifications, should be very similar. For example, in the BBO Diploma the units are:

- Unit 1 Planning techniques in dance teaching
- Unit 2 Dance teaching and learning
- Unit 3 Assessment in dance
- Unit 4 Promotion of health and safety in dance (now changed to Promotion of safe dance practice)
- Unit 5 Child development and dance learning
- Unit 6 Dance practice within a chosen genre
- Unit 7 Relationship between music and dance
- Unit 8 Background to a chosen dance genre

And a further unit has been added:

- Unit 9 Reflective practice

The ISTD syllabus for its equivalent level of qualification fundamentally covers similar content with one or two key differences. For instance, it has a 'lifespan development' unit instead of 'child development' unit. This reflects the fact that the ISTD covers a wider range of teacher qualifications including subjects where the teaching can be aimed at adults learning to dance such as ballroom. Whilst BBO teachers might teach adults, much of their teacher training is aimed at teaching children and adolescents. The ISTD syllabus available online does not include the separate 'reflective practice' unit that the BBO has added to its Diploma units.

A key purpose of these new syllabi was to offer a broader learning and teaching experience for student teachers, one that encourages

understanding and facilitates the ability to relate learning to generic teaching or dance teaching practice rather than restricting knowledge to syllabus content of one dance genre. An aim of this new model was to prepare and develop teachers with an ability to teach dance safely, to all ages and levels of experience and to practice within the law. Some example extracts from the Diploma syllabus indicate taught units promoting ethical teaching practice:

Some of the indicative content from Unit 1: Planning Techniques in Dance Teaching

- I Learning needs – learners age, gender, and level of achievement and ability
- VI Learner centred approaches which demonstrate familiarity with age, gender, ability and existing achievement level
- VII Teaching from – command to discovery – and learning styles – audio, visual, kinaesthetic, group, individual

Further indicative content from unit 2 includes:

- I Methods which promote learner's participation, confidence, creativity and enthusiasm in both group and individual situations
- VI ...Motivation of learners through teacher's enthusiasm and support, positive verbal and non-verbal communication, use of praise, pace of lesson, and ability to show respect for candidates
- X Professional behaviour – as specified in the CDET Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers of Dance

From these few examples of indicative content from two units we can see that, on paper, these units appear to be promoting ethical practice. The learner-centred approaches and the mention of teaching styles might reassure anyone reading the syllabus that such content is included in the syllabus for a teaching course. The problem lies in whether, for example, the teaching styles are addressed as promised, and if they are, is the course delivered in a way that reflects such styles - teaching styles in reference to generic teaching and learning. For example, if you ask me to teach X, then you get my version of the X class. How would somebody else design the

class? If one is not thinking about such matters, one will not see that there could be any alternatives. But if the purpose of the class relates to generic teaching, it is precisely such ranges that one shall be thinking about. This might, for example, be a Mosston style C and you would be thinking about how to deliver the content, using for example, *Reciprocal Style* or *Command Style* and so on. Could you get by without 'no' *Command Style* at all? It is unlikely as there is some element of this style in most teaching (McFee 2004a pp 158-162) and, as discussed below, when it comes to dance, a *Command Style* is the one that is often mentioned in relation to dance teaching.

### **2.4.3 New Syllabi and teaching styles**

Teaching dance is so much more now than simply knowing the technique or syllabus as the course documentation demonstrates. Teachers need to be able to understand not just the 'what' of the syllabus but the 'how' and the 'why' too. Dance training should no longer be based on technique and repetition alone. There are a whole host of topics that are now viewed as being part of dance teaching and training that were never part of it before, as mentioned in Chapter One. But understanding better how we actually teach, how we help the student to achieve goals, through recognising the style of our teaching, will help us to be more aware of the 'how' part of teaching rather than focusing so much on the 'what'. This is where we can learn from the generic teaching styles such as the spectrum of styles developed by Mosston (Gallahue and Cleland Donnelly 2003 p 232) that are included in the indicative content for the course. Let us consider the style that is recognised as the typical teaching style for teaching movement skills: the *Command Style*. As the name suggests, this style is about teacher-directed instruction that does not require the student to be cognitively involved other than to memorise the steps or movements being taught. Reading this, one might, mistakenly, label the historical style of dance teaching, 'teaching by terror' as the *Command Style*. But this would be a mistake since, when Kassing & Jay (1998 pp 15-17, 2003 pp 59-63) consider Mosston's teaching styles for

teaching dance and they put forward the following as a description for the *Command Style*:

The command style is traditionally used in dance instruction. The teacher plans the class, demonstrates the exercises, and corrects the dancers' execution. The teacher makes all of the decisions about subject matter, etiquette, discipline and motivation.

One could argue that much of this is in line with the historical dance teaching discussed earlier. But is it? The description says nothing about the teacher treating the students in ways that might be described as being unethical. It says nothing, for example, about the sorts of ritual humiliation mentioned in the interview data and autoethnography, earlier. Therefore this suggests that there must be something else, something outside of the basic *Command Style*.

In 'Teaching Beginning Ballet Technique', Kassing & Jay (1998 pp 14-15) present Mosston's teaching styles on a continuum with *Command Style* at the far left as the most teacher-centred style and listing other styles on the continuum as it moves from left to right as, *Practice, Reciprocal, Self-check, Inclusion* until it reaches the most student-centred style mentioned, on the far left, *Guided Discovery*. If we accept the outline of the *Command Style* above, then we must also accept that, whilst consisting of teacher-directed learning, it does not appear to contain the typical behaviours consistent with 'teaching by terror' mentioned earlier. Therefore it is reasonable to think that the behaviours that belong with the 'teaching by terror' methods are not consistent with the *Command Style*. If this is the most teacher-directed style in the taxonomy where does that leave the methods we are concerned about, the 'teaching by terror' and 'big stick' type methods? Perhaps these methods are so far left of the *Command Style* on the continuum that we simply would not find them at all – they are simply off the scale. Or perhaps they are excluded as being unethical, and therefore inappropriate. This makes sense if we consider that the styles of teaching Mosston identified and Kassing and Jay are looking at are all styles of teaching that can be described as being ethical - each of the different styles are acceptable styles of teaching – they each have defined objectives and implications that are associated with each

style. Gallahue and Cleland Donnelly (2003 p 230) offer the following definition of what a teaching style is:

A teaching style is a specific set of decisions made by the teacher to achieve the learning objectives of the lesson; these decisions result in identifiable behaviours on the part of both the teacher and the learner.

They further explain (Gallahue and Cleland Donnelly 2003, p 231):

No one style of teaching in the spectrum is best; each style is best for the objectives it can achieve.

The key issue here is that all of these teaching styles are relevant and all can be used within teaching dependent on the aims and objectives of the session. An example from my own teacher training and development practice might be where, for a teacher development session, the group or class is organised into smaller groups or pairs where one acts as the teacher and the other or others act as the learners - I sometimes refer to this as a 'micro-teaching' task. Based on the teaching styles being discussed, this would probably come under the *Reciprocal Style* although it lacks some features of the *pure* style as Mosston describes it. Another time I might decide that the focus of the task needs to be more student-centred and therefore it would be more appropriate to adopt a 'Self-Check Style of teaching where the student is challenged to take more responsibility for his/her learning. The point here is that, with knowledge and understanding of what these different teaching styles offer, one can make informed teaching decisions rather than perhaps leaving it to chance (Schmid 2003 p 66). Making use of the teaching styles encourages a shift from a content-driven, blinkered teaching approach of, say, a dance syllabus, where the outcome is thought to be achieved so long as one adheres to the syllabus to one that considers the various teaching styles available in order to make decisions about 'how' best to approach, plan and deliver the teaching of the session (McFee 2004b pp 158-162). This sort of approach fits in well with the new style of dance teaching qualifications as it encourages an analytical approach to the teaching where a teacher might use a combination of different teaching styles in any one session to satisfy the needs of the individual learners. And, in considering the best approach for the individual learners in this way, the teaching is becoming more person-

centred. Teaching styles are not the only way in which teaching can be analysed – teaching styles are used here as one appropriate example that is congruent with the teaching of dance: a concept that could benefit both the teacher and the learner. However, in order for the ‘teaching styles’ ideas to benefit us, they must be incorporated into teaching at all levels and not just as an exemplary form of teaching to be held up for all to see but, as with so many other things, not embodied into practice.

Suppose someone urges ‘that’s the way it is done’ perhaps, with understanding more about teaching styles, it could be or could have been, done differently. It is not that trainers of dance teachers typical of the ones we have considered do none of it - they do some of it and they could do more of it. They know enough as adult student teachers to be able to correct each other without damaging the other person.

People recognised that some aspects of the present programme were heading in a person-centred direction and other aspects were not. And if teaching styles were much more part of it all, then the teaching students might understand more about the type of teacher they are:

You know. And then there’re are so many different specialities of teaching, ie, teaching children, teaching adults, teaching teenagers. Teaching specifically grade classes, teaching free classes, doing full-time training. All those issues we didn’t talk about them at all, none of it.

So what kind of ballet teacher am I? I still don’t know (laughter).

Isla interview (2005)

When we look at the indicative content mentioned above, we see that even professional behaviour is drawn attention to, indicating that it should follow the CDET Code. And of course, from personal experience as a tutor on the course, the researcher discovered that teachers were not familiar with what the Code contained and therefore were not in a position to follow it specifically or even know if they were acting in accordance with it at all. Codes, however, are clearly put forward in the documentation as a means to guide professional behaviour. This will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Alongside a change in the syllabi content for some societies is a completely different approach to the examined or assessed parts of the qualifications. Previously, assessing the qualification consisted of one practical examination with the focus mainly on syllabus knowledge rather than in depth understanding of how to teach the work. In contrast, the new system follows a more academic route with individual units being assessed in a variety of ways such as marked essays, practical teaching practice, reflective logs and maintaining a portfolio (that contributes to the overall qualification) covering all topics within the qualification being studied.

This relates to what we discussed previously about there being some intention to change. As we will learn later from Isla's interview data the course was supposed to bring teaching into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century but in her opinion, this was not what happened. Here we have the claims from the written materials and there are two or three sets of problems with the written materials. There is a kind of conceptual flaw in their thinking that forms the basis of the discussion in the next chapter. The written material does not effect the reality of, for example, past experiences and the new experiences: are not encouraged the teachers-in-training to break away from their past due to the way the courses are being taught. For the traditional authoritarian models still dominate in too many cases.

It is common sense to move towards a more person-centred way of working as this is the law and is recognised in society generally. Therefore why is ethical treatment in dance teaching not more visible or apparent? Before addressing that question, we need to address a couple of others. For example, is it the fact that the claims are made by the dance societies themselves? We have seen these through their syllabi: the answer is 'yes'. But a method of dance teaching that prevents ethical practice is present in too much current practice. The importance of dance cannot be so great as to make unethical behaviour acceptable as one might grant if one thought both that dance was hugely important and that dancers could be trained in some other way. So given there are alternatives, why are they not more widely

adopted? So, how is it that dance teaching is unethical and how can it be made more ethical?

Clearly the person-centredness of ethical treatment is important – we have a limited ethical view of animals and children but dancers have not got the same law as animals and children. It is not as if dancers have signed away their rights to be treated ethically. In this instance, though, it is not the children we are interested in (although how dance teachers are treated and behave will no doubt affect how they in turn treat children they teach). It is adults we are interested in – adults training to be teachers. If the societies wanted ethical treatment as they claim to then why has this not come about? There is not just one reason - it is not just the teaching method but the concept it is delivered with.

It is not all doom and gloom though. If the written syllabus of say, the Diploma from when the researcher was involved in teaching two of the units, when they first began, is compared with the latest (summary) syllabus downloaded from the member section of the new BBO website then the wording of the learning and teaching unit is different. The unit description of the latest version has been expanded to emphasise in some detail the generic learning and teaching knowledge, skills and understanding. In contrast, the previous syllabus simply stated:

## UNIT 2 DANCE TEACHING AND LEARNING

### Unit description

This unit is about selecting, using and evaluating a range of dance teaching methods and activities appropriate for different individuals and groups. It also pays attention to professional behaviour.

The updated wording of the latest syllabus:

UNIT 2. DANCE TEACHING AND LEARNING - This unit is about selecting, using and evaluating a range of dance teaching methods and activities appropriate for different individuals and groups. It examines theories of learning and their practical application to dance teaching. You will explore teaching strategies and techniques appropriate to dance learning and develop a deep understanding of the technique and artistic implications of the genre studied. You will cover communication skills and how to motivate young learners and how to meet individual needs effectively. This Unit requires you to be



teaching on a regular basis in order to put the learning into practice. Your assessments for this unit will be in your workplace where you should be teaching a range of learners. You will receive a pre-assessment visit to your location for feedback and advice and have one externally assessed teaching session observed by an independent assessor. Following this you will have the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the teaching process in a discussion with your assessor and through a written evaluation on the effectiveness of your teaching session.

The syllabus for this unit originally said that it was about selecting and using dance teaching methods. This was confusing in certain ways as, for example, it appeared to only value the practical aspects. Now there is evidence of a change of tone in the writing of the syllabus at least with the new syllabus valuing the written material and the generic approach to teaching and learning, although there is only the documentation as evidence. One would hope that the documentation is a true reflection on what is happening on the courses. But at least in the recent past this was not so. If we consider the interview data, then we know that previously the documentation and the reality were not the same. There is a worry about 'lip service' – updating the written materials to be seen to be making changes rather than necessarily making the changes per se. But even 'lip service' can be viewed as being a little better than nothing at all. It is a start at least, and now we need to think about how to increase this understanding to ensure that little by little the move towards the person-centred methods happens.

Codes of conduct might seem to offer one way forward: if the problem (as diagnosed in this chapter) included the thought of the dance teaching profession as unregulated, codes of conduct might seem to offer a route to regulation. That will be a topic for Chapter Six. But the persistence of the 'teaching by terror' methods suggest that this route may be unpromising. For, as we will see, changing one's practices in teaching are required if that authoritarian style is to be set aside. That requires both that the use of this style of teaching be recognised and that it be regarded as unsuitable (because unethical). Yet why would the style persist if its unsuitability were recognised? So either the teachers do not acknowledge that this is the basis of their typical practice or they do not regard it as unsuitable (or both). But

then, for whichever of these reasons, they are unlikely to modify their practice. Some of the unsuitable behaviours identified earlier are in a similar position. Of course, there is a recognition now that pointe work can begin too early. But the unsuitability of some of the touching (at least in a context without genuine consent) must also be acknowledged before there will be pressure to discontinue it (Collen 2002, Green 2004, Marshall 2009, Rist and Siddall 2001, Warburton 2004). And that is not a finding here.

Roughly, merely telling a person to stop (as a code might tell him/her) alone will not achieve what is needed, as the code can be ignored (Brackenridge 2001). Equally, there will be no progress until there is improvement here. And, of course, not having such a code will not be helpful! So we must look in more detail at the potential for codes to provide regulation of the private sector dance teaching profession (in Chapter Six). For seeing what is beyond the scope of such codes may suggest more positive ways forward.

## ***2.5 Some recommendations from previous work (Botham 1997)***

In our journey to this point we have explored the history of dance teaching in the private sector from its inception over 100 years ago when a number of dance teaching societies were formed. Then we followed the work of Espy in codifying the classical ballet technique and his commitment to improving teaching standards. We have also been made aware of the sort of content and understanding expected in dance teaching qualifications until recent times. Now we must begin to explore the major changes to these teaching qualifications that some of the private dance teaching societies embarked on.

One way to introduce those changes, and to relate them more directly to the project here (concerning the issues for dance teaching within the private sector), involves showing the connection of the interest in ethics to that of the training of dance teachers. The argument for ethical dance teaching practices is made consistently throughout this work. But how did we

get to this point? And why is there such passion for leaving behind the damaging body-centred practices of the past for ethical, person-centred practices today? It will be useful to review the current situation in the light of the recommendations from that earlier work.

This investigation has developed from the 'theory of health education for dance teachers' which originated from an exploration of theories of health, psychology and ethics together with models of health education (Botham 1997 p 3). Comparison of the traditional, biomedical or body-centred approach to dance teaching and the holistic or person-centred approach demonstrates the need for dance professionals to facilitate the flourishing of each individual dancer by valuing the dancers for what they are as well as what they can do (Botham 1997, Botham 2000b). The term 'dance teaching ethics' may well have emerged originally from this research. This study gave the following four recommendations for the future:-

- Further research is needed in order to generate greater understanding in this under-researched area.
- Encouragement be given to the educators of student dance teachers by examining bodies and dance organisations to promote the benefits of a cognitive approach to the training of dance teachers in addition to practical approaches.
- Priority be given by the relevant dance personnel to further explore the psychological and ethical issues raised in this paper and in particular, the person-centred or holistic approach to dance teaching.
- Consideration be given by dance examining bodies, teachers and organisations to the creation of an independent 'Certificate of Health Education for Dance Teachers' in collaboration with an academic body. Such a qualification could perhaps, be open to all eligible teachers and student teachers and therefore each examining body would not require a separate syllabus. Consideration be given to the possible National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) status of such a certificate.

Since these recommendations were made in 1997, progress has been made. For example, undertaking this investigation has achieved the first recommendation – to do further research in this area. But one must wait to see whether this intervention will lead to lasting change.

The second recommendation has also been achieved to some degree, through dance organisations such as BBO<sup>18</sup> having gone through enormous changes in recent years to introduce the new dance teaching qualifications that include academic, as well as practical elements. Attention must be given to the question of whether the changes made so far do indeed meet the challenge. (We will note aspects where they do not.) But much of the discussion that follows concerns the possibility of meeting these challenges with the resources at the disposal of, say, BBO, together with the attitudes of some of their current personal.

In the main, teaching qualifications in the private dance teaching sector have remained the same until fairly recently when some major changes occurred in certain societies. These changes have been driven by the wish of these societies to have their teaching qualifications recognised by the public sector<sup>19</sup>. Some private dance teachers (according to some of the dance societies) wanted to be able to teach in primary or secondary schools without the need to take further qualifications. This led to a lengthy process where organisations such as BBO, ISTD and RAD in conjunction with the Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET) completely changed their teacher training and qualifications. Such major changes have seen the long standing teaching examination syllabi thrown out in favour of modular-type teacher training courses covering a much broader range of topics such as child development in dance teaching, safe dance practice and how people learn, to mention but a few. A monumental change in this new system is the delivery of the teacher training in these societies. Previously, any qualified teacher could train and prepare student teachers for one or more of the professional teaching examinations in the

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<sup>18</sup> BBO is discussed in some detail in 2.3.

<sup>19</sup> See discussion in Chapter Six about what it means to be a professional.

society or societies in which he/she was qualified. Indeed this was for some, a regular part of their job (and income) in the dance teaching profession. However, the new teaching qualifications system has taken away the individual private teacher training system and replaced it with central training carried out by or under the direction and supervision of the central organisation. The BBO, for example, now runs the teacher training courses from the headquarters in London. Courses are run on a part-time basis, usually at weekends, over a period of one or more years depending on the qualification being taken. In contrast, other organisations have a number of approved centres around the country that offer training in the various modules that make up the qualifications. Support in the form of personal tutoring is also part of the new system and the personal tutors are usually drawn from those teaching on the courses or, in some organisations, from a list of personal tutors that they retain. It is not clear how much, if any, proper guidance is given to personal tutors as to their function and role. Neither is it clear as to the qualifications and experience required by those employed as personal tutors. For example, where personal tutors are teachers who have only experienced the old way of doing things then it seems reasonable to ask how well they might adjust to offering support of a completely different nature to teaching students of today. It is not clear how overnight a teacher who has come up through a model of fault correction and overly authoritarian methods and approaches might offer support concerning a much more person-centred approach to teaching. Indeed data presented later in Chapter Five will demonstrate that it does not necessarily work to have the same people that delivered training in the old method to deliver training that is supposed to value new ways of doing things. In effect, although the syllabus content might demonstrate new approaches insofar as including topics that are concerned with the health, safety and welfare of student dancers and the impact of how they are taught, in reality it is just the same old system as before in disguise unless those training the teachers change how they do things. In fact, it can be said that delivering those parts of the new system (often the teaching and learning units) by old methods is worse than

before because no one was trying back then to pretend that the teaching was anything other than it was. If the new system is not delivering the training using ethical methods then it is not delivering what it is supposed to be delivering. It is not acceptable to say (as one faculty member did) that in order to access the expertise of these teachers, the student teachers just have to put up with the way they do things even if that means putting up with 'teaching by terror' (as outlined in Chapter One: and see below) - the very thing from which we are trying to distance ourselves; or so will be argued. The point, then, has been to identify – in the history of private-sector dance teaching – a traditional concern with technique which became (or always was) a focus on the method of fault correction. That in turn lent itself to authoritarian teaching styles. And while we need to improve teaching in this respect it was the clarification of recent changes in this sector we have questioned whether that is the effect of those changes. In this way, we have posed a set of questions or issues to be addressed in the empirical phase of the investigation.

In part, then, this enquiry might be seen as involving a contribution to the third recommendation; as is other work the researcher has been involved with in the intervening period and interest into ethical and psychological issues in dance; for example, developing and carrying out the online Professional Dancers Ethics and Safety Survey as part of a multi-disciplinary, international research team - findings are being written up for possible publication in an American journal. But also, importantly, through the growing amount of research and publications that have emerged over the past 10-12 years. Julia Buckroyd's (2000) book, *The Student Dancer*, has become a 'must have' for dance teachers and others involved in looking after young dancers. As she comments:

We cannot comfort ourselves either with the idea, put to me by a good number of dance professionals, that destructive teaching is a thing of the past. I only have to raise the subject with dancers and trainees to be given examples of teacher interventions that are alarmingly insensitive.

(Buckroyd 2000 p 74)

Further:

When I have discussed these issues of positive feedback, support for students, recognition of achievement, and so on, with dance teachers they have sometimes said to me that my ideas are totally unrealistic for dance training.

(Buckroyd 2000 pp 74-75)

The final recommendation has not (yet) been achieved although the recommended concept of having one syllabus suitable for use by everyone taking the qualification, no matter which dance society they are affiliated to, has been realised in a recent, new qualification 'Certificate in Safe and Effective Dance Practice' from a partnership between Trinity College London and IADMS (International Association for Dance Medicine and Science). As a move away from the traditional practice of each organisation having a separate syllabus from the other dance organisations, this qualification is welcome in the pursuit of safe dance practice. However, it seems a missed opportunity to integrate the understanding of the psychological aspects of dance teaching with the physical. Raising concerns with some involved with the development of the qualification and its content in turn raised other concerns. And anecdotal evidence suggests that no clear rationale exists for this omission. For example, apparently the missing psychological input was, so the researcher was told, simply explained by not having access to this area of expertise. This seems surprising given the activities of eminent people recognised for their contribution to the emotional welfare of dancers and dance students such as Linda Hamilton, Julia Buckroyd and Bonnie Robson. Others argue that the psychological aspects, although not specifically mentioned in the syllabus, are in effect present: that candidates can address psychological issues within their essays or incorporate them into their practice<sup>20</sup>. With this in mind, one should be aware that there are no formal prerequisites or qualifications in order to take the Certificate in Safe and Effective Dance Practice. The syllabus (p 6) does however state that

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<sup>20</sup> Since writing this, the Certificate has been reviewed and a basic psychology element is included in the updated syllabus.

most candidates will have professional dance training or experience as a dance teacher, dancer and so on (Trinity College London and IADMS 2009).

The Certificate in Safe and Effective Dance Practice is unique in its specificity. Candidates registering for the qualification will be assessed regarding their knowledge of the key principles underlying healthy dance practice, including basic applied anatomy and physiology, nutrition, and injury management and, in achieving the qualification, candidates will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of safe and effective dance practice to employers, parents, and participants. Dancers at all levels will have confidence that the person teaching, rehearsing or coaching them is qualified and has demonstrated mastery of the knowledge required to work safely and effectively with professional dancers, dancers in training, children, and dancers in the community.

(Trinity College London 2009-2012, IADMS 2009-2012)

The progress relating to the recommendations is welcome; it demonstrates that things are changing in the world of private sector dance teaching. Some changes have taken place then. But, as will be demonstrated through this enquiry, the journey towards ethical dance teaching practices is still very much at the first steps stage with much learning and development still waiting in the wings to be discovered, embodied and put into practice. Although we are led to believe that new teaching qualifications in this sector promote ethical teaching practices, this investigation will demonstrate that in fact we are still a long way from the person-centred approaches that we aspire to.

We are much more aware today of the unsatisfactory methods used to teach dance than, say, 10 years ago. Still, as mentioned earlier, the damaging methods of the past might not have been documented in the way and to the extent that sport has gathered evidence and presented it publicly. The problem is that although the damaging character of the negative ways of teaching from the past are acknowledged by many, it will be argued that we are not doing enough to truly eradicate them. On the surface, it might appear that the overly authoritarian dance teacher is no longer acceptable - certainly the new-style teaching qualifications are promoted with a holistic, ethical and person-centred philosophy. However, as we will see, the reality is that at



least some of the training, in these new qualifications is being done by 'old-style' teachers who still employ draconian methods of the past.

It is difficult to see how these new-style courses will succeed if they bring people who teach using methods of the past. For instance, do we know whether or not these teachers believe in say, the person-centred approach to learning which aims at facilitating the flourishing of each individual? Do we know why these people have been chosen to teach on these courses? From conversations with teachers from different societies, it seems that those brought in to teach the 'new' topics such as safe dance practice and child or lifespan development will indeed typically aim to promote positive reinforcement and person-centred learning. They discuss the learning with the students, asking how it can fit into the overall teaching methods and approaches. In comparison, when talking about the practical dance teaching elements of these courses, it is clear that nothing has really changed. As we will see, there are still teachers ruling the dance studio with a rod of iron (literally!), strutting up and down, instilling fear into, not children, but grown adults who, in many cases, are experienced teachers taking additional qualifications. If (as it seems) that this is the case, how can the claim to be promoting better teaching methods, and therefore improving standards of teaching in the long term be sustained? Paying lip service to improving standards in this way is not helpful to anyone, least of all for the teachers who are led to believe that these courses are promoting one way of doing things when in reality (as we will show) they are just doing what has been done in the past. From the data<sup>21</sup> there is confusion between the different lecturers. Some are genuinely promoting encouragement, facilitation and positive methods, while others are simply sticking to what they know best, the old ways that they were taught by and continue to perpetuate.

When we consider the history of the development of qualifications in the private sector, it becomes clear that content and delivery are often muddled. For a lot of changes that have taken place are to do with content. This point was partly elaborated in 2.4 above, considering both old and new syllabi.

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<sup>21</sup> This issue is discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

New qualifications have moved away from the focus on knowledge of syllabus content. These qualifications now include separate units on child development, promotion of health and safety in dance, and so on: in other words, more content. And, although this content is vital for teachers to understand, the value of the content is reduced if the delivery takes the form of poor practice. There needs to be a greater focus on the 'how' of teaching, rather than the 'what'. Indeed the rationale for the changes was explained in terms of greater attention to the teaching as such, rather than to its content. Greater understanding generally is required of the impact of teaching on the learner. Where this understanding is missing teachers may continue to teach by terror. Chapter Five considers the views of those who were trained by such methods, and of some who were aiming to improve their dance teaching methods for the private sector. But introducing these data requires an elaboration of our methodology, as well as detailed considerations of the context of such dancers (researcher included). And that must wait until the next chapter.

## ***2.6 Highlighting some of the concepts arising from this background***

### **2.6.1 Issues being considered**

What concepts or issues arise from this examination of the contrasting histories of public-sector and private-sector dance preparation? In addition to the central ones, concerning regulation, other concepts have arisen. Therefore, beginning with some personal reflection<sup>22</sup> on traditional dance teaching practices, this section highlights some of the issues relating to the learning and teaching of dance through overly authoritarian methods and introduces the concept of being ruled by big sticks in the dance studio environment. In that way, it clarifies what is meant by authoritarian methods, highlighting that they were unethical. This in turn raises questions about how

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<sup>22</sup> These autoethnographical issues are dealt with in more detail in Chapter Five.

discipline should be maintained, leading to an exploration of surveillance and docile bodies in the dance setting drawing on the work of Michel Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish* (1979) especially as understood in contemporary writings on dance. Current dance teaching practices are explained as still being burdened with the ways of the past, for some at least, although in some areas such as beginning pointe work at an appropriate age, progress has been made. Dance pedagogy, or lack of it, is explored in comparison with the traditional methods favouring content rather than pedagogical knowledge.

### **2.6.2 Traditional dance teaching practice – ruled by big sticks**

As noted in Chapter One, a phrase used to describe dance teacher behaviour ‘teaching by terror’ (Geeves 1993 p 8) captured my imagination, transporting me back to my own memories both of learning to dance and of learning to teach: and, in particular, the deep seated fear of not getting it right in case I was accused of not trying. I still remember the deep feelings of injustice when I was accused of not trying – somehow not getting it right meant I was not trying. No doubt there were times I did not try as hard as I could but generally I did try, I tried very hard. And all too often, it just wasn’t enough. So, yes, I can identify very well with the concept of ‘teaching by terror’ as it applies in this case. I also realise looking back that at least some of the accusations of not trying were not really levelled at my level of effort but rather they were criticisms of my anatomical shortfalls such as a neck that was too short (and not surprisingly, still is) and, toes that were too long with feet that did not possess the naturally high, overly flexible arches that were so often prized for classical ballet. I always knew that the fear was not right, but what could I do? Lots of teachers at that time promoted fear in the dance studio and I remember that some examiners too could make one rigid with fear in case one put a foot wrong. Linda Hamilton, a former dancer and now clinical psychologist, describes this type of teaching as a ‘military model’ (1998 p 5).

When I entered the profession to work as a dancer, I discovered that fear often ruled the roost there too – choreographers would shout and scream when time was short as if it was somehow our fault. Or, if a number was not quite working out, then the old favourite was barked out ‘you are not trying’ – the only difference was that it might be the whole group being accused instead of me alone.

In his paper, ‘The Difference Between Training and Taming the Dancer’, Australian dance educator Tony Geeves (1993 pp 8-9), drew attention to the harsh methods used by some dance teachers saying:-

When you teach in a University in Australia you have to change your language. You can’t use sexist language, you can’t throw chairs at people as my teacher did; you can’t abuse students any more. Teaching by terror is out – so how are we going to do it? That’s going to leave some people at a real loss! The unfortunate thing is that when I first went into teaching I thought I will never teach by terror so I went to the opposite extreme: I was so nice and I found that teachers using terror were getting the same results as me. .... What we suspect but don’t know, is the psychic damage done by the negative teaching; for example to self-esteem.

I can understand Geeve’s determination to want to teach differently as I also made a similar decision<sup>23</sup>. When I was writing this section, I happened to have conversation with another teacher who said that she had made a deliberate choice not to teach using humiliation as she remembers only too well the damage it does. It seems that dance teachers faced with this model of teaching from their own training go one of two ways - they either follow in the footsteps of their own teachers even when that promotes negative teaching or they go in the opposite direction to look for methods that are more person-centred and encouraging. This issue is highlighted below:

The teacher, however, is the one who is most commonly the bully in dance classes. I have been a witness to and have heard many accounts of examples of the insulting and humiliating of students and of temper tantrums that included shouting insults, swearing and name-calling. I have also seen teachers coerce students on to greater efforts when they were long past useful exertion.....Where it does arise, I have come to understand that usually the teacher who uses the methods of interacting that are experienced by the students as

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<sup>23</sup> This is discussed in Chapter Five.

abusive is repeating ways of teaching that she herself experienced, and at a conscious level at least thinks that she is helping students make maximum effort to use the class. That may be the reason for teachers' astonishment at the suggestion that they bully or coerce students.

Buckroyd (2000 p 79)

As shown above teachers might not realise that his/her behaviour is abusive. Clearly in order to choose a route that is more person-centred and encouraging, the teacher must be aware that something is wrong with the teaching methods - something that is not present in the two clips from the TV programmes 'Faking It'<sup>24</sup>. Indeed these clips show examples of dance teaching practice typical of a 'teaching by terror' model (rather than a person-centred one) that they might usefully be taken to define it.

'Faking It' was a TV programme aired 23 October 2002 on Channel 4, basically a reality TV show. Therefore its purpose is to provide entertainment for those who apparently find it entertaining to watch others being humiliated or treated harshly. That said, it portrays dance teaching in a very bad light, perpetuating an image of the dance teacher as someone who behaves in ways that are not consistent with good practice or ethical teaching. Furthermore it appears from the programme that the teachers do not understand the damage that they are doing. As Buckroyd (2000) demonstrates throughout her book, 'The Student Dancer', it does not make sense to treat students in this way.

In this particular episode of 'Faking It', a female kick boxer was filmed over a period of a month learning to become a Latin American dancer, something that she had never attempted before. Her goal was to be good enough to compete against experienced dancers without being identified as the one 'Faking It'. This is a highly challenging task for anyone without a dance background. As the programme revealed, the student dancer, Jo, found it difficult to walk in high-heeled dance shoes, never mind dance in them; and of course she was supposed to make her performance look effortlessly elegant too. The first two clips chosen from the programme can

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<sup>24</sup> These clips are on the attached DVD.

be found in the accompanying DVD<sup>25</sup>. Since they portray an image of the dance teacher, these clips tell us a considerable amount about the teaching methods and confirm that in this arena at least, 'teaching by terror' and use of ritual humiliation are not things of the past. Also the negative impact of this experience on the learner is very clear.

Clip one shows us Jo trying to get to grips with letting herself go so that she can use her arms without embarrassment. Clip two is the dress rehearsal; Jo and her partner receive feedback about their performance from a group of four teachers. The first thing to notice is that the teacher, Sammy, does not appear to understand, or attempt to understand, what the problem is. He tells Jo what he wants her to do and when she doesn't respond, he says "this is me being nice, I'll get really shitty after a while'. Jo's reflection on the session was very negative referring to the new teacher as 'some new freak of a ballroom dancing teacher who was a little bit scary, to be honest'. This is reinforced by the next part of the clip where the teacher says '... let her do it on her own, if she doesn't want to do it, slap her, that's the only way of dealing with it'.

The other teacher, Paul, reflecting on the session, thought that Sammy had been very nice to Jo in the beginning. He could not understand why she did not appreciate Sammy's banter, saying that she was taking it all at face value and pointing out that, when she got upset with Sammy, she told him to be a little more encouraging and a little less patronising. Instead of Paul trying to understand why Jo might feel like this, he said 'I think under the circumstances quite rightly he gave her a bollocking'. Clearly, teachers Sammy and Paul both thought that Jo was at fault for not appreciating what they called 'humour', even although it was clearly was not received by Jo as humour. This resulted in Sammy adopting a militaristic teaching style of teaching - barking out orders with hands on hips in an overly authoritarian

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<sup>25</sup> A third clip from the programme on the DVD is called 'positive approach'. It shows Jo and her dance partner at an improvisation class with a teacher from RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art) and offers a positive teaching approach in contrast with the negative approaches in the first two clips. In this clip, we see the difference in Jo's attitude and body language when she is encouraged and treated ethically.

manner. The stance, actions and voice all reinforce his power over the student.

This clip illustrates the obvious lack of understanding by the teachers as to the inappropriateness of the teaching and the use of humiliation. They fail to recognise that it is no longer unacceptable to bully people in this way. Even when the student plucks up courage to say that more encouragement is required, this is simply dismissed out of hand. There is no evidence that the methods of delivery are helpful, and yet the teachers do not consider that what needs to be done is to change the delivery of the teaching to something that facilitates the student's grasping the material being taught. It is as if the teachers are not seeing what they are observing; they are not taking on board the fact that the approach is not working. Nor are they reflecting on the reasons for this (Debenham and Lee 2005 p 137, Schön 1983 pp 300-302). Perhaps this sort of behaviour is accepted (we are purposely not saying 'acceptable') between people who have known each other for a long time, who therefore know for certain that it is not intended as bullying or humiliating: they would, for example, give as good as they got and it would be obvious that it was just banter. However using this approach with someone you do not know well and someone new to dance (as here) is clearly unacceptable. Indeed this approach is never right (as later chapters illustrate) although good numbers of teachers would argue differently. But if there is good reason to develop student-centred teaching, this example will deserve the criticism.

In the past, the dance teacher has regularly been portrayed as the stern, authoritative, individual wielding a large stick, ruling the dance studio through fear<sup>26 27</sup>. Indeed, a well-known painting *The Dance Class* (La Classe de Danse), painted around 1873-1876 by French artist, Edgar Degas, depicts a teacher with his 'big stick' in the ballet studio. Such authoritarian approaches put the dance achievement before the person, resulting for

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<sup>26</sup> More about 'big sticks' later in Chapter Five.

<sup>27</sup> A music composer friend recently mentioned (May 2010) during a conversation, that his first memory of seeing ballet being taught was in 1972 and the teacher carried a 'big stick' – clearly the stick made a strong impact.

some, in varying levels of physical and psychological damage (Buckroyd 2000). This damage has not been documented in the way, and to the extent, that sport has gathered evidence and presented it publicly. For example, the militaristic training of young, elite gymnasts like Nadia Comaneci; the abuse of pills and prevalence of eating disorders in elite gymnasts and the role that coaches played in damaging these young people for life (Ryan 1996). As Brackenridge (2001 p 12) notes, such a strict approach was not unusual in nineteenth-century England where the attitude was one of 'spare the rod and spoil the child'. Such Victorian attitudes still exist within the dance world, which seems to favour continuing of the highly disciplined studio environment ruled by teachers of great authority who instil fear into their students. This is especially true of some ex-professional dancers who experienced these methods themselves. It appears from conversation they now firmly believe that if they experienced it and (in their words) it did not do them any harm, then it is the price you have to pay to become a dancer. This is consistent here with the traditional body-centred approach to the teaching of dance where the emphasis is on body-centred techniques and physical fitness rather than with the person-centred approaches which facilitates the flourishing of each individual dancer by valuing them for what they are as well as what they can do. Body-centred approaches do not encourage dancers to take responsibility, feel empowered and able to contribute to the learning process. They result in the undermining of confidence, feelings of inadequacy and an external locus of control (Botham 2000b p 146). Furthermore fostering such negative feelings can help to feed the ego of the authoritarian teacher and his/her importance in the dance studio (Buckroyd 2000 pp 78-79).

Interview data (see Chapter Five) provides further evidence of poor teaching practice and confirms that the methods of the past are unfortunately still with us. It is saddening that the following comments refer to recent teacher training.

The biggest thing is as a teacher you need to be able to stand in front of a class not with arrogance but with, with a calm kind of confidence that you do know what you're talking about. And that you know how to



get someone safely from A to B. Well we didn't do any of that, we really did not do any of that. A lot of it was straight forward humiliation.

And, as we will see, the interviewee (Isla) was familiar with such humiliation use in dance teaching. As she continues:

So...I'm sorry to say that but that's something I really feel very strongly about. And since the course was sold to me 'into bringing teaching into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' I think there are certain elements here which have failed bitterly. But then I think they really didn't understand what it meant moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in the first place, in fairness.

(Isla, interview 2005)

Isla's dissatisfaction suggests that despite the promises – the course was (at least arguably) not delivering what was promised.

Traditionally dance teaching operated an idealised model of fault correction (Buckroyd 2000, 1990, Geeves 1993) that can be compared with the old form of health care criticised by Seedhouse (1995) where the body is the focus and not the person as a whole. In Seedhouse's (1995, pp 86-89) view this authoritarian approach to teaching is immoral because of the possible obstacles it creates to individual growth and development, and its possible disregard for nonmaleficence (do no harm) (Botham 1997, pp 17-18).

Attention was drawn to the need for dance teaching to become more person-centred and less authoritarian in a review of Buckroyd's *The Student Dancer* (2000):

The ideas and suggestions throughout the book add support to the main, evidence-based argument that current dance training is damaging to the welfare of students and that changes are needed in the approaches and teaching methods used in professional dance training. It is readily acknowledged that bringing issues such as student welfare, counselling and psychology into the arena of dance teaching practice, whilst stimulating debate and discussion, is more than a little controversial. In providing the reader with much food for thought, the text not only challenges traditional dance teaching methods to become less authoritarian, less body centred and more person centred but it also challenges the role of the dance student to take on a greater responsibility and play a more active part in their own learning and development. Encouraging such a radical change in the power structure of the dance class will no doubt meet with some

resistance; however, resistance alone is not an acceptable reason for not striving to improve how dance is taught and learned.

(Botham 2003a p 73)

Before moving on to look at current practices (2.6.4ff.), the teaching model put forward by clinical psychologist and ex-professional dancer, Linda Hamilton, can be borne in mind. Here she makes the distinction that it is the work of the dancers that is open to criticism and not the person:

Dancers need to have feedback about their work, which means being open to criticism. Teachers have the power to make this learning experience positive. The best teachers take a problem-solving approach to mistakes rather than making things personal. They also set up specific goals that don't escalate as soon as you reach them.

(Hamilton 1998 p 43)

This, then, is a powerful statement for the kind of person-centred approach we have been endorsing.

### **2.6.3 Surveillance and docile bodies**

She would give you a look. She could give a look (laughter)... I can't remember a situation when the classes were unruly ... So as children we were maybe more disciplined than what I experienced as being a teacher ...

(Cara, interview 2005)

There is no doubt that dance teaching requires discipline of the learners. But how is that best achieved? One version of the disciplining of the body has a powerful hold on the literature, and might suggest alternative conceptions of control for the dance studio. Therefore, this section explores briefly a selection of literature surrounding body surveillance and body discipline particularly in relation to dance. It draws upon the work of Michel Foucault mainly in his book *Discipline and Punish* (1979). Then explorations of authority and discipline in the dance studio from the writings of Jill Green and Clyde Smith explicitly draw on Foucault's arguments and creation of the self and the concepts of power, surveillance, discipline, docile bodies and authoritarianism applied in dance settings.

Surveillance in the Western world and especially in the UK has increased to epidemic proportions in recent years. Apparently the UK has more CCTV cameras (estimated to be over 4.5 million) watching the population than any other country in the world (Floru 2011). In addition there are increasing numbers of automatic number plate recognition cameras recording and storing millions of images of cars and those in them. Most recently, full body scanners that see virtually naked bodies underneath clothes have been installed at airports. The watchful, gaze of these CCTV cameras is aimed at changing behaviour.

Such surveillance techniques may find their origin, or anyway their rationale, in an idea, the panopticon, sketched first by Jeremy Bentham and later elaborated by Michel Foucault. Bentham theorised a prison built around a single, central guard-tower from which any of the prisoners could be observed, as a "... new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example" (Bentham [1787] 1995 p 31) which he presents as "a simple idea in architecture" (Bentham [1787] 1995 p 31) that might have many uses. He starts from its use with prisoners: but he concedes that it might be used, among other things, for "...*training the rising race* in the path of *education*" (Bentham [1787] 1995 p 34). Hence Bentham's idea is explicitly mentioned in relation to training or education. For the centre of that idea is that, as long as the prisoners (or whomever) think themselves under surveillance, they will begin to behave as though they were. Thus their behaviour can be modified, but without physical oppression of the kind that was common at the time even in schools. This building was the *panopticon*.

Foucault extended this idea, seeing at its heart a way of shaping kinds of people. Thus Foucault (1979 p 217) writes:

Our society is not one of spectacle, but of surveillance, under the surface of images, one invests bodies in depth; behind the great abstraction of exchange, there continues the meticulous, concrete training of useful forces; the circuits of communication, are the supports of an accumulation and a centralisation of knowledge; the play of signs defines the anchorages of power; it is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is carefully fabricated within it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies.

The central mechanism here is the panopticon. Thus Foucault (1979 p 201) writes that:

... the major effect of the Panopticon ... [is] to adduce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. ...the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its actions...

But notice that action here is directed at individuals rather than (say) classes; it is the individuals who are “carefully fabricated” in the process: “... one of the prime effects of power [is] that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals” (Foucault 1980 p 98).

Foucault takes such a mechanism to induce the appropriate kind of behaviour on the part of those under surveillance, as when the peasant under the eye of the sergeant acquires the stance and manner of the soldier. Then those persons can be understood (on the basis of that behaviour) as soldiers; and see themselves in that way. Hence, on the one hand, a model of that ‘appropriate kind of behaviour’ is projected, so that:

... by the end of the eighteenth century, the soldier has become something that can be made; out of formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; as calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable ...

(Foucault 1979 p 135)

The result will be “... the body that is manipulated, shaped, trained; which obeys, responds, becomes skilful and increases its forces” (Foucault 1979 p 136). This is what Foucault calls “the docile body” — “A body is docile when it may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (Foucault 1979 p 136). But, as Foucault recognised, at the heart of this conception is “... uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result ... that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement” (Foucault 1979 p 137). But, on the other hand, this may become achieved without conscious attention to the processes of docility. Just as it is enough that the soldier think he is (or may be) under supervision, the wider process may be achieved through a disciplining gaze, understood on the

model of the panopticon. Moreover, the idea of a docile body might apply when the power that enforces it is more explicit, as in Foucault's discussion of prisons. But one of its central insights is that the results may ultimately be achieved through surveillance alone, or even the fear of that surveillance. That is, it may be understood on the model of the panopticon.

Foucault also stresses the fine details by which "docile bodies" are created: "they are always meticulous, often minute techniques..." (Foucault 1979 p 138: following translation from Foucault Reader p 183). So he affirms that "Discipline is a political anatomy of detail" (Foucault 1979 p 139), and distinguishes discipline in this sense from slavery, from service or vassalage, from asceticism and similar renunciation. For discipline is "... the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself [the human body] makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely ... Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (Foucault 1979 p 138).

The general idea in Foucault would explain in part how we came to see ourselves as *kinds* of people, as those of Foucault's "infamous people" (Foucault 1994 pp 157-175) who become transformed from simply people to do terrible acts (where the act assumes the importance) to people of infamous *kinds*. In this way the range of kinds of individuals becomes expanded.

Such an idea of the transformation into the dancer may seem attractive, especially given the idea of dancers becoming "docile bodies" through their training. Thus, in her paper, "Somatic Authority and the Myth of the Ideal Body in Dance Education" (1999 p 81), dance educator Jill Green gives the following description of her vision of a typical dance class.

For example, when I envision a typical dance class, I see, a large studio space filled with mirrors. The dance teacher usually stands at the front of the studio while the students are often lined up in neat rows facing the mirror and the teacher. Students in dance classes spend much time gazing in the mirror in order to perfect the outward appearance of the body and strengthen dance technique. They commonly wear leotards and tights or variations of tightly clad clothing that allow the teacher to view the body from an outside perspective. Very often the dance teacher focuses on specific corrections,

placement of the body, proper technique, and efficient performance of dance movements.

We might see, in this description, some of the small-scale processes to which Foucault referred: there is a great deal of actual watching of one another; and the expectation of such watching, which may be facilitated by the clothing, the “leotards and tights”, and such like — although it is interesting here that, while Green’s description fits the typical dance class for the young, it would not fit the class for elite dancers, who will typically be more elaborately clothed in layers to be removed (if necessary) as the class progresses. But perhaps Foucault’s explanation here will be sound: that the elite dancers, having become “docile bodies”, will no longer require the same level of surveillance to maintain docility.

Green draws again on this text in a conference paper entitled “Foucault and the Training of Docile Bodies in Dance Education” (2002-2003), where she claims that dance training is a practice whereby student dance bodies are docile bodies of the sort that Foucault discusses in relation to standardising behaviour in institutions such as prisons. She explains that these docile bodies are created not only for the purpose of efficiency of movement but also for the behaviour that results from such a practice – a standardisation and normalisation that in dance is often referred to as the necessary discipline required for students learning to dance. Green draws comparisons between the docile bodies that dance creates and Foucault’s discourse about social control and in particular in relation to standardising bodily behaviour. She points out that shaping a body in dance education can be associated with the last two of the following four types of technologies of the self identified by Foucault (Green 2004 p 40): 1 technologies of production; 2 technologies of sign systems; 3 technologies of power; 4 technologies of the self.

According to Foucault these practices or technologies allow people to understand and transform themselves in ways that aim to achieve a desired state such as happiness, wisdom or perfection.

Technologies of production 'permit us to produce, transform or manipulate things' (Foucault 1988 p 18) and in turn they contribute to identity construction. Technologies of sign systems 'permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols or significations' (Foucault 1988 p 18). The third set of practices, technologies of power 'determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination' (Foucault 1988 p 18). Such technologies are concerned with the creation of sets of rules that regulate and control identities. In contrast with technologies of the self, explained below, technologies of power are imposed upon individuals.

Technologies of the self 'permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality'

(Foucault 1988 p 18)

Green (2004, pp. 38-42) discusses the technologies of power and of the self and how they operate in dance training. In discussing her former research (involving student dance teachers and how they perceived their bodies) she explains her surprise at how much technologies of the self play a role in dance training when her expectation was that the technologies of power would play the larger role. She writes:

But while I expected technologies of power to play a large part in dance training, I was surprised to find out how much technologies of the self played a role. What disturbed me the most was that some of the participants had on several occasions indicated they enjoyed the harshness of dance classes and what they perceived to be the strength and reward of shaping their bodies into dancers. For them the ideal dance body was a way to happiness and enjoyment of making a self.

(Green 2002-2003 pp 118-119)

Green likens the Western docile bodies in dance to Foucault's idea of the Western prison system. She recognises that the perfect body of the soldier in the early seventeenth century referred to by Foucault as a model for bodily honour (Green 2004 pp 39-40) and respected for the physical build and agility is similar to the desired physical traits revered in docile dancers.

As we saw Foucault claims that the prison system could have moved away from punishment in the form of overt torture and physical abuse in favour of a system that might appear on the surface to be more humane or more sensitive but in actual fact it is a form of hidden discipline or control achieved through surveillance, supervision, training and correction. This concept of always being watched, whether in fact it is the case or not, leads those being surveyed to behave in what Foucault (1979 p 177) described as normalised way, since one of the prime effects of the application of disciplinary power was to produce, precisely, individuality. As Foucault (1979 p 193) puts it:

... as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those upon whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualised. ... In the system of discipline, the child is more individualised than the adult, the patient more than the healthy man, the madman and the delinquent more than the normal and non-delinquent.

So, in summary, the idea is that when we are being watched, or believe that we are being watched, is enough to control us to behave in acceptable ways. And we have seen that this has similarities to the controlling gaze described by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979 p 201) where the knowledge that there is a possibility of one being under surveillance is, after time, sufficient in itself to control behaviour. Furthermore this knowledge that one might be under surveillance initiates the self-controlling behaviour that leads to what Foucault describes as docile bodies.

Clearly, some of these ideas have a resonance. Discipline of the body through surveillance is something that dance students experience each time they attend class. Green's description of the dance class (above) brings this out. The surveillance is not all about the gaze of the teacher observing the bodies of the dancing students performing the dance technique. However, we must not see more similarities between dance practice and Foucault's theories than exist. A key aspect of the discipline that dancers learn is self-discipline – the ability to self-regulate so that the discipline becomes from within rather than from an external source such as the teacher.

With the teacher's eye constantly on students, the teacher does not have to impose an outside force to motivate students to perform



according to specific standards; the students learn to discipline themselves through self-regulation and unconscious habit.

(Green 1999, p 90)

Cara's interview quote given earlier in this section is a good example of the level of discipline that is commonly found in dance classes. One look from the dance teacher can be enough to ensure that any remotely unacceptable behaviour is curbed there and then. And as Cara explained in her interview this was not viewed as the teacher disciplining the students. It was seen more as a warning for the students to control themselves – a reminder to be self-disciplined. But, of course, for Foucault this would just be one aspect of the more general disciplining of the body, since he acknowledges that the gaze here might well be the gaze of *others*, or our gaze on them, not necessarily of *authority*.

In writing about authoritarianism in the dance classroom, Clyde Smith (1998 p 128) points out that, whilst the situation is ideal for authoritarian teacher behaviour, it is also necessary to remember that the student has consented to be in that situation.

The student has already consented to being in a situation in which he or she is usually attempting to replicate as perfectly as possible the example and the demands of the teacher.

(Smith 1998 p 132)

Smith (1998 p 132) draws attention to the amount of power that the dance teacher has in the dance class and how readily this power is abused. Although he is himself anti-authoritarian, he discovered that in a teaching role he too adopted traditional methods of demonstrating, observing and getting attention in order to let the students know that he was always watching them. He put his methods down to the large size of the group of non-dancers he was teaching at that time. Nonetheless he found that, despite coming from a somatic perspective, his teaching tactics could easily have moved along the continuum from behaviour that was caring and supportive to behaviour that could be described as authoritarian and displaying 'power over'. He goes on to explain that the dance teaching situation allows for authoritarian behaviour

that can readily facilitate authoritarianism especially where the teacher is in a bad mood or the class is perceived to be behaving badly.

Smith (1998 p 132) recognises that Foucault's conception of the body being disciplined through power can be usefully employed in looking at dance settings. He discusses how Foucault (1979 p 194) writes about the positive effects of power and how it is a positive force that is productive. As Smith recognises, this idea is central to the way he conceptualises his awareness of the effectiveness of his dance teaching practices:

This argument addresses, in part, my awareness as a dance teacher that my use of power in the classroom produces dancers, for better or for worse.

(Smith 1998 p 132)

From Foucault's view of power as a force that produces, Smith (1998 p 131) points out that one does not hold power but rather one exercises power. And he further clarifies this through his use of the expression 'power over' to describe the sort of power that is exercised in situations where individuals or groups are controlled with the negative implications of authoritarianism. He reminds us how, for Foucault, it is the exercising of disciplinary power or power over that produces the docile body.

... at the centre which reigns the notion of 'docility', which joins the analysable body to the manipulable body. A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved.

(Foucault 1979 p 136)

A dance teacher may aim at the disciplined or docile body of the dancer; and Smith (1998 p 131) describes the docile bodies of dancers as 'becoming material for the dance teacher's or choreographer's vision'. The docile dancing body is not only disciplined externally, it is also disciplined internally. For the gazes of others have been institutionalised, and strongly internalised — in part, one therefore conspires in one's own disciplining, by accepting an external gaze (panopticon-like) even if no one else is there.

In this way, Smith draws attention to the combination of external and internal surveillance methods to be found in the dance studio that lends itself to the construction of docile bodies - the watchful eye of the dance teacher,

the mirror-clad walls and the self-critical students. The result of these surveillance methods in the dance studio fit in with the surveillance that Foucault reveals to be a key part of the discipline that forms and controls the docile body. According to Foucault, observation in the form of surveillance that is applied to the self is most effective – this means that a situation is created by those seeking to control others (the observers) whereby the observed constantly feel they are being observed whether or not the observers are present or not. In the dance studio the watchful eye of the dance teacher can be replaced to some extent by the critical eye of the dance student rigorously self-observing each and every movement made in the mirror.

Dancers and to some extent dance teachers are used to others watching or observing them. The body of a student dancer is critically watched by various people during the time he/she is learning to dance. The dance teacher, examiner and perhaps guest teachers are just some of the people that will watch the student dancer. Student dancers may be encouraged to observe the body of their peers in order to develop a critical eye for correct bodily alignment. Bodies of dancers are also watched by others during performances. One difficulty lies in deciding to what degree these common-sense facts are explained or clarified by reference to Foucault's ideas. Certainly we have seen how some of the theorisation here seems to address these facts. Further, if the result of the surveillance is to create the distinctive dancer's body, we can recognise that such bodies having been the subject of such scrutiny will reflect what is thought desirable both in terms of body type and flexibility and in terms of the demands of performance in the artform of dance, in one of its current incarnations (literally). So this may be idealised as the *artistic dancer's body*. Exploring this idea would take us into the danceform presently current; but this is precisely what is typically taken for granted by dance teachers, whose training might be thought to involve actively internalising such 'bodies'.

#### 2.6.4 Current dance teaching practices

Human beings ask questions. Traditionally this aspect of human nature has not been encouraged or even tolerated by the teachers of dance. Do dance teachers demand unquestioning obedience from their students in order to retain their mystery, similar to secret societies where the initiated hold all the power?...

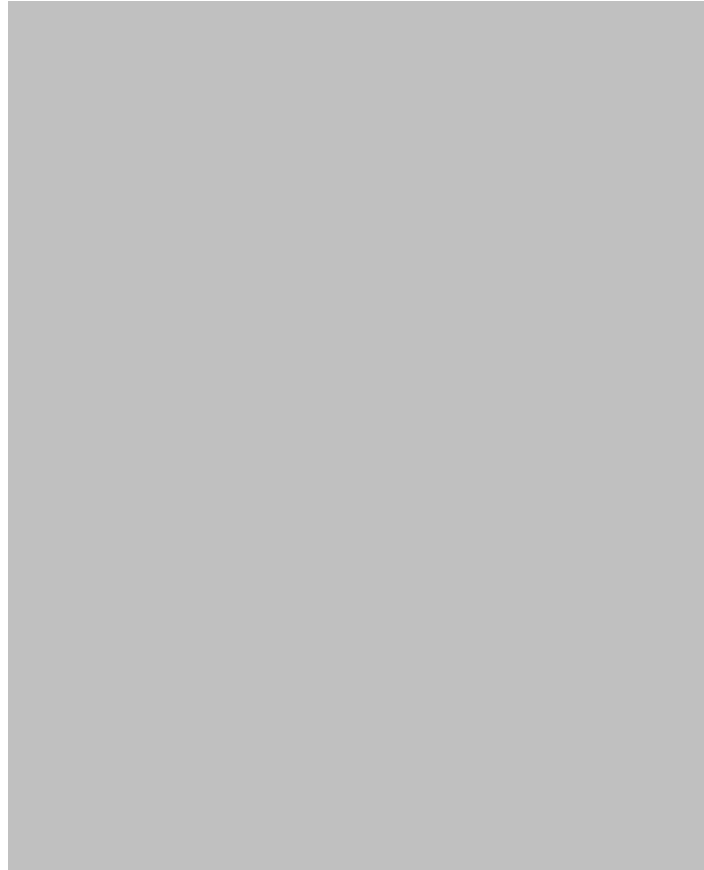
... The aim is for student-centred learning, taking forward useful traditional teaching methods, embracing new knowledge and enabling students to reach their full potential.

(Geeves 2000 p 18)

If the preceding brief history showed that authoritarian teaching had existed in private-sector dance teaching, and speculated (via the correction to fault-correction in technique) as to why, where are we at present? Unfortunately, for some at least, dance teaching in the private sector today still follows the traditional methods where an overly authoritarian approach is favoured.

It must be acknowledged that dance teaching today has made definite progress in relation to certain aspects. In particular there have been improvements in the dissemination of health concerns. Take for example, ballet students beginning pointe work, an IADMS resource paper, 'When Can I Start Pointe Work? Guidelines for Initiating Pointe Training' (Weiss et al. 2009) recommends that point work is not started before the age of 12, and then only after careful evaluation of the student's physical development, alignment and strength and flexibility of her feet. Where the student is anatomically sound, has the required core stability, is taking a minimum of two ballet classes per week, has been training for sufficient time (around four years or so) and is truly pre-professional then pointe work may commence. Of course as highlighted in that paper, not all 12 year olds are the same and a comparison is made between the truly pre-professional student and the child who has been dancing since the age of five years old at a local dancing school taking one ballet and tap class per week. So in reality the age 12 is only a very rough guide. The key is when the student is ready anatomically: and that once the training is in place, one ensures that the student is fully prepared. If these current guidelines are contrasted with when students

began pointe work in the past, we can see that a lot has changed. The photographs below are from historical copies from BBO's 'The Dancer' magazine. As can be seen, they show clearly girls as young as four years old en pointe.



This young student is four years old and already en pointe.

(The Dancer, March-April 1928)

**Figure 3: En pointe at four**



This young ballet student is just five years old and en pointe.

(The Dancer, October, 1930)

**Figure 4: En pointe at five**

Although these young girls are all shown posed on pointe it is worth noting that, even in 1931, concerns were flagged up regarding this practice:

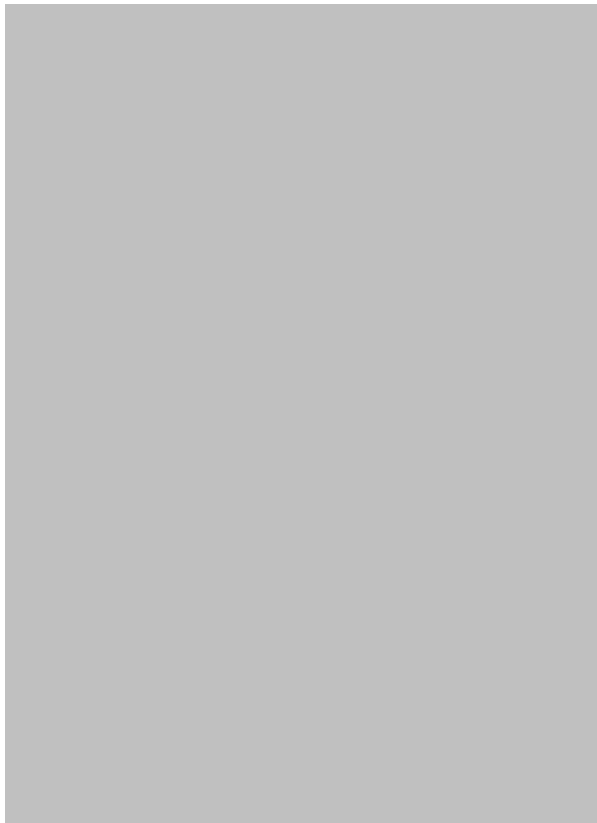
To push a child forward too rapidly spells ruin to its future success and may cause serious bodily harm to the child. Why is it that so many parents want to see their children run before they can walk? The crass stupidity of some parents is heartbreaking to a conscientious teacher. Often if a child is not put on to pointe work after a few preliminary lessons, they think there is something with a teacher who cannot make better progress. It is to be feared that, in consequence, some teachers strive to produce the desired results by faulty technique, with consequential injury to the child. Point work is the grave danger in ballet dancing. Any child with long, loose-jointed arches should be seriously warned against early pointe work, at the first stage of arch

strain should be taken off it altogether. Much can be done, of course, by careful preliminary strengthening of the muscles of the foot and by strict care to see that the whole leg and never the foot alone, is turned out. Nevertheless, at time and especially in the cases I have just cited, it is wiser to admit initial unsuitability.

(Doreen Cleare 1931 - BBO's 'The Dancer')

Thirty years later, Celia Sparger's renowned book *Anatomy and Ballet: A Handbook for Teachers of Ballet* (1965 p 74) also draws attention to the fact that doing pointe work too early is dangerous:

Although the recognition of the danger of too early pointe work is far more widely accepted than a few years ago, it is still possible to buy blocked shoes to fit a six-year old and to find classes where they are allowed to wear them. It cannot be too strongly stressed that pointe work is the end result of slow and gradual training of the whole body, back, hips, thighs, legs, feet, co-ordination of movement and the placing of the whole body, so that the weight is lifted upwards off the feet, with straight knees, perfect balance, with a perfect demi-pointe, and without any tendency on the part of the feet to sickle either in or out or the toes to curl or clutch. This movement will arrive at different times in different children, not only by virtue of previous training but according to their physical type, and in this may be included the growth of the bones.



A young ballet student in a typical pose of the era – a cover girl.

(The Dancer, February 1935)

**Figure 5: Young cover girl en pointe**

Another area of possible improvement in moving towards a student-centred approach concerns the rights to privacy (or similar) of students. In particular, some attention has been given to appropriate (and therefore also inappropriate) practices of touching students when we teach. As an extreme example, the photograph below shows Espy with Niece Ada on his knee<sup>28</sup>. It might have been perfectly acceptable to have a young student sitting on the teacher's knee in February 1936 but times have changed (Warburton 2004 p 92). The introduction of child protection and the subsequent awareness raising within the dance teaching profession means that we are surprised to see a photograph of this nature and would certainly not encourage such photographs being taken today.



**Figure 6: Espy and Niece Ada**

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<sup>28</sup> Niece Ada is a student – all his young students appear to be referred to as Espy's nieces and he was called Uncle.



This section has drawn attention to two key aspects concerning dance teaching practices. Firstly, there is the attitude to the student – how teachers treat their students (at times unethically) during teaching (Buckroyd 2000 pp 65-95, Hämäläinen 2004 pp 79-106). And secondly there seems to be ignorance of (or ignoring of) the science about damage in dance training. This body of knowledge and understanding might be growing year on year but it does not appear to be sufficiently acknowledged within the private dance teaching sector so that it can positively impact on practice (Botham 2004b, Buckroyd 2000, Hämäläinen 2004 pp 79-106, Lovatt 2009, Mainwaring 2008, Redding 2010 pp 43-44, Sharp 2009). We acknowledge that there has been some improvement in teaching practices – but nowhere near enough. And given that there is the need for such improvement, and that this need is widely agreed (Botham 1997, Buckroyd 2000, Geeves 1990, Geeves 1993, Robson 2003, Warburton 2008), why has it not happened? Does it have something to do with the fact, from which this chapter began that the dance profession is unregulated, as compared with the public sector? Clearly one way of regulation would be by some sort of ethical code governing conduct and practice<sup>29</sup>.

### **2.6.5 Dance pedagogy**

When we consider the traditional based dance teaching methods discussed earlier in this chapter and throughout this thesis it is clear that the focus is on teaching dance skills or content and not on the broader pedagogical skills that are required in order to be a good teacher. Dance societies such as BBO have mainly focused (until very recently) on developing the technical and dance content knowledge of teachers at the expense of developing pedagogical skills. In their efforts to improve standards the focus has been on what is being taught and not how it is being taught. And even where opportunities have arisen for teachers to develop pedagogical skills such as with the new BBO teaching qualifications, in

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<sup>29</sup> Explored in Chapter Six.

reality, the focus has remained on the model fault correction of dance content that has been in place since the BBO and the other societies came into being. Below we explore what dance pedagogy offers in contrast to the traditional dance teaching methods of the past.

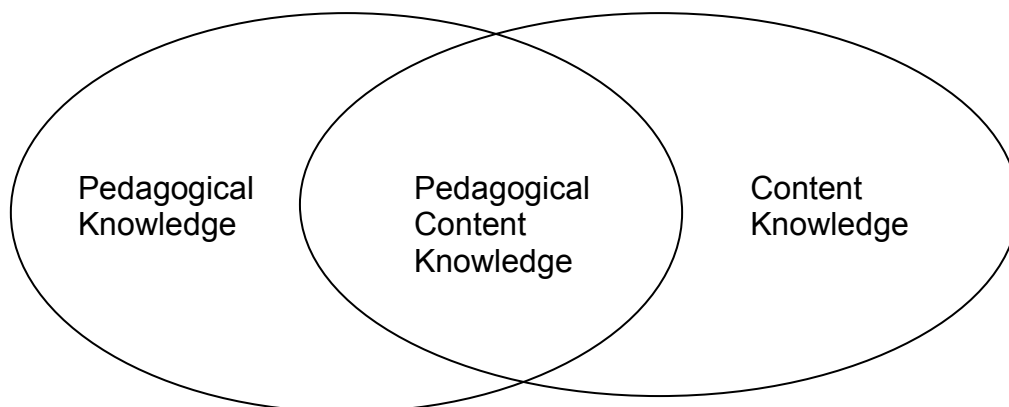
There is much more to dance pedagogy than focusing on the traditional methods of dance teaching (typical of the private dance teaching sector) discussed throughout this thesis. Dance pedagogy does not subscribe to using the sorts of methods where dance content is king and the teaching relies heavily on demonstrating dance movements and steps that are then copied by his/her student dancers. Instead there is a quite different agenda.

As Gibbons (2007 p 5) explains, dancers often find themselves teaching before they have studied how to teach. And so the content knowledge that they focus on often lacks pedagogical input or knowledge. In this situation dancers will often rely on using the same teaching methods that they themselves were taught with. And the result is that:

... often beginning dance teachers practice *inadvertent teaching*: that is, teaching as one was taught without studying and questioning method and content.

(Gibbons 2007 p 5)

In order to better understand how dance is learned and taught requires pedagogical knowledge relating to learning styles and teaching strategies. So pedagogical knowledge might be thought of as the 'how' of dance teaching and content knowledge as the 'what'. Gibbons (2007 p 5) offers the following useful diagram to demonstrate that where content and pedagogy overlap one gets pedagogical content knowledge - or in other words, the application of pedagogy to dance learning and teaching.



**Figure 7: Pedagogical content diagram**

As Warburton (2007 p 5) argues, there is need for pedagogical knowledge in dance, since deficiencies in dance teaching skills – the skills required in order to teach dance content – pose a greater threat to effective teaching than how familiar the teacher is with the dance content. Warburton refers to his own disastrous early teaching attempts as impeding the progress and motivation of his students through lack of pedagogical knowledge and use of intimidation. This led to a realisation of what he refers to as ‘becoming a teacher meant going beyond the steps’ (2008 pp 7-12). What he meant by this was that his knowledge of dance content (and his experience as a professional dancer) did not automatically make him a good teacher of dance. He recognised that understanding of how to teach, plan and implement lessons was also needed. In other words, he needed to develop pedagogical knowledge.

... – when pedagogical knowledge is as valued as content knowledge  
 – our community will be stronger, more informed and more respected.

(Warburton 2008 p 9)

This is of particular relevance to the private dance teaching sector as will become apparent later when the wish for greater respect for the private dance sector is discussed.

Dance syllabi have traditionally focused on dance content as Warburton draws attention to above. The approaches to discipline in dance that Warburton refers to can rightly be compared with the highly demanding,

militaristic style of gymnastics taught by physical training teachers in the past. Consistent with this has been the requirements for dance teachers to know about specific dance content, exercises and sequences rather than the sort of generic pedagogical skills that Warburton is referring to. And, as he highlights, these content-driven approaches to the teaching of dance results in the sort of general, lack of pedagogical understanding that Warburton discovered when he first began teaching. He recognised that, in order to be a good dance teacher, it was not enough to know dance steps one also must know 'how' to go about teaching these dance steps to others.

In an article about motor learning and dance technique Enghauser (2003 p 87) describes the subculture of the dance class as:

... embedded with traditions and widely held and implicitly accepted practices that are rarely questioned. These traditions come to represent the accepted practices, standards and overall identity of dance learning and teaching.

She goes on to say:

... because of this focus on dance tradition, "much of the exciting psychomotor research, with its implications for dance skill acquisition, never reaches the novice (or even experienced) teacher".

(Enghauser 2003 p 87)

Criticism of dance teaching that focuses on dance material rather than how to teach the dance material is growing (Botham 1997, Buckroyd 2000). Along with this criticism is an increase in the number of positive teaching strategies being put forward in an effort to encourage a pedagogical approach to the teaching of dance. Kimmerle and Côté-Laurence (2003 pp 3-9) discuss the need for teachers to make good decisions about what to teach and how to teach it. They identify three key areas of teacher knowledge that are required when preparing a dance class: the dance material, the learning process and the learner's capabilities. And they highlight the fact that although the dance content may be fairly similar between one class and another, the teaching methods are likely to differ considerably. Mainwaring and Krasnow (2010) broadly agree with this when offering strategies to enhance skills acquisition, mastery and positive self-image. The 16

guidelines bring together a range of theoretical foundations and practical strategies for teaching dance. They are explored in three broad categories: (1) clarifying the process and goals of the class, (2) discussing various influences that affect the dancer's progress, and (3) clearly defining the class structure and content.

The extensive guidelines recommended for dance teaching and learning include under 'process and goals', SMART planning: encouraging students to set specific, measurable, age-appropriate, realistic and time-targeted goals. The SMART or SMARTER model has been around for some time. Developed originally by psychologists as a way of helping people to set and achieve their goals, it has successfully been used by a variety of professional fields including sport and health education (Cabral and Crisfield 2005 pp 6-8); (Naidoo and Wills 2009 p 277). Decision-making by objective, recognising individual differences and optimise individual potential are also under this heading. The second guidelines heading is 'Influences affecting the dancer'. Here words such as mentoring, embody, encourage, nurturing, empower, enjoy are very evident. The guidelines here are concerned with empowering the self and feeling good about their bodies and self development, positive reinforcement and constructive criticism in ways the student can develop skill mastery and comprehension of principles and thinking about learning. Under the final heading 'Structure and content of the class', the list includes, building foundations of knowledge, learning in various ways across learning tasks and situations including somatic and analytical strategies and contextual variety. It promotes enhancing body image and ensuring safe practices are established and embraced. Reading through these guidelines one is struck by the recurring promotion of variety and diversity. In other words the authors are clearly supporting teaching methods that are not reliant on one way of doing things. Instead they are recommending a multi-method approach to the teaching of dance that offers learners a range of methods that also take into consideration that learners learn in different ways. Approaches that incorporate at least some of these guidelines are moving away from the sort of teaching where the students are not cognitively engaged but instead simply follow instructions. These

guidelines encourage a holistic approach whereby the learner is fully involved in the learning process. And through such approaches and methods, student dancers can contribute to and discover knowledge of how to dance.

Some dance teachers take discipline in dance teaching to be what teaching is all about. And, further, that such discipline is the only teaching method that works. However, such a one-dimensional approach to teaching does not encourage the curiosity, exploration and discovery that is a vital part of learning. And when these teachers are encouraged to involve the students more within the learning process, they might argue that such approaches lose discipline and control and ultimately results. But McFee (2004a p 170-171) gives a good example to show why involving students in the learning process is not about undisciplined teaching or letting students do whatever they like. In discussing assessment and accountability he points out that, at least in principle, a teacher must be able to recognise *that* something is wrong. Although this teacher might not say these exact words for pedagogical reasons, the teacher will steer the students away from ways of doing what they are doing because it is not a productive way to proceed, and might possibly be wrong.

Ethical teaching practice is not about giving students total autonomy as this could be compared with a monist, highly disciplined method that does not encourage student involvement in the learning process – going from one extreme to another. Instead it is about using appropriate pedagogical methods that involve the student in the learning process. It is also about being sensitive to the needs of the dance students and their boundaries concerning personal space and the use of *hands on* teaching methods. Ethical teaching practice encourages, facilitates, shares and supports the dance learner.

Touching with clear intent – *technically* and *ethically* – empowers students. I believe that a touch which has a clear intent for specific goals of dance technique *also* has a clear ethical intent because the purpose is clearly experienced as pedagogical.

(Collen 2002 p 214)

Encouraging the use of touch as a pedagogical method in dance in current times might be considered controversial because so many dance teachers have been directed away from the use of touch due to child protection issues. However, Collen's (2002) thesis is about the value and use of a pedagogical theory of touch in dance. Perhaps a key difference in this theory of touch is that it clearly acknowledges that there are positive and negative ways of using touch in dance learning as the following extract demonstrates.

For touch to be used effectively a teacher is required to take on the active role of a mentor. A teacher cannot assume that students understand the complexities of touch. Touch is intimate and it has boundaries; it is matter-of-fact and it is personal; it is playful and it is emotionally charged; it can bring about new understanding and it can confuse or cause great discomfort.

(Collen 2002 p 193)

## ***2.7 Conclusion: What have we learned?***

A positive learning climate is created when the teacher selects appropriate material to teach in the lesson and uses appropriate teaching methods during the lesson.

(Kimmerle and Côté-Laurence 2003 p 3)

This somewhat lengthy Chapter has provided a background to this investigation drawing some explanation of how the researcher's interest in ethics and dance first emerged, thereby offering something about the reasons for arguing for ethical dance teaching practices that move away from the traditional body-centred dance teaching practices of the past referred to as 'teaching by terror', in favour of person-centred methods that facilitates the flourishing of each individual, valuing each dancer for what he/she is as well as what he/she can do.

Reflecting on the development of training of dance teachers in both the public and private dance teaching sectors shows distinct differences due in part to public sector dance being situated in the physical education area with a focus on health improvement. Whereas the focus of the private sector has

been until very recent times for teachers to have in depth knowledge of dance technique and content at the expense of pedagogical knowledge and its application to practice.

A brief history of dance teaching in the private sector shows how this sector developed to what it is today. We are shown that wanting to improve standards of dance teaching is not a new concept. Espy's (Edouard Espinosa) efforts to improve standards of dance teaching focused on his technique books written as far back as 1928.

An explanation of how the medal test system contrasts with graded examinations helps us to understand its purpose and use within some of the dance societies in the private dance teaching sector.

The concept of traditional dance teaching practices being ruled by 'big sticks' has been introduced as a recognisable way of reinforcing teacher authority within the dance class along with the model of fault correction that has been so much a part of the private sector dance learning environment. This expands into an exploration of Foucauldian type authority and discipline in the dance studio. And in particular, discipline of the body through surveillance, leading to the type of external and internalised discipline that contributes to and constructs dancers as docile bodies.

Attention has been drawn to two aspects of current dance teaching practices in the private sector: the attitude of teachers to their students and the lack of understanding of the science about damage in dance training. Along with this is the missed opportunity for the growing body of knowledge to positively impact on practice. Attention is also drawn to the lack of dance pedagogy within dance teaching practices in the private sector. Without understanding the *how* and *why* of teaching dance and only focusing on *what* is taught, the private dance teaching sector cannot make the sort of improvements required in order to foster ethical dance teaching.

It is acknowledged that some improvements have been made but these are not enough. Some of these improvements are related to the introduction of new teacher qualifications syllabi but questions are raised as to whether



these are effectively supporting and sustaining change or just being used to give the impression of change.

In the next Chapter, the various methods of data collection employed in this investigation, of which there are a number, are discussed. The reasons for choosing each of the data collection methods are explored together with a discussion about why it was necessary to employ a variety of research methods in this study.

### **3 Data Collection Methods for Empirical Enquiry**

#### ***3.1 Introduction***

This Chapter addresses the methods that were used to collect the data – in that sense, giving shape to the plan for the research. There are the research questions for the project as a whole, concerning the need for, and direction of, changes (motivated by ethical concerns) in the methods of training teachers of dance for the private sector. To approach these questions, we must also engage in the conceptual enquiry (see Chapter Six) But there is also at least one research question for the empirical part (big one!) – what goes on in dance teaching past and present? Detailed data that focused on people’s understanding of their practices was required in order to answer this question. Therefore given its reflexive concern with understanding, a qualitative study was much more relevant than a quantitative study. This chapter describes why a number of qualitative methods were used rather than just one, to gather the data including an autoethnography, a method not on the original plan or indeed one the researcher was familiar with when starting out on this project. It is not uncommon when carrying out research for problems to arise relating to the data collection methods used, but the main discussion of the problems encountered in data collection are left to the next chapter.

It was known from the outset that this would be a qualitative research study. It would be dealing with people as people; and that one of the primary tools would involve listening carefully to what the participants said. These facts provide a background for the decision as to research methodology. The concern with experiences and reliance on speaking to those teachers (McFee 2009 p 303), ensured that the methods would be qualitative. What was not appreciated at that time was that, in the end, multiple qualitative research methods would be used. This situation was more about luck (or lack of it) than design. Silverman (2010 p 63) suggests keeping it simple - steering clear of using multiple methods where possible. However, in this study, the need to use a number of methods resulted in part from the research plan not

being fulfilled in the way originally anticipated. So it is necessary to discuss the relations between the various methods deployed. In reality, a decision had to be made about how to deal with the problems generated by potentially not gathering sufficient data. In the end, it was decided to adapt the research plan and use more than one method of data collection. Silverman's (2010 p 222) discussion about data analysis was therefore somewhat of a relief where he writes:

In most qualitative research, sticking to your original research design can be a sign of inadequate data analysis rather than demonstrating a welcome consistency.

With this encouragement for letting the plan evolve, we begin this Chapter by looking at why qualitative methods were right for this study before discussing the three data collection methods that were used. In one way, this Chapter is back-to-front: the most important sources of empirical data are discussed towards its end. This is to preserve the chronology of the research process itself; and should not confuse a reader attentive to it.

### **3.1.1 Selecting the research methods**

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

(Denzin and Lincoln 2000 p 3)

This is a qualitative rather than quantitative study since there are limits to what quantitative data can offer in respect of the thoughts and feelings of those engaged in human practices. And that was the situation here. Seeking detailed, depth of data is characteristic of qualitative research and it is this depth of information that is believed to provide a deeper understanding of social events and situations (Durfee et al. 2004 pp 82-88, Silverman 2001 p

32). Statistical percentages provide the depth of information and understanding required in relation to people's perceptions of lived experiences. For example, a key finding of the Dance UK, 2<sup>nd</sup> National Inquiry into Dancers' Health and Injury (Laws 2004 p 28) is that psychological problems are experienced more often than physical injury. This result of the questionnaire study identifies that 'tension with people', 'constant tiredness', 'low self confidence and 'general anxiety' are key problems experienced by over 50% of the dancers in the last twelve months. Interesting although this is, it does not provide one with sufficient depth of information in order that one might begin to understand 'why' so many dancers perceive 'tension with people' as such a problem. Nor does the data provide any detailed information that explains 'why' low self-esteem in dancers is so prevalent.

In discussing ethnographic research, Silverman (2001 pp 297-298) puts forward the concept of addressing the 'how' questions before the 'why'. In essence he is saying that in order to answer 'why' a certain situation exists, it is first necessary to know something about the 'how'. For example, if we return to the Dance UK results above, knowing something about 'how' the professional dance world functions and its culture, according to "Silverman, may throw some light on 'why' the findings of the inquiry show that psychological problems are experienced more than physical ones. And he seems to have a point. If for example, it is understood that dancers today can still experience the overly authoritarian approach by teachers, artistic directors or choreographers or others in authority, where they are expected to be totally passive and accepting of high levels of criticism, often of a personal, derogatory and unhelpful nature, it is not surprising then to discover that these dancers have low self-esteem. In addition, the perfectionism that drives so many dancers to always seek a level beyond their existing standard means that they can never be satisfied with what they are doing and this too can lead to low self-esteem (Hamilton 1998 p 5, Lovatt 2009 p 72, Sharp 2009 p 146).

But the focus is on the explanatory force of 'why', as is predicted in the Denzin and Lincoln passage above: why is the state of the teaching of private

sector dance teachers as it is? That assumes, of course, that it has been accurately described. And how can one explain its arriving at that position? Once these questions are addressed, in the empirical phase of the investigation, we can turn to speculation, and conceptual investigation, to look at a brighter future.

Clearly, qualitative research is not about collecting large quantities of generalised data and presenting it in statistical fashion. For this study the interest lies in the detailed data that provides some insight into the motivations, feelings, values and attitudes of the participants and their perceptions of their experiences. Given these concerns with the understanding of people's lives as they are experienced, it makes sense to put aside any quantitative methods – they would not reflect the fine differences in what was said nor the different contexts in which the various participants developed and practiced. And later in this chapter each of the qualitative methods used to gather sufficient rich data in order to make some meaningful interpretations are discussed.

### **3.1.2 My position as researcher; and selecting the methods**

This investigation concerns my own profession; and the typical research participants are fellow dance professionals and experienced dance teachers in a learning environment at the time of the data collection. I was involved with them as a senior course tutor on a new dance teaching qualification course and it is necessary for me to identify my dual roles and highlight how this might affect the study. I address issues concerning my role where relevant and also mention from time to time that everyone (for example, at BBO and other organisations and committees that I am involved with relating to my research area) were all aware that I am also a researcher carrying out this study. The data collection methods take into account my involvement as the following sections demonstrate. In addition, the concern throughout with emotional responses to experiences, and the fact that some of those experiences are mine (through the autoethnography: see below and Chapter

Five) means that the usual imperative on the ethnographer to rehearse in detail the narrative of the research process - is especially strong here. Moreover, in this case, that process was very protracted. As a result, I will spend a considerable amount of space on the details of my research experience, both as planned and as it ultimately occurred.

First, though, some issues might be clarified as follows:

Dance teachers in the private sector in the UK have traditionally been trained using a practical based model of learning where the main focus is on having knowledge of particular syllabi and not the generic learning and teaching skills required by teachers generally. Such models do not promote a conceptual and cognitive approach to the learning and teaching of dance that encourages consideration of the wider teaching issues and concerns. Furthermore they do not promote student involvement in the learning process.

(Botham 2004a p 170)

Given the need to address the place of the learner in the learning process, one must first determine precisely what that place is – and, for us, that only makes sense against the background of a past ruled by authoritarian styles of teaching. But even those cannot simply be taken for granted.

So the large topic here became clarified, by the research questions for the empirical phase of the investigation focusing on three main sets of issues relating to the current state of the training of private sector dance teachers, since each set of issues suggested methods appropriate to its investigation: first, what is the present situation? To explore this issue, syllabi from major dance awarding bodies/societies was drawn on (see 2.4.1; 2.4.2). But perhaps the reality of the practice did not reflect the presentations these documents offered. To explore that topic permission was sought to draw on current students undertaking to improve their training in respect of teaching here. This is representative in the reflective logs, although (as recounted in Chapter Four) these were originally to be a much more important part of the investigations. To expand the limited detail they provided, interviews were undertaken – these had always been in the plan, but acquired a greater

importance as the investigation progressed. And consonant with the needs of dealing with dance teachers, the interviews were videoed.

A second topic concerned how we arrived at this present situation. Since the interest was partly in the training of the teachers, that too was a topic for the interviews, as well as the consideration of syllabi from the past.

The third topic came about because in responding to the other interviewees, I came to realise both that I represented another case to be considered (one to which I had unique access) and that there was an established method - autoethnography - by which the use of my story in this context might be justified.

It is important here to stress the limited claims that these empirical enquiries were aimed to support. In context so many enquiries, where the empirical investigation is designed to resolve the matter by suggesting an explanation of whatever phenomenon, the empirical investigation here was primarily designed both to make more vivid the claims of 'teaching by terror' and to identify it in the experiences (especially the self-perceived experiences) of those researched - as here (by implication) in the experiences of teachers-in-training for private sector dance. In this way, the primary purpose of the empirical data-collection was to identify that there was an *issue* here (making the anecdotal evidence more concrete) and to explore the history of that issue in the lives of those currently extending their training as dance teachers, in line with new principles<sup>30</sup>. So the initial set of research participants was to be drawn from the first cohort of teaching students undertaking the new government accredited teaching qualifications of the British Ballet Organization. A request for volunteers was made at the monthly intensive teaching sessions in February and March 2004. Information about the study and consent forms were available at the March session. Participation is voluntary and participants were to be able to withdraw at any time from the study without any penalty or prejudice. As we will see, things did not go as planned.

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<sup>30</sup> See Chapter Two.

### 3.1.3 Nature of methods employed

As has been stressed throughout, this investigation intersects with many aspects of my life. and hence much that happens in my life bears on it. Thus reality TV shows based on learning to dance actively promote both the very behaviours that the dance profession is supposedly trying to leave behind – ritual humiliation and the sort of ‘teaching by terror’ and use of the ‘invisible big stick’ mentioned and clarified earlier<sup>31</sup>, and a ‘well it is worth it if it achieves the goal in the end’ approach consistent with the sorts of unethical teaching practices investigated here (Parsons 2009). As such, they can illustrate what is meant by ‘teaching by terror’ (see 2.6.2) and offer examples of unethical teaching practice and treatment of dancers by others in the dance profession such as, judges of these programmes (Smith 2005).

Another source of insight comes from conversations with teachers of dance and others involved in the training of dance teachers and dancers. This material was not exactly anecdotal and not exactly participant observation since everyone involved was aware that I was carrying out research concerning the learning of dance and learning to teach. Hence, their comments were made in a research-based context, although (of course) some may have forgotten this. So if I noted something I observed or heard, it cannot really have been a surprise (McFee 2008, p 40). But inevitably there were times that I asked if it was okay to make a note of something I observed (or heard) and other times I did not.

It is important to note that the data collection was done at a certain moment and some things have changed since then. For example, the teaching of certain units is now delivered by visiting lecturers instead of regular members of the faculty, as previously. At present, there is nothing in the documentation to say how this affects, for example, assessment preparation and marking. Apparently (from conversations) there are instances in some dance societies where assignments may be marked by uninformed examiners. That is, such examiners, although experienced as examiners, lack specific expertise in the topic being marked. Let us consider

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<sup>31</sup> See Chapter Two.



a hypothetical example to suggest what this might mean in practice, by speculating about, say, an assignment concerning child development. An uninformed examiner might give marks for a student mentioning *skipping*, but not for understanding the child development aspects of *skipping*. If, say, the student only mentioned that a four-year-old child was having difficulty *skipping*, it tells us nothing of the teaching student's understanding of the child's abilities in relation to perhaps expected motor learning characteristics for that stage of development. It does not demonstrate, for example, understanding that 'skipping ability' is a characteristic expected to be seen in the six to eight year-old age group rather than the three to five year-old age range (Kassing and Jay 2003 p 92). That is not to say that, no child under six years old will have the ability to skip, but rather, dance teachers need to consider the stage of development in selecting what they are going to teach. Often, 'skipping' is included at the early level of dance examinations and therefore many dance teachers have spent many frustrating classes trying to perfect skipping in children that are just not ready to skip. If they do not understand that they need to select dance content that is appropriate for the stage of development the child is at they might carry on trying to teach dance content that is not appropriate for these children. In discussing the child learner Kimmerle & Côté-Laurence (2003 pp 87-112) explains that the developmental limitations of children restrict the dance material as well as the teaching method and that dance teachers need to take into account 'why a child cannot learn a skill'. Understanding 'why' the child is having difficulties, for example, lack of understanding of what is wanted, knows what to do but does not have the strength or co-ordination to do it or it may even be that the child is not interested in doing it well preferring, just enjoying dancing (Kimmerle and Côté-Laurence 2003 p 87). In this hypothetical example, we can see that an insufficiently informed examiner might not recognise the important connection between skipping and child development, and therefore might not appreciate that the topic under assessment is not in fact understood in the way required.

The dance teacher must be conscious of the developmental limitations of children in order to select appropriate dance material and teaching methods.

(Kimmerle and Côté-Laurence 2003 p 111)

Another form of anecdotal data unexpectedly comes from the ethicsdance website, which emerged out of this PhD study. The site has two key uses relating to this study. Firstly the material it offers identifies or confirms, the problems of the past concerning dance teaching and learning. It raises awareness of issues relating to ‘teaching by terror’ and unethical teaching practices. In this respect, the website content is related to the first few chapters of the thesis where questions are asked about whether or not there is a problem in the private dance teaching sector and if so, how we might fix it. Secondly, the website is raising awareness about ethics and dance and providing an opportunity for people to explore various aspects about the issues discussed in the documents and web content. Through the website we might find a way to answer one of our questions – how do you change people’s hearts or stop them paying lip service to ethical issues in dance teaching? By using the website and the resources offered with students we will further raise awareness of the ethical issues. And this is confirmed by the many emails received from research students and researchers, dance educators, dance organisations, dancers and others who have all used the site and found it useful. The following examples are typical of those received.

Thank you so much for your wonderful website.....  
Thank you for putting this out there. It is such an important aspect of dance that is often overlooked.

I want to thank you for a wonderful website.....Your website is so rich and offers great reading material for the students. I hope you don’t mind if I direct the students to it and the materials as part of their resource materials.

Regular requests are received for comment or advice from students, teachers and researchers about ethics and dance related topics. And this further demonstrates that the website is raising awareness of ethics and dance and encouraging more questions to be asked by more people about this vital topic.

Some matters referred to are inevitably based on the anecdotal sources mentioned here. The data is there, not as data sources but instead they help with understanding.

### 3.1.4 Refining the project

The anecdotal evidence for the behaviour of dance teachers from which the investigation began is seemingly reinforced by, say, the representation of dance teachers in books and films. But all of this material is, at best suggestive of lines of thought and conduct; and, in particular, it carries little evocative detail of the kind needed to capture the practices at issue. Now, one might have tried to get more detail here with broadly quantitative methods: that is, one might perhaps have sent questionnaires to a number of those who had *been*, and who had been *subjected to*, such teachers, enquiring into the teaching methods deployed and into its effects. The virtue of such an inquiry, of course, would be that it might offer considerable breadth to the study. Yet there would be at least two sets of difficulties for that inquiry, reflecting two features of the case as it arises in *this* investigation.

First, there is reason to suppose that the responses to the questionnaire would not be very revealing — material might well be forgotten; and there would be a tendency to suppress the very material under investigation if it seemed either to cast a shadow over an admired teacher or to exaggerate the case where the teacher was recalled with *less* affection. In short, it would be a perfect place where the truthfulness of responders might be at issue. And, while that would be a problem with other methods say, qualitative ones, such as interviews, there at least the opportunity to investigate the truthfulness existed — one could probe the responses. Moreover, exploring such truthfulness was a recognised part of the methodological stance, so that the methods themselves would be geared to our problem.

The second aspect was more apparent once it became clear that, as one of the potential informants, the researcher here had a method at hand

that, if used judiciously, might well provide much of the *detail* required as well as insight into the motivation for the whole study. That method was *autoethnography*. Drawing on that case permitted functioning as both researcher and data-source. Of course, such an enquiry must be rigorously conducted, in line with the tenets of autoethnography, and the *limitations* (as well as the strengths) of this method must be recognised.

Thus the limitations in other methodological choices pointed the empirical segment of the research towards the research choice ultimately adopted. To clarify the position of the private sector dance teacher, providing rich data, autoethnography would provide a central data source. To then suggest that the reflections from the past still retained their currency, some of those presently engaged in training for such teaching would be sought. In the end, these were the respondents who completed the reflective logs.

In addition, some interviews had been planned with the same 'modern' group but, in the end, the interviews conducted related primarily to the period 'described' in the autoethnography; and therefore are best seen as aligned with it, offering additional in-depth insight into the past of such dance teaching.

But the key structural feature is to see the empirical enquiry as searching for a detailed, rich description of the phenomena of private sector dance teaching for young people, as a basis for responding to one line of reaction aimed to improve it; namely, the production of codes of conduct. For, if one wishes to address the ethical issues associated with teaching, one must first clarify the nature of those issues, and then respond to this candidate recipe for addressing the issues: namely, with codes of conduct and other rules. Once we see (in Chapter six) that this strategy is not promising (as our conceptual investigations demonstrate), we shall have opened the door to more radical strategies.

The net effect, then, is to identify the autoethnography, supported by the interviews and (to a lesser extent) the reflective logs, as the centre of the empirical enquiry here; but also to grant that the overall project has a

conceptual dimension: in particular, through its concern with codes of conduct, and other rules.

However, much of the insight from the investigation is methodological: how can this combination of methods and investigations be managed? So there is perhaps more on the topic of the practical issues for the reliable use of such methods than might be expected; in particular, it offers something rarely discussed: namely, the specific issues concerning the videoing of interviews (3.2.3).

### **3.1.5 Formal methods**

The formal methods were of two kinds:

- 1 Written materials
- 2 Semi-structured interviews
- 3 Autoethnography

Let us begin with the first one on the list: the written material. This data was collected in two different formats:

- Syllabi & claims by organisations (addressed in this section)
- Reflective logs (3.1.7)

During the past decade or so the teaching syllabi of a number of dance examining bodies in the UK have undergone extensive changes. In the past, a representative sample of the examining dance bodies had been chosen purposefully to demonstrate the diversity that existed at that time in professional dance teaching syllabi or qualifications (Botham 1997 pp 51-54). Such a purposive or non-probability sample can be limited in value because the sample is handpicked. However in this case, it ensured that the study was informed by a representation of a cross section of dance examining bodies and that it could be replicated in the future for validation purposes (reliability) and also for comparative or monitoring purposes (Denscombe 2003 pp 15-16).

The following, seven UK examining bodies offering teaching qualifications based on their own syllabi agreed to provide information:

Royal Academy of Dancing (RAD)

British Theatre Association (BTA)

Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD)

International Dance Teachers' Association (IDTA)

British Ballet Organization (BBO)

British Association of Teachers of Dancing (BATD)

United Kingdom Alliance (UKA)<sup>33</sup>

Unlike quantitative research where analysis is usually carried out after the collection of data, the content analysis of this study began while data was still being collected (Silverman 2010 pp 221-223) and the commonalities found were categorised under a few headings and before being listed in two distinct categories of teaching qualifications.

This data is useful for comparison purposes as it tells us what the requirements were for dance teaching qualifications in the private sector before the new style qualifications came in. Therefore we can compare for example, the syllabi content and training as well as the types of assessments that candidates were required to undertake. The data also tells us something about the claims of the examining bodies concerning the qualifications that they offered at that time.

The new style teaching qualification syllabi began to emerge following two to three years of meetings and discussions between some of the dance societies, the Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET) and the Qualifications Curriculum Authority (QCA). Existing qualifications were reviewed in the national framework by a consultant for the QCA and CDET and design principles were established. The intention was to establish common units that all the societies would use in addition to society specific

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<sup>33</sup> As an examiner of the UKA, the researcher already holds all the syllabi details concerning teaching qualifications and did not need to request further data. The society is aware of the research.

units. In the end this did not happen and each society delivers its own units. However the general design and content of the qualifications were agreed by the majority of the societies working in conjunction with the CDET and QCA.

### **3.1.6 Dealing with research participants**

The research participants (or subjects) provided initial written statements and the reflective logs, and some then became the interview candidates.

### **3.1.7 Reflective logs**

Young dancers rely on their teachers (often a local studio owner, neighbor, or friend) and the resilience of their young bodies to negotiate the physical demands of training.

(Welsh 2009 p 3)

One difficulty was to get insight into the thoughts and feelings of the emergent teachers. How could one understand what they were experiencing? A feature of the BBO programme seemed to offer a way to address such questioning. As part of the Certificate and Diploma teaching courses, students were required to complete regular, reflective logs to be assessed as part of the overall qualifications. These logs seemed precisely directed at understanding the experience of these teachers in training, and hence to focus on a topic investigated here.

Having been granted permission to use these logs, the expectation was that they would provide rich, useable data about student experiences about their learning and development on the courses. And, in particular, about moving towards ethical dance teaching practices since the thought had been that such methods and practices were at the heart of the courses these people were undertaking. The plan was to analyse a selection of logs, drawing on data relevant to the three aspects of the research mentioned earlier:

- (a) learning to dance
- (b) discipline and teacher behaviour in class
- (c) learning to teach

As the students were (supposedly) writing these reflective logs on a weekly or fortnightly basis, it was thought that asking them to write a short statement about their experiences of learning to dance and learning to teach as a bit of background information for the interviews would not be an unreasonable task. If this task had developed as planned then the data from these logs would have been a key part of the data collection. However, this proved not to be the case (see Chapter Four).

In addition, the students provided the 'written statements' mentioned above. Requesting participants to write a short piece about their experiences of learning to dance and learning to teach was seen as a way of finding out background data that gave participants the freedom to reflect and write about these reflections in their own way. The intention of using an unstructured, open question approach to this part of the study was to attempt to ensure that participants had as much freedom as possible to write about their own experiences in their own way.

It was thought that this method would help to avoid researcher bias that might have arisen if the initial activity had been carried out as a conversation or semi-structured interview (Silverman 2010 pp 221-223). Also it was thought that, by giving interviewees the opportunity to say what they wanted to say, the gain would be some understanding of how each participant perceived her own experiences.

### **3.2 Interviewing**

An interview is a conversation, usually between two people. But it is a conversation where one person – the interviewer – is seeking responses for a particular purpose from the other person: the interviewee.

(Gillham 2000 p 1)



In addition, some of these students would be interviewed. Interviewing as a method of gathering some sort of data or information has a long history and has a multiplicity of uses (Fontana and Frey 1998 pp 47-49). An interview situation might occur in the doctor's surgery where we are asked about our medical history to assist with diagnosis or perhaps a market researcher might want to ask us about products or services that we use. In research such as this study, the purpose of interviewing is to obtain data relevant to the aims of the research project (Gillham 2000 pp 1-2) of investigating dance teachers' experiences of learning to dance and learning to teach. But why specifically choose interviewing as a research method for collecting data from dance teachers? First of all, the purpose of this study was not to carry out a large-scale study with large numbers of people: it was about quality of data and not quantity (Fontana and Frey 1998 pp 47-49).

Gaining access to potential research participants is a fundamental part of the process: and I was fortunate in that I was able to negotiate and agree access to BBO teachers who were involved with the new teacher qualifications. In discussing access, Baxter et al. (2001 pp 154-157) list various ways by which one can increase the chance of gaining access to potential participants: be modest in your request; make effective use of existing contacts and asking at the right time, are just some that are included in the list. In this case, it was found that making effective use of contacts as well as asking at the right time to be a very successful way to gain access to those who were going to be the research participants. Gaining access was helped by the fact that the researcher had been a member of BBO for very many years and furthermore was to be a senior tutor on the Certificate and Diploma courses, with responsibility for two of the units on each of the courses: this involvement with the course and the participants is mentioned earlier in this Chapter.

In addition, some previous experiencing of interviewing that had worked well encouraged the use of this method again (Botham 1997 pp 47-50). In planning this research an interview method that would have some structure: sufficient structure was wanted to enable the gathering of relevant data but

not so structured that it became a series of answers to pre-prepared questions and thereby losing some of the potential uniqueness of the data. Semi-structured interviews offered the desired flexibility with some structure to ensure the data was relevant to the research topic. Furthermore, semi-structured interviewing could be carried out on a small sample and had the potential to produce rich data (Gillham 2000 pp 9-11).

Hence the four participants for interviews were anonymised as Ailsa, Iona, Cara, and, for reasons we will come to, Isla. All were BBO teachers.

In considering interviewing initially, it was intended that interviews could take place at times when both researcher and participants would already be in the same place to keep to a minimum costs and time associated with travelling to interviews. As it turned out, not all the interviews were conducted in this way (see Chapter Four).

There were a number of ethical issues to consider when planning the interviews. The issues that were considered and addressed included:

- what are participants expected to do?;
- what will happen to the data collected from the interviews?;
- how can anonymity and confidentiality be ensured?;

Informed consent is often thought to be a requirement for research involving human participants (McFee 2006 pp 13-29, Welsh 1999 pp 86-88). In its simplest form, informed consent refers to the participant being informed about what he/she is giving consent for. Furthermore such consent needs to be given voluntarily and without coercion. It is, of course, not that simple as McFee (2006 pp 15-22) demonstrates in his exploration into the meaning of 'informed consent'. For were the participants duly informed of all that might occur? And, if they were not fully informed, how could they give consent? But this case at least drew on overt research designs. The information and consent sheets<sup>34</sup> prepared and distributed to potential participants satisfied a typical list of minimal conditions for informed consent by giving information about the researcher, the research topic and aims as well as saying how the

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<sup>34</sup> A copy of the information sheet and consent form can be found in the appendices –Appendix A.

data might be used. Participants were given opportunities to clarify understanding of the information provided and they were free to make their own decision about taking part in the research. The participant's right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason was also made clear. The information sheet mentioned that, with their permission, the interviews would be recorded. Each participant was spoken to individually to ensure each was aware that the intention was to video the interviews.

It was expected to encounter some degree of concern about recording interviews on video. But surprisingly these concerns were totally unfounded. In fact, the participating teachers agreed almost without question perhaps because (as some-time dancers) they were used to being looked at or videoed.. This raised some concerns (as above) in relation to participants being fully 'informed'. In order to be sure that they knew what they were consenting to the role of the video was discussed with each of them in detail to ensure they were comfortable with this method of data collection and also how the data might be used in the future. Attention was drawn again to the clause in the information sheet giving each participant the right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason. No one changed his or her mind about participating in the study following these conversations and it was reassuring to know that steps had been taken, as far as possible, to ensure that participants were informed and were not being deceived (O'Neill 2002b pp 70-71). In line with participant consent, the intention was to anonymise through its presentation the data gathered through the video interviews (McFee 2006 pp 16, 20-21, Oliver 2003 pp 30-31).

Just as with other forms of data collection and use of data, it is essential to observe and preserve participant confidentiality. Some issues of confidentiality relating to video interviewing are no different to those that arise in other methods. For example, once video data is transcribed the issues of confidentiality are the same as for any other transcription. Names can be changed to give anonymity to the participants and preserve confidentiality. Video, however, is not anonymous.

The original intention was to interview around 15 – 20 participants by means of semi-structured interviews. The objectives of these interviews was:-

- to find out about individual dance teachers' experiences of learning to dance and learning to teach dance
- to explore any identified influences between the participants' own learning experiences and their current practice
- to find out if there is evidence of existing ethical teaching practice.

In the end, only four teachers were interviewed and the reasons for this drop in number of participants is discussed in the next chapter.

In the beginning, there was no plan to use a video camera as the instrument for recording or preserving the data collected from the interviews with dance teachers. The plan was to deploy the more commonly used medium of audio taping in this type of qualitative research (Oliver 2003 p 45), not least because video itself (as opposed to its transcription) seems to pose insuperable problems about maintaining anonymity/confidentiality.

Once the decision to use video to record interviews was taken, a short powerpoint presentation was offered to other researchers, which included a number of short clips from one video<sup>35</sup>. This was designed to pilot the presentation of the video data as well as getting feedback on the methodological issues. In fact, despite testing and re-testing the presentation a number of times problems were encountered with the video clips on the day. Still, given the value in being able to explore interview data from a methodology perspective, it seemed worth persevering with the hitches.

First there are serious time issues. The trade-off for obtaining the whole picture and such complete data is the time taken to transcribe and analyse the data. It took considerably more than the usually suggested 10 hours of transcribing for each hour of audio recorded data. Initially quite some time was spent trying to find the best way to watch, listen, rewind and type. In the end, each interview video was watched two or three times to identify specific

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<sup>35</sup> See later in this chapter and the next chapter for details of how this became possible without acting unethically in relation to the research participants.

sections to transcribe. Then only these sections were transcribed. This reduced the transcribing time although it was still a lengthy process. But had something important been missed? To resolve this issue, ensuring that valuable chunks of data were not missed, the data were professionally transcribed (as discussed later in this chapter: 3.2.2).

The next five sections look at different aspects of video interviewing in some depth beginning with piloting the use of a video camera at interviews.

### **3.2.1 Pilot video interviewing**

When the use of video was considered it seemed that the presence of a video camera at the interview would not make a significant difference to the interview and data produced, since video cameras are used increasingly within dance to record, for example, a lecture or teaching session. Watching and being watched is all part of a dance teacher's role: it is in the nature of the job of teaching dance today. Most dance teachers today will have been filmed in connection with their work at some point; perhaps in relation to a demonstration or performance, creation of a learning tool or perhaps to evaluate teaching practice. It has become the norm for master classes and other lectures at dance teaching conferences to be videoed for educational purposes. So dance teachers are familiar with having a video camera recording various aspects of their professional life.

Further, from experience of working with dance teachers over many years dance teachers prefer visual learning resources: they like to learn from pictures and visual information rather than from, say, the written word (Cottrell 2003 pp 5, 26). The use of demonstration, diagrams of good alignment and aesthetic pictures of dancers are all tools of the dance teacher's trade. With the increase in filming at conferences, and of dance generally, there is a growing choice of visual resources available to the dance teacher.

Of course we have all had to get used to being watched due to the current trend for CCTV cameras. They seem to be everywhere recording our movements as we go about our daily lives, apparently some 20 million in the

UK. We do not appear to have a choice about whether we consent to being filmed. In contrast, seeking and gaining informed consent from participants is an essential element for this type of qualitative study. In the next section a particular issue of consent that arose within the study relating to video interviewing is discussed.

At the least, for the reasons above, it seemed that having a video camera present to record the interview would not pose much difficulty once the interview was underway (Denscombe 2003 p 177). To test the water, a brief pilot study was carried out in an attempt to determine whether the presence of the video camera would be detrimental at interview. A small group of dance teachers agreed to participate and discuss their experiences afterwards. To avoid the camera being intrusive it was deliberately placed in a corner of the room out of the main eye line of the interviewee. To avoid potential restrictions regarding where the camera could be placed battery power was used. It was agreed with participants that the camera would be switched on at the start of the interview and turned off once the interview had finished thus reducing any interference caused by drawing attention to the camera's presence during the interview. The outcome of the pilot suggested that once the camera was running and the interview begun the camera was ignored: this was confirmed by the participants in the post-study discussions. This outcome was not unexpected since, as was said above, many dance teachers are familiar with the use of video in their work. So, once the camera was set up and the chat was underway, the camera did not appear to be an intrusion into the discussion at all. Therefore satisfied that the video camera would not intrude on the interviews, the video interviews went ahead.

### **3.2.2 Video interviews**

Before reflecting on this experience, it is worth clarifying what is meant by video interviewer or video interviewing. The actual data collection method was of course the semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. The device used to record the data was a video camera. So the video is not the research

method but the technology or gadget used to record that data gathered through the research method (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003 p144). When using the term 'video interviewing' it refers to interviews carried out in the presence of a video camera recording the data. Equally the description of video interviewer refers to the role of interviewer being carried out in the presence of a video camera. It does not mean that the camera was the method of data collection. As Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003 p 144) make clear there is distinction between using the video camera as a tool to record and store data and using it in data collection. In order to function as the latter permission would have been needed to set up the video camera to record the dance teachers in their daily work. The recordings could then be used as data. Of course the data generated would be quite significantly different to the sort of data gathered from semi-structured interviews (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003). With this hopefully somewhat clearer we can return to the matter in hand.

The interviewer had previous experience of using a video camera as a training and development tool in her work with dance teachers. This obviously helped with the practicalities of setting up and using the camera but did not offer much, if anything, in the way of knowledge about video interviewing and the sort of challenges and benefits that are associated with it and discussed below.

One particular challenge (mentioned above) evolved around transcribing interview data which is a lengthy process and especially if one is inexperienced and lacks the right equipment designed for the job. For a long time the aim was to personally transcribe the interview data gathered in part because the interviews were on video and there was no wish to potentially compromise the ethical stance (say on confidentiality) by giving the video data to someone else especially as a promise had been made to participants that the video data would not be shared with others, for reasons of confidentiality. It was therefore vitally important to keep this promise (Gillham 2000 pp 15-16). In discussing ethical issues during research, Oliver (2003 pp 45-46) draws attention to the need for the participants to be informed of the

way which they will be identified. He uses the example of the possibility of the researcher referring to the interviewee by name during the interview and the need for them to be reassured that this will be dealt with by, for example, substituting real names with fictional ones to protect anonymity. Clearly, if Oliver is right, then it goes without saying that handing over the video to someone else would be acting unethically for at least two reasons: firstly, there was the broken promise to the interviewees and secondly confidentiality would not have been preserved through anonymising their identifiable data in line with the information contained in the participant information sheet that they were given before agreeing to participate in the research.

In the end, it was decided to explore getting the data transcribed by a professional while considering how the issue of confidentiality might be addressed. Eventually, it was decided to separate the audio and visual so that the audio data alone could be passed to a professional transcribing company. Although there were initially some concerns about the quality of the audio that could be separated from the video this turned out not to be an issue.

Once the audio from the first interview was separated it was uploaded as a test file to the transcribing company for a quality check. Confirmation of the quality being suitable led to the other interviews being similarly separated and uploaded for transcribing. This procedure produced full transcriptions minus a few words here and there that were either impossible to decipher from the recording or were technical expressions relating to dance that one would not expect someone without dance knowledge to have known.

By taking time to address this challenge it was possible to keep the promise (and solve the ethical dilemma concerning confidentiality and anonymity) to the interviewees. Upon reflection the decision to opt for professional transcription could have been made much earlier. And there would be no hesitation in having audio data professionally transcribed in the future provided, as in this case, confidentiality could be protected.



Looking back at the experience of being a video interviewer, the belief, at least for a short time, that videoing the interviews would make the job as researcher easier seems rather naïve. After all, having the data, en masse as it were, would surely be helpful in drawing out more from the data. Having been through the experience it is acknowledged that this was not the case in the sense that there were additional practical and time issues to deal with that one does not encounter when using only audio data. In another sense, it did make the job easier because having the video enables one to return to each interview time and time again and bring it back to life. It is like being transported back to the moment when the interview actually took place.

As discovered, a number of the issues and considerations relating to video interviewing are not so different from those arising with other data recording methods and these are discussed below. The visual aspect of video, not surprisingly, presents the specific ethical concerns regarding consent and confidentiality mentioned already, and these issues will also be further discussed.

Let us begin with the similarities between audio and audio-visual methods of recording interviews. Take, for example, the concern that participants might act differently when there is a camera present. This concern is not one solely relating to the presence of a video camera. The potential exists for participants to act differently in other interview methodologies too. Some participants may act differently when an audio tape or recorder is present (Denscombe 2003 pp 176-177). Equally some interviewees may respond differently or be distracted if the interviewer makes written notes during the interview. It may not be possible to eradicate totally the impact of recording methods on the interviewee but clearly this method has potential with certain populations. All methods raise practical issues, and theoretical issues about confidentiality, and such like. Just as with other forms of data collection and use of data, it is essential to observe and preserve participant confidentiality. Some issues of confidentiality relating to video interviewing are not different in principle to those that arise in other methods such as taping. For example, once video data is transcribed the

issues of confidentiality are the same as for the transcription of audio-only data. Names can be changed to give anonymity to the participants and preserve confidentiality. The images contained in the video, however, are not anonymous. In line with the idea of informed consent the information and consent sheets satisfied a typical (McFee 2006 pp 13-29) list of minimal conditions for informed consent by giving information about the researcher, the research topic and aims as well as saying how the data might be used. So, the information sheet mentioned that, with their permission, the interviews would be recorded. Moreover each participant was made aware through checking with them individually to ensure they were aware that the interviews would be videoed. As noted previously, it was expected to encounter some degree of concern about recording interviews on video. But the participating teachers agreed almost without question.

Further, and in line with participant consent, the intention was to anonymise the data gathered through the video interviews as recorded previously. However this changed when one participant, Isla, changed the goal posts as far as her own data was concerned by unexpectedly deciding to relinquish her anonymity. This happened once the interview had finished and the camera was being packed up. When asked about this decision she simply said that she was happy for the video to be used in its entirety and that there was nothing in it that could not be used. This was totally unexpected and at the next opportunity the matter was discussed with the PhD supervisor (Oliver 2003 pp 144-146) and it was agreed that as the offer was given freely and not coerced it was reasonable to accept it since the participant was still in agreement. So she is not anonymised<sup>36</sup>. Her generosity in allowing her data and identity to be shared allowed the photographs and interview DVD clips to be attached to this document. Without this agreement, it would not have been possible to show any video footage or indeed any still photographs from Isla's interview since these would have identified her.

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<sup>36</sup> Insofar as video footage and images are concerned as with the other interviewees her name has been changed.

It would be unethical to ask participants to change their consent in order to relinquish their right to anonymity after data collection had taken place. After all, many people only agree to participate in research providing their anonymity is assured. Such a request could easily suggest to participants that this had been, rightly or wrongly, the researcher's intention all along. There was and is no question of the researcher considering approaching the other participants to ask them to review their consent. Isla's data can only be used because the offer came from her unsolicited. And so the other participants have not been approached about this and their data, rightly, remains anonymous.

It might technically be possible to anonymise video by means of pixilation it has, however, considerable disadvantages. A major consideration is that this method of anonymising video removes much of the value and purpose of using it at all. Facial expressions and other visual data are lost. In addition it is a time consuming process with considerable cost implications. It is not believed that Isla's video would have the same value if it had been anonymised by means of pixilation. In fact, even using pixilation it is difficult to see how anonymity could be successfully achieved in a video of this nature.

### **3.2.3 Visual communication – lingcom and percom**

The argument for using video to record the interview data in this instance was two-fold. First of all, there is always the advantage in having the complete interview available in comparison to having say one aspect such as the audio. Secondly having the video means that additional gestures are seen and available for analysis (Oliver 2003 p 45). The benefit of having this additional data was really highlighted once the full transcripts were received. Reading through the transcripts from start to finish it was realised how two-dimensional the data seemed in comparison to being able to see and hear the whole interview as was the case previously with this data. As mentioned earlier, the initial intention was to transcribe the video data personally and

therefore until such times as it was professionally transcribed many hours were spent listening, watching and absorbing the data. Sometimes the visual was turned off to enable only listening to the audio. At other times the video was watched with the audio turned off to focus on the gestures, expressions and actions. And although some sections that were going to be used had been transcribed they did not read in the same way as having the full transcriptions. Therefore it was only once the full transcriptions were read that the true value and advantage of having the interview data on video was realised. Being able to re-live the interview seeing it as it happened on the day, seeing how the interviewees reacted, gestured and communicated is so very different than reading the interview data off the page. Someone else who did not have the video data to refer to would need to have very comprehensive field notes in order to remind themselves of the visual data that would not be recorded on say, an audio only interview.

Just after the interviews the visual communication was looked at as basic body language with the sorts of assumptions being made about what was being communicated non-verbally that one does. In doing so, all the non-verbal communication was being treated as being on the same level. In one way, this was not problematic. Although not an expert in body language, the researcher does not believe that one has to be in order to benefit from having data on video. After all, most of us read body language all the time as a natural part of our communications with others. How often have you heard someone say something along the lines of 'I could tell she was worried from the look on her face'? Or, 'he said it didn't matter but I could tell from the way he stood, that it did'. The medical profession takes this to another level. In *The Body in Question*, Jonathan Miller (1979, p 33) discusses how the non-verbal communication that a patient uses in relation to pain helps the doctor in diagnosis. He calls it 'the pantomime of complaint'.

In fact, a lot can be learnt about a pain from the way in which the patient points to it. Apart from saying something about where it is, the movement of the hand is often a tell-tale sign of its quality: if someone has angina, he often presses the front of his chest with a clenched fist, the whole fist shows that the pain has a gripping quality. The pain from peptic ulcer is often closely localised, and the patient usually tells you

so by delicately pointing to it with the tip of index finger..... Even if the patient doesn't describe this movement in words, he will sometimes do so by holding his side with the thumb at the back and the fingers pointing down at the front ..... The skilled physician can learn a lot from the pantomime of complaint.

And in dance we are also skilled at certain types of visual communication. It is an integral part of dance. Dance teachers actively make use of visual communicating skills in their teaching role. A whole variety of demonstrations are used to communicate aspects of dance to the youngest beginner through to the professional performer. Teachers purposefully develop a critical eye for observing and analysing dancers and their performances. So it is hardly surprising that many teachers use demonstration and visual action to accompany or even, replace aspects of verbal conversations. One example would be from a teachers' development day a few years ago where one of the presenters appeared uneasy introducing her session to the audience. She commented on not being very comfortable talking to the audience because she was more used to communication that involved demonstration. This was evident as she started to teach the class. Her uneasiness was immediately transformed into a confident teaching approach as she turned her back on the audience and began communicating with the students using gestures and movements backed up with appropriate talk. Other examples of dance teachers communicating visually can be found with Highland dancing teachers. Due to the continual hopping and elevated movements and steps that Highland consists of, it is a very demanding dance genre and teachers often use their hands to demonstrate the movements instead of actually performing them. An example of this hand demonstration comes from discussing the intricacies of the technique of a particular step with another Highland teacher at the World Highland Championships. Two teachers standing facing each other, hands actively demonstrating all the movements in detail that were being discussed. When the discussion finished both laughed and commented on how much easier it is to dance Highland with your hands than with your feet. Recalling previous research carried out in Russia in the mid 1990s, the researcher was invited to watch the morning class of the Leningrad State

Ballet Company. The artistic director used his hands to mark through the exercises he wanted the dancers to do. There was no language barrier in this sense because, for example, *battement tendu*, *ronds de jambe en l'air* and *développés* demonstrated with hands are all the same in every language. This sort of purposeful demonstration makes it easy for dancers to know what the *enchaînement* or *amalgamation* is. So it is hardly surprising that when it came to collecting the data for this project a method that would enable seeing the data as well as hearing it would be chosen - a method that would allow obtaining as complete a picture as possible of the interview. And as anticipated, having the whole picture means that the characterisation is clearer and more precise.

As mentioned above, having the data on video means that when analysing the data one could choose to see and hear the whole picture but also at times one could choose only to 'hear' or only to 'see' the data. Through doing this one became aware of how much being able to see as well as hear the data added to the study thus confirming the value of this data collection method.

It is not only dance teachers who use visual action to enhance the spoken word. Many people do it regularly, often without realising. If, for example, you ask someone to tell you how to tie shoelaces it is very likely that he/she will offer some sort of demonstration of the process rather than relying on providing detailed verbal instructions. If one was to attempt to follow the verbal instructions without seeing the visual actions, it is likely that it would prove quite difficult as they would no doubt, be incomplete. What this tells us is that there are a number of elements, that when combined, give us a whole picture.

Staying with the topic of non-verbal communication, it became clear later in the study that body language or non-verbal communication of the sort from the interview data cannot simply be viewed as all being on one level. As Best (1978 pp 138-162) recognises there are two quite distinct ways in which this type of communication or behaviour can be defined namely *lingcom* and *percom*. For *lingcom* to take place between two people the communication

needs to be understood in the sense it was intended. For example, if one was teaching say a ballet class and said to the class, 'we will now put on our pointe shoes' and if the students responded 'yes we like bananas too' then clearly the communication was misunderstood and therefore the teacher would have failed to communicate with the students. In this way, it would be clear that the students were not following the communication and therefore *lingcom* had not taken place.

In discussing Best's distinct differences between *lingcom* and *percom*, McFee (1992 pp 243-245) draws attention to the fact that Best later acknowledged that it may be better not to use the term 'communication' at all when it is being used in the perceived or *percom* sense.

To demonstrate the key differences between *lingcom* and *percom*, Best (1978 pp 138-162) uses two useful examples. The first one below is an example of *lingcom* – the type of communication that is intended to convey a message:

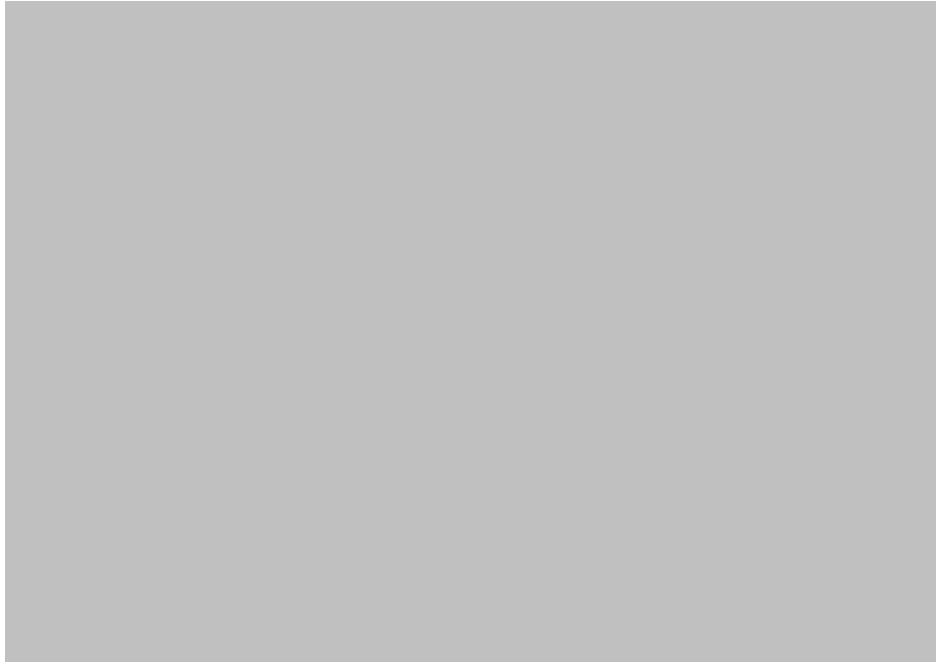
..... a beckoning gesture, the hitch-hikers' thumbing sign, shaking a fist, and nodding the head, can communicate as effectively as saying in words respectively: 'Come here, 'May I have a lift?', 'I am angry with you', and 'I agree'.

In comparison, his example below of *percom* has no such intention to convey a message:

Let us imagine that while waiting outside an examination room I am observed to be fidgeting nervously. It is this sort of case which would tempt some to say, for example, that my fidgeting movements communicate my anxiety about whether I shall be successful in the examination.

If we are to begin to understand what is being communicated and prevent misunderstandings then it is essential to differentiate between what gestures and actions are intended to communicate (*lingcom* - a dance student in a class yawning to her friend across the studio to indicate that she is getting bored) - and those where this intention is absent (*percom* – a tired dance student trying to stifle a yawn at the beginning of an early morning class) - but where one person can still learn about another (McFee 1992 pp 243-245). With *lingcom* and *percom* in mind the interview data was reviewed

and examples discovered where both *lingcom* and *percom* are present at the same time. Isla's interview clip (gestures) on the attached DVD is a good example of this and even the still photo below from this clip clearly shows this.



**Figure 8: Intentional demonstration**

Here Isla is using intentional demonstration (*lingcom*) to describe a particular movement. She uses her hand and arm to demonstrate a movement of the leg carried behind the body. She was describing the movement that caused her to have a major fall when she was a young dancer which severely damaged her back and led to a lengthy rehabilitation period over a number of years. It was this accident that led to Isla changing her career path from performer to teacher. However in addition to this *lingcom* message, there is also the unintended, *percom* information that unintentionally conveys the gravity of what she is describing. This was not part of the intended (*lingcom*) demonstration at all but one could see from her expression (body language - *percom*) that this was a very difficult part of her life she was talking about and yet it was not her intention to convey this from the gestures made. As an example, the still photo below from Isla's interview shows a very different *percom* picture. Here she is presenting a much more relaxed posture that was not intended to convey a particular message.





**Figure 9: Relaxed at interview**

Throughout all of the interview data there are strong examples of *lingcom* and *percom* and this is not surprising when one considers that dance teachers actively use gestures and demonstrations as a natural part of doing their job as teachers as mentioned earlier. Obviously only examples from Isla's interview are shown here but each interviewee demonstrated a good deal of *lingcom* communication liberally sprinkled with a lot of *percom*. Viewing the data from a *lingcom* and *percom* perspective helped to bring the data to life in new or deeper ways. It makes one think about how dance teachers make use of *lingcom* regularly in their work. In some instances an interviewee would start to say something, then pause before finishing the sentence with a physical action or gesture in explanation of the point being made. There are also a good number of examples of interviewees using visual actions to enhance what they are saying. For instance, using a revolving or turning motion of the hand to denote turning. The level of this intentional demonstration was raised at times to denote not only the general concept of turning but to demonstrate the type, direction or speed of a turn.

Dance teachers no doubt, use a good deal of intentional demonstration because they are so familiar with the use of demonstration as a method of

communicating in their work. As a dance teacher the researcher is used to reading this type of non-verbal communication. Someone else with a similar training or background would also be able to get the same from this data.

In the still photograph below Isla is using intentional demonstration (*lingcom*) as she discusses her acrobatic training. The hand and arm actions demonstrate the support given by a teacher to a student, learning certain acrobatic tricks. Anyone who is experienced in the learning and teaching of acrobatics would immediately recognise this demonstration. In this instance, the demonstration is easier to understand than having to go through lengthy explanations.



**Figure 10: Supporting in teaching of acrobatics**

Therefore it seems reasonable to say that carrying out interviews via video interviewing has a lot to offer by way of additional data. And in the case of dance teachers who are used to using visual communication in their work, as indicated above, this method of recording interviews is particularly useful.

### **3.2.4 Seeing is believing**

The Latin phrase 'facta non verba' (actions speak louder than words) suggests that non verbal communication is more meaningful than verbal.

This was not found to be the case with video interviewing. The biggest benefit has nothing to do with one aspect of data being more important than another. It relates to getting the whole picture precisely as it happened at the interview. It means that one reviews what was said, how it was said, the body language, the expressions, the posture, the pauses and many of the finer details that would have undoubtedly been missed without a video recording. However, even with a video recording, it is still possible to miss something important as the following example demonstrates.

During one interview, the interviewee, Cara, explained about how her childhood dance teacher had managed to discipline her pupils without any apparent effort - not even needing to raise her voice in class. She said "we respected her and she didn't need to tell us to behave". After the interview when the camera and tripod had just been packed away the interviewee was chatting with the researcher. Discipline in class was mentioned again and this time when she mentioned her childhood teacher she added "of course she did carry a big stick". She had not made the connection between her dance teacher carrying a big stick in class and the class of well behaved dance students. This brought to life something mentioned previously on a number of occasions by very experienced researchers: that the best data can often occur after the interview has finished and often as a throwaway remark.

American body language expert, Richard Greene (1995, 2006), suggests that "Up to 93% of what is communicated between people is non verbal" thereby claiming that an extraordinarily high percentage of people talk in actions rather than words. Even if we do not accept that the figure is as high as 93%, it suggests that non-verbal communication is a very important part of our day to day communications. Furthermore it suggests, as mentioned earlier, that there is much to be gained from being able to see as well as hear what is being said, a considerable advantage in accuracy and reliability of data.

Moreover, in certain circumstances one is able to see the truthfulness of what is being said. This phenomenon, familiar from everyday examples, can assist where there is conflict between talk and behaviour and an example of

this is provided later. That said, it does not mean that an interviewee cannot be a great actor and do a good job of playing a part. However there seems little point in being misleading in an interview of this sort.

### **3.2.5 Reliability of data**

Dance teachers are those who train dancers. This embodies the empty vessel model, as in traditional dance teaching, the body is to be shaped into the form of a dancer. There is no focus on the development of the whole person, nor contribution of the person to the direction of the lessons. Typical teaching in this model includes a “teacher know all” focus, with students responding to both strict development and structure. This model, passed on through generations, is alive today in professional training schools and conservatories.

When using the term dance educator, I do not exclude the training of the dancer, but rather expand it to fit into a larger model. Developing the diamond in the rough metaphor, the dance educator is responsible for the molding of the whole child, so that the movement or psychomotor education is just one aspect. This holistic education enables the learner to increase expressive verbal and non-verbal capabilities in order to live and exist in the world.

(Roff 2004 p 86)

There are a number of ways that data can be demonstrated to be reliable. One way we can do this is by a form of triangulation of data – using different methods or sources that are all saying a similar thing (Hammersley 1992 p 67). Take, for example, Roff’s statement above. Her description of dance teachers not working to develop the whole person and the lack of student involvement in the learning is consistent with other descriptions of the traditional dance teaching model mentioned earlier in Chapter Two and confirms existence of a body-centered model of dance teaching of the type we are concerned about. So, in this way, demonstrating a degree of consistency with the data.

To highlight the improvement in respect of the reliability of the data, we will briefly explore below, two types of non-verbal data gathered from the interviews in this study - body language and intentional demonstration.

Let us consider body language first as it was mentioned earlier. We learn from one another via body language all the time. It is an integral part of how we communicate with others. For example, the photographs captured from the video interview, say something to us on their own. The body language gives us information about the tone of what is being said. It might be reinforcing what is being said or showing where there is conflict between behaviour and what is being said as mentioned earlier. It is possible to choose to see and hear the data separately as well as in its complete form. This can be achieved through listening without watching or watching without listening. This was found to be useful when exploring how the actions and the words each contribute to the whole picture.



**Figure 11: Thoughtful**

In this photograph, Isla's body language suggests that she is talking about something serious or concerning. Indeed this is the case. In this instance the body language is reinforcing the seriousness of what she is saying about her past dance teachers.

“There was nothing I could not ask her. There was nothing that she wouldn't have an answer for. I felt completely safe with her. I could move mountains with her (laughter).”

In contrast, the body language in the photograph (Figure 9: Relaxed at interview, page 129) presents a much more light- hearted or relaxed pose. At this point in the interview Isla is questioning the choice of lecturers on a dance teacher course and she says:

“They are just label chasing. You know, like they have to wear the Gucci handbag or the Gucci glasses. I don’t want the label to teach us with the Gucci brand name on them. I want the teachers who actually can teach (laughter). It makes me very sad when there is obviously that talent and yet these people are locked up in a cupboard somewhere.”

The body language here is relaxed. This pose is consistent with the lighthearted tone of voice that is used to talk about the matter. However, both the tone of voice and visual data conflict with the content of what is being said. It is as if the seriousness of the matter is reduced by discussing it in this manner. The significance of what is being said is still there but it is not immediately apparent.

Another contrast is the image of Isla (Figure 10: Supporting in teaching of acrobatics, page 130), which we have already discussed this earlier in this section. Here she uses intentional demonstration as she discusses her acrobatic training. As mentioned previously, anyone who is experienced in the learning and teaching of acrobatics would immediately recognise this demonstration - it being easier to understand than having to go through lengthy explanations.

### **3.3 A special case: autoethnography**

“... an evocative form of writing that produces highly personalised and revealing texts in which authors tell stories about their own lived experiences.

.... and the holding back on interpretation invite the reader to emotionally relive the events with the author.”

(Richardson 1994 cited in Sparkes, 2002 p 73)

As explained earlier, my own experiences were a key motivator in doing this research in the first place and it seemed sensible to make use of a

participant that I had direct access to, myself. Autoethnography is the method used to incorporate my story into the research as it enables me to share my personal emotions and feelings about my own lived experiences of learning to dance and learning to teach.

Autoethnography is described by du Preez (2008 p 509) as a relatively recent, qualitative, methodological technique whereby personal narrative and reflective practice are used as a means to locate the researcher in the research. According to Anderson & Austin (2012 p 132), this type of research has gained in popularity since the term was first used in an article by anthropologist, David Hayano, in 1979 to describe his own research with semi-professional poker players.

Anderson & Austin (2012 p 132) refer to conceptions of autoethnography to "... include an epistemological prioritising of emotional experience and emotionally evocative communication". In explaining this, they refer to a conception of the CRM (the complete member researcher) "... as opposed to having other, more distanced field-work roles". All this coheres closely with how I saw my role once I had decided to centrally involve my own case, my own experiences and memories, in this investigation of private-sector dance teaching. For I saw that, in using my story as a data-source, I was "... reflexively engaging the researcher's self as integral to the ethnographical enterprise" (Anderson and Austin 2012 pp 132-133). For mine was to be a CRM that used "... explicitly personal experience as ethnographical data" (Anderson and Austin 2012 p 133). This required that I think about the nature of 'my story' as data: that is, reflect on what might make it reliable or when its reliability might be challenged. For clearly most people, in contexts where they have no particular reason to lie, to fabricate, or otherwise to be 'economical with the truth', will tell the truth: and may be taken to do so for methodological purposes. But this is not that situation, for here many of the events appear as the deliverances of memory from some longish time ago; moreover, there are reasons to be sceptical of the veracity of my recollections of events where my emotions (and especially my feelings for both my mother and for dance, an activity I loved) were heavily involved.

Further, in my case, as often, "... autoethnographies prominently feature the body and lived experience" (Anderson and Austin 2012 p 137).

No doubt, autoethnography is, as Collinson observes (quoted in Anderson and Austin 2012 p 141) still on "... a rocky ascendance into scholarly recognition"; and may not be all the way there yet — Anderson and Austin (2012 p 142) cite dismissive reviews of some of Sparkes's autoethnographies to highlight that acceptance is by no means complete. But the discussion here should do something to put aside the most substantial worries in my case, not least because I have drawn on interviews which might almost be taken as parallel to the autoethnography, viewing 'my story' as a kind of self-interview. Then my claims might seem supported in their broad coherence with the interview-findings, while recognising that, in the end, each account will necessarily reflect its author's thoughts and emotions (and be valued for that reason). Moreover, as researcher, my relationship to 'my story' was inevitably different to some degree to that with interviews — although I endeavoured to approach both with the same detachment.

Ellis and Bochner (2000, p 739) highlight the autobiographical nature of autoethnography in their definition " an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural..." And they describe autoethnographers as a diverse group where the focus or emphasis can vary between the research process (graphy), culture (ethnos) or self (auto) (Ellis and Bochner 2000, p 739). Furthermore, they present autoethnography as a form of writing that "make[s] the researcher's own experience a topic of investigation in its own right" (Ellis and Bochner 2000, p 733). And therefore they appear to value the telling of highly personalised, and often emotional tales that will elicit emotional responses in the reader. Even more recently, Ellis et al. (2010) describe autoethnography as being "...an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience". Evocative, emotional, experiential and empathy are all words used to describe aspects of autoethnography (Sparkes 2002, pp 73-75). This emphasis on the personal, evocative and



emotional seems to be a key aspect of what autoethnography has to offer researchers wanting to tell their tale – a way of examining “through systematic introspection” their own, highly personalised, lived experiences as the “primary data” (Sparkes 2002, p 75).

In research of this nature, reflexivity matters and because the story I am telling is my own story the problem of me, as the researcher, imposing my interpretation on another’s story is eliminated (Hammersley 1992 p 67). Logically, one might think of autoethnography as being on a par with an interview used for ethnographic purposes, which resulted in the transcription of a narrative. And that is a relatively well-accepted method in qualitative research (1994 cited in Sparkes, 2002, p 73). What is the difference here? That I am its author, as well as the researcher, may seem to make little difference. But just as we have seen that, in ‘ordinary life’ and in interviewing, one makes a judgement as to the truthfulness of the respondent, this is not open to the autoethnographer. So how is there any guarantee that the tale told is true?

Autoethnographic narratives often tell a highly personalised and emotional tale that is an analysis of being different. It is the sense of being different that makes the topic interesting rather than being merely self-indulgent. In my own story for example, I can demonstrate through their testaments that others saw me differently and in this way I can demonstrate that my own self-narrative is of value as a form of data collection and is not just self-indulgence. If one considers the variety of ways of being self-indulgent, reflecting on things that might be difficult to re-visit is not on my list of choices (Sparkes 2002 p 73-75). Indeed, the experience is one of a struggle to be scrupulously honest, in telling one’s story, especially about difficult matters. This leads me to address key aspects that the autoethnographer needs to consider.

When the potential value that my own story could add in the form of primary data to my research was first considered, I thought that composing it would be the easiest part. After all, I would be writing about my own story, the experienced I have lived through relevant to the research. It all seemed very

achievable back then. All I had to do was transfer the relevant memories from my mind onto the printed page. The experience has been very different than what I had expected. Sitting down at my computer I found it difficult to get started. Where should I start? Is there much point in starting here instead of there? What is relevant for the research and what is not? Does the reader really want to read about what happened to me? Is it interesting enough? All of these questions would go round and around in my head as I tried to write my own story. It felt as if the most used key on my keyboard was the delete key. For every sentence I typed I seemed to delete two. My worry was that in my addressing my story in this 'write and delete' style it might never get completed. I did not have any one reason why I deleted much of what I wrote initially. It just seemed that I was not happy with the writing of it rather than being unhappy with the content. So to return to my first thoughts about writing my own tale, I can report that I was mistaken about this being an easy piece of writing to do. It proved not to be easy at all.

This is just one challenge of autoethnography. Writing as a method of collecting data and not for sensationalism is another challenge for the researcher. The purpose, as I said earlier, is to produce data. Once written down this primary source of data can then be analysed just like any other written tale to be used as a data source. It is not about writing an exposé. It is a self-narrative written for the purpose of answering a research question and not simply a desire to tell my life story. Of course what I must address in telling my tale are the ethics of doing this. So a balance must be struck between a desire to be vivid in presenting and a need to be truthful. For those ethics provide the pressure towards truth through full disclosure.

I began my autoethnography by reflecting on my past experiences of learning to dance and learning to teach. I was obviously aware of the issues that had motivated me to consider writing my story and I used this to focus on the areas that seemed pertinent. I wrote an outline of ideas of things that came to mind that loosely connected with the issues of interest. Once I had some ideas, I began to expand the ones that seemed useful by writing them up into a number of short pieces that all had some connection with the

learning and teaching issues. I tried a variety of writing methods: I tried writing in the present as if it is happening now; I tried writing as if remembering the past; I tried writing a combination of the past and present and each time reading the text over and over again to establish if it felt right. I would write a piece and then leave it for a while – a few days or weeks – before going back to it to edit or delete much of what I had written. Eventually I decided on one method (which later was modified as discussed in the next Chapter), and began to write my story for real. This continued for some considerable time and generated any number of crises of confidence about the content of what I was writing. In particular, I found myself wanting to soften the story I was writing. Yet this felt like a kind of betrayal: what I had written initially often still feels like a correct account as I remembered it. So even when I had reservations about small details, its emotional tone still seemed correct. (I realised that one reason here related to the place of others in ‘my story’: see below.)

This tendency to ‘water down’ was difficult to fight especially after I spoke with others who trained with me but were in a different situation as will become clear in the next Chapter. In producing this sort of self-narrative, I did find myself revisiting the text to accommodate many memories that had not surfaced since I first lived them - memories that produced a rollercoaster of emotions and feelings within me. Recalling incidences that happened a long time ago made me realise that they had never gone away: they were just a thought away, waiting in the wings, to be brought to the forefront of my mind when they were needed. And when I did focus on them it was as if time disappeared and I was, once again, the young dance student or young dancer reliving those experiences once again. I could feel the same emotions and same feelings that I had back then, rise up and remind me of how it really felt at the time – or at least that is how it seemed to me when I recalled my experiences.

The autoethnography gradually appeared and the editing reduced until I had a narrative that I decided to leave alone, not so much as something complete, but all the story I wanted to tell now. Something that I discovered

about this method of writing is that each time I went back to it, I would feel the urge to edit it in some way. I had a constant concern about editing out the memories that reflected past dance learning and teaching in its true colours and keeping the ones that were honest but perhaps not quite so dramatic.

My own tale is not about me in isolation. It involves others who were involved or influenced my experiences of learning to dance and teach. I cannot tell my tale without involving others. I am acutely aware that I am telling my story from my perspective and others who touched my life in some way will have their own views of the experiences. It is essential to address the ethics of telling your own tale right from the start, as this will inform content deemed appropriate and some that is not.

I have had some conversations with a long-standing friend who trained alongside me in the dance studio. The content of some of these conversations have reflected on our experiences of learning to dance and teach. When I realised that our conversations could usefully inform aspects of the research, I did not want to simply include the relevant aspects in my writing. So I approached this person and asked for permission (or to be more precise, voluntary informed consent) to include parts of our conversations about our experiences in my story (Allen Collinson and Hockey 2004 p 188). For I am trying to be ethical in the way that I deal with these matters by providing an opportunity for the relevant parts of the writing to be made available to this friend for comment.

### **3.3.1 Doing justice to others**

... Consequently, when we conduct and write research, we implicate others in our work.... For instance, if a son tells a story that mentions his mother, she is implicated by what he says; it is difficult to mask his mother without altering the meaning and purpose of the story.

(Ellis et al. 2010, §4.3)

Trying to do justice to others involved in my story proved challenging, partly because some of the key people died a long time ago and so cannot comment on what is written about them. Sparkes (2002, pp 103-104) uses

the following quote from Richardson to draw attention to the perils of writing about one's life.

Writing about your life brings you to strange places; you might be uncomfortable about what you learn about yourself and others. You might find yourself confronting serious ethical issues. Can you write about your department without serious consequences to yourself and your students? What about your family? Who might be hurting? How do you balance "fact" and "fiction"? How do you write a "true" ethnography of your experiences? These questions, of course, are the ones that contemporary ethnographers ask themselves when they try and write up their "data" about other people. How different it feels when it is you and your world that you are writing about; how humbling and demanding. How up-front and personal-in-your-face become the ethical questions, the most important of all questions, I think.

(Richardson, 2001 pp 37-38 cited in Sparkes 2002 pp 103-104)

One of the problems I experienced in trying to ensure that I am doing justice to others was discussed earlier in this section - a strong desire to soften certain things that happened. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for my 'write and delete' style. In some ways it seems unfair to be writing about something that was a negative thing that happened to me when the other person involved is not here to defend herself. I suppose in my story this is where the difference is relevant. I do not feel that I would have the same depth of concern if I were writing, for example, about negative experiences from my school days such as the teacher who used to throw wooden blackboard dusters at me in class for asking questions. Most people have stories to tell about their school days, good and bad. It is not unusual for people to share these tales with others and we do so with little thought about the person in question and whether it is doing them justice or not. But there is a distinct difference here because we can all talk about school teachers without necessarily revealing or disclosing the identify of the person or persons concerned. In telling my story I cannot, for example, hide the identity of a key person, my late mother. One of the ways that I addressed the ethical issues arising from telling this tale was to give a presentation at a one day symposium at Sussex University in May 2007 discussing some of the ethical constraints that inevitably arise when telling your own story for research purposes (Sparkes 2002 p 103).

More recently I have found it interesting to read the Ellis (2001 p 599) story that I discovered through reading Sparkes mentioned above. Ellis wrote about her mother and discussed what she had written with her mother:

As I write this final version, I wonder what my mother would say about the frame I've added now to my story about her. Would she think it unnecessary, even interfering with the plot? Would she know what a frame is or why it is here? Should I feel obligated to read this last version to her? Did I write this story for my mother?

Yes, I wrote it for my mother, but I also wrote it for myself and for others, who are involved in or interested in caregiving relationships and aging or who have concerns about methodological issues of writing about family members.

(Ellis 2001 p 614)

However, she had previously made the decision not to reveal to her mother another story that she had written about her because she did not think that her mother would appreciate the references within the story to her bodily functions following surgery.

The two differing decisions above interest me because of my own situation in writing about my own mother. Of course, she is no longer here to read my story to or discuss it with her. But it raises an interesting question for me: would I have written my story if my mother had still been alive? And the answer to that, is most probably no, or maybe yes. Let me explain. If my decision is no, then It would have nothing to do with any concerns about telling the truth. As far as my memories serve me, I am telling the truth but obviously from how I remember it. In conversation with my friend, mentioned earlier, we discovered that we have slightly different memories of our experiences of the same incidents. And it seems that this is partly due to the fact that she saw it from a pupil's perspective and I saw it from the perspective of being the dance teacher's daughter. That is not to say, we had hugely differing memories - we did not. But she pointed out to me that, at the time, she was only thinking of her own experience and not the experiences of others: as she said, "I didn't notice what was going on around me, I was just dancing because I loved it". As we reminisced on several occasions, we discovered a lot of our memories were very similar in that we both

remembered the same incidents or the way things were at that time and in this way offers corroboration of my story. But what if my mother was still around and I decided to tell my story? My reasons for not telling my story if my mother was here would be personal: for example, not wanting to upset her, but my reasons for telling my story would be professional – so we could discuss the issues raised and the reasons for wanting things to change. As I mentioned earlier, I am convinced that my mother would have been influenced by emerging knowledge and understanding; and therefore we could have had very useful discussions about ethical issues in dance teaching. However, she is not here and I am telling my story, I hope she does not mind.

Perhaps the two points from Mellick & Fleming's (2010 p 312 note 1) paper about personal narrative and the ethics of disclosure will help to put my mind at rest. Firstly, that the finished work may be read only by a few and at least some of those will be within academic circles and therefore may not know any of the people in question. And, secondly, that the researcher is likely to be more sensitive to the people described in the story.

“... ethnographers are somewhat relieved of the problems of speaking for the ‘Other’ because they are the ‘Other’ in their texts”

(Richardson 1994 p 52) cited in Sparkes (2002 p 74)

The challenge of autoethnography is often said to be meeting research requirements. This comes about due to the personal and unique nature of the data. However, there are not necessarily more difficulties over and above the usual ethnography ones of: researcher and analysis bias, quality and quantity of data, time to build trust between researcher and participants. The difficulties are slightly different and the very nature of autoethnography means that some of the usual ethnographic difficulties are removed. In autoethnography the researcher is both the interviewer and interviewee and therefore knows what the lived experience is like first hand – as the researcher and the participant are one and the same the issue of trust building is taken care of and the expected outcome a full and honest self-representation (Allen Collinson and Hockey 2004 pp 189-192, Sparkes 2002

pp 73-80). As noted above, once the autoethnography is written, it can be treated like any other testament and be subjected to analysis by others.

Perhaps autoethnography may even be slightly stronger than other methodologies in relation to determining if someone (say, someone being observed or interviewed) is lying. For example, many contexts lend themselves to people telling less than the whole truth — maybe hoping to impress, or to conceal a felt weakness, and many more. The skilful ethnographer must be on guard against these possibilities. But there is no need for the autoethnographer to look in this way for, say, conformation in body-language: I know I am not lying. By contrast, as we noted, self-deception could be present in any type of interviewing and is not peculiar to autoethnography.

Another aspect of autoethnography is the fact that it is not testable in the usual sense, since no data about actual events can show that the emotional impact was not as narrated in 'my story'. Therefore alternative criteria have been suggested, such as: believability, congruence (agreement) and resonance (quality of memories). Allen Collinson and Hockey (2004 p 197) report having successfully used these methods in their own research accounts.

Even taking this into consideration, it is possible to go some way to meeting traditional measures such as: validity: where the story is your own, validity might be seen as problematic because of the possibility that the data is made up or inaccurate. But one way of validating some of the story is to have corroboration by someone else who was there at the time - in my case, my friend who trained at the same time as me. During telephone conversations and some meetings, she was able to corroborate the tales I was recounting. Of course what we discovered was that the features of my story that were not possible to corroborate were the feelings and emotions, as naturally they are my feelings and emotions and not hers.

Another aspect of concern with autoethnography is reliability. Although using one's own story as a form of data might have its challenges, it can be done. As discussed earlier, once the narrative is written it is like a transcript



and of course others can analyse the transcript. However, other than piloting the transcript with my husband, I did not take this opportunity since I had already drawn on the shared recollections of my friend (discussed above). But it is still true that the autoethnographic narrative is available to the scrutiny of others; and this gives it the kind of public, shareable character we recognise as objective. Finally, the generalisability of the method: if I can do it, so can others. Anyone in a similar situation could use autoethnography to bring a very personal element to their story. It may not be straight forward generalisability but aspects can be generalised to the degree to which the cases are similar (Allen Collinson and Hockey 2004 pp 195-196).

In summary, we should accept, then, that – if properly regulated – autoethnography offers potentially valuable insights into an individual's thoughts and feelings.

### **3.3.2 Defending autoethnography**

Such a view has been challenged. Then, one way both to elaborate the description of autoethnographic process deployed *here* and to show us the soundness of our version of this process is to meet classic objections to autoethnography. Here the focus is on six such objections, as voiced (in a concise way) by Sara Delamont (2007, p 1) who regards autoethnography as "... essentially lazy — literally lazy and intellectually lazy". She states her position (Delamont 2007, p 5) in the form of six objections to autoethnography:

- 1 It cannot fight familiarity.
- 2 It cannot publish ethically.
- 3 It is experiential, not analytic.
- 4 It focuses on the wrong side of the power divide.
- 5 It abrogates our duty to go out and collect data.
- 6 The important questions are not about personal anguish ... 'we' are not interesting enough ...

Our view of autoethnography, and our practice of it, offers replies to these objects. The first four can be dealt with comparatively briefly, to allow greater attention to the last pair.

The remark that autoethnography “...cannot fight familiarity” is germane only if that is its task; once the difficulty that any social scientist faces with problematising the familiar is recognised, autoethnography is not especially badly placed. Indeed, the need to read as though we were not the author, as was stressed in thinking of ‘my story’ in as detached a way as possible is precisely an explicit injunction to guard against familiarity. So this is explicit in our process; not always in alternatives.

The objection to publishing ethically turns both on the impossibility of preserving anonymity and on the fact that ‘my story’ inevitably overlaps with others (in this case, with my mother’s, and hence my sister’s): that I do not have exclusive title to all of ‘my story’. But neither of these is an objection as such, but rather an injunction to be have responsibility. Thus, one set of elements *almost always* excluded from consideration will be precisely those where the ‘ownership’ of the story is most contentious — where one might predict that one of the ‘others’ might have voted against the inclusion of material; a consideration not removed by the death of that person. So, like the point above, this is just a warning to the autoethnographer to behave sensitively. And, of course, anonymity cannot be an expectation of research: for instance, it would necessarily be impossible when researching England football managers. Hence Delamont is mistaken to see this as a special problem for autoethnography.

Moreover, there is special concern here with the ethical: with the ethical treatment of subjects, as well as on ethical treatment *within* the practices under investigation. This does not offer any special solution here; but it is an additional reminder of vigilance on this point.

Then Delamont’s contrast between the experiential and the analytic is confused: she says that autoethnography is “... all experience, and is noticeably lacking in *analytic* outcome” (Delamont 2007, pp 1-2: her emphasis). But whether any example, or any case, of autoethnography has

an analytic outcome depends both on the case and on the force given to the term “analytic”. And, unlike some versions, the view of autoethnography here does not prioritise the evocative when there is no possibility of critique: so, there are, for example, no poems in ‘my story’ - it is precisely a move to make it analytic. Like the response to the objection above, our version presents a detachment fully consistent with what might be hope for analysing the contexts presented: but it recognises both that any analysis must give weight to how the event is characterised by the agent (which may well be in experiential terms) and that we need to analyse what we value. To the degree that Delamont seems to ignore this, her criticism exposes flaws in her view of research.

Finally, the suggestion that autoethnography “...focuses on the wrong side of the power divide” (Delamont 2007, p 5) assumes that the sociological gaze should only fall on the powerless — but why? This is an issue to which to return, but surely (when the autoethnographical subject were powerful) that might itself be a reason to address it. Moreover, if my own report of autoethnography might stress that it was empowering (see section 5.1) it certainly did not feel like a situation where I had control. In fact, it seems to me to be a data-source much like any other — one’s data depends primarily on the state of the world, on facts beyond one’s immediate control. Of course, I could always modify ‘my story’: but why should I want to? Facts beyond my control were typically relevant here; since this was, after all, a search for truth.

These four objections have not got to the heart of Delamont’s critique of autoethnography. She puts it in the other two objections; but, at heart, the worries seem to be that the autoethnographer is unregulated by the outside world (and hence prone to self-indulgence): hence, autoethnography is “lazy” in the two ways sketched initially — one does not need to search far for one’s subjects, and one does not need to do much to turn the utterances of those subjects into data; or, if this is different, to ensure its soundness and robustness as data.

But these concerns, if ever justified for some versions of autoethnography, have no place applied to that practiced here: for it is not true that “[i]t abrogates our duty to go out and collect data”, not least because, here, there is a subtle relationship between the autoethnography and the interviews. Since one use of the interviews is to suggest a kind of generality for the data derived from ‘my story’ (that it is not unique), it follows that there is a concern to notice commonalities between the events (including the evocative charge of those events) reported in the interviews and those integral to ‘my story’. Insofar as there is a kind of confirmation in finding, in an interview, an evocative impact similar to one from ‘my story’, there is a concern to connect the events discussed to the ‘real world’; to go beyond the world of ‘how it seemed to me’ to something of the emotional impact on human beings — not, of course, *all* human beings in *all* contexts, but (at least) *these* persons in these (similar) contexts. So there are resources for the critique of what is said either in interview or autoethnography — for instance, looking back, perhaps my view appears unduly coloured by this or that event. Throughout my own story for example, I refer to negative aspects of learning to dance and especially when shouting and ritual humiliation was used as a form of teaching method. Through the interviews I carried out I discovered that being shouted at or being humiliated in dance class was not something that was unique to me and my training experiences. Being shouted at in the dance studio was something that each of the interviewees mentioned in their interviews and it was clearly a method that all of us were familiar with – even though there was some fairly weak attempts to make a case justifying our teachers shouting at us because they were trying to get the best performance out of us and really wanted us to do well. And part of the point here is that both interview and autoethnographic process are in broadly the same position here: both can be reconsidered for soundness and robustness. In this sense, the autoethnography is treated like a (special kind of) interview. Importantly, in both cases, the *researcher* makes the key decisions; especially, as to what is and what is not data; and how reliable it is. And this phase is separated in principle, if not in practice, from the data-collection phase (McFee 2010, pp 166-167). Hence, the process here is a

*realist* one (McFee 2010 p 78): we take for granted that there is something there to be ‘captured’ by the research process, that there are ‘facts of the matter’ to be discerned by research (if things go well); but we insist that some of these facts are experiential, emotional, evocative ... and hence suitably investigated through autoethnography. Moreover, we do not insist on one single version of these ‘facts’, but rather admit that different perspectives might usefully be taken of them. Hence the development of any perspective (say, in the autoethnography) draws on comparisons, real or implicit, with other perspectives. This process is not straight-forward; and, in showing both its transparency and its ‘working through’ in practice, this is one way in which its robustness might be demonstrated to the reader. So the operation of this process is a complex and difficult one, not at all the “lazy” option Delamont imagines.

Delamont’s final objection is also revealing: she urges that “‘we’ are not interesting enough ...” (Delamont 2007, p 5). This is precisely what is denied here; and in two ways. First, who is this “we”? If it is confined to academic researchers, one might perhaps agree: but, as in the case here, although the role as practitioner is clear, ‘my story’ draws primarily on aspects of experience other than those of the researcher *as researcher*. Instead, the researcher’s perspective is made valuable here as the perspective of the dancer-teacher in training (or something similar). Once the importance of an expressive dimension is granted, the experience (and especially the remembered experience) of the practitioner becomes of value; and that is what the autoethnography offers. Second, there is a peculiar disempowerment in thinking, as Delamont does, that “‘we’ are not interesting enough ...”: why not? Again this returns us to Delamont’s point 4 above: for, in thus taking “we” to be of no particular interest, it implies that we are of no real value. But the question of the value of the practitioner — in particular, in contrast to the value which seems to be implied by the treatment of those practitioners through their training — has been fundamental throughout. Indeed, much here could be re-cast as a set of questions about the presentation of *worthwhile-ness* to the dancer-in-training. So this research design could not profitably start from an assumption (like Delamont’s) that the

lives of its central subjects were not interesting enough to be worth researching: that would beg the question against the whole design — here, we have preferred to discuss its worthwhile-ness from the vantage point of having attempted it.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This Chapter has led us through the variety of qualitative data collection methods that have been used to gather the data for this study. In this chapter, then, we discovered that the original plan for the data collection did not materialise in quite the way it was intended and adjustments had to be made to the plan in order to achieve sufficient data for the study. With the reflective logs not delivering the sort of rich data expected, greater importance had to be put on the video interviews. However, as the number of interviews had dropped to four from a potential twenty, a method that the researcher was unfamiliar with was chosen to fill the gap – autoethnography. It seemed as though this method would become the primary data source in the empirical aspect of this study. The challenges of using this method were discussed, along with the benefits of having unique data that, although highly personal, can still be corroborated, in parts. So, above, there is a defence both of this methodology in general and of the decision to use it here, explained in terms of its appropriateness to the questions (about emotional impact) being asked.

An unexpected bonus arrived in the form of one interviewee, Isla, relinquishing her anonymity which has resulted in being able to use clips of her video interview data (on the accompanying DVD) to demonstrate particular visual points relating to the data and also relating to non-verbal communication. Thus it made sense to give due weight to the interviews, especially this one; and to recognise their usefulness in the validations of aspects of the autoethnography, as well as their value on their own behalf.

Isla's decision, and its impact on the overall design, was a definite 'up' in the data collection experience and just as there is an up, there were the

inevitable, one or two downs as well. So the next Chapter, looks at the 'ups and downs' of the data collection.

## **4 Ups and Downs of Data Collection**

It can be very frustrating to find out that, despite taking care to plan research and follow research guidelines carefully, things do not go quite as expected. When this happens, how one deals with the problems that arise is an important aspect of the whole research process and of course the outcome. In this chapter, the 'ups and downs' of the data collection process are reflected on. The problems encountered in carrying out this research, of which there were a number and the changes that resulted are identified. These bear on limitations encountered as the study developed; and of course the overcoming of some of these limitations. Also discussed is how some of these problems might have been prevented or at least the risk of the problems occurring reduced to some degree. In addition some personal ups and downs related to the data collection and the research experience as a whole are discussed. We begin with the ups and downs that arose out of securing participants for the research.

### ***4.1 Upon reflection***

The reflective logs were intended by BBO as an assessed reflective diary whereby teaching students on the courses would record their learning and progress as well as concerns and plans.<sup>37</sup> In this way they would also develop useful critical skills relating to their teaching learning, planning and development. Initially, therefore, it was thought that this would yield data-rich reflective logs showing the movement of body-centred practice to person-centred practice since that seemed promised by the programme in which the students with the logs were engaged. However this was not the case. Yes, there were a few data-rich logs but generally they were not rich in the type of data that one would expect to find. Recall that the dual purpose of these logs in this investigation was both to present the contemporary experience of the

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<sup>37</sup> At that point in time the logs were assessed as an extra rather than being part of any particular unit.



students and to see that experience in the light of their past training. So the expectation was that the reflective logs would document the experience of this transition: The sort of data that would show that the ‘teaching by terror’ ways of the past were exactly that, in the past.

The reflective logs submitted by students, were assessed as part of the course in the same way as an essay or other marked piece of work. And as mentioned in the previous chapter, BBO consented for a selection of submitted reflective logs to be included in this research. A total of 158 logs were looked at and although not specifically asked to anonymise any identifiable data in extracts used, this has been done as failing to do so would be unethical and not in line with research ethics (Denscombe 2002 pp 177-179). In this case, anonymising means that the code RL has been used to refer to ‘reflective log’ along with a letter of the alphabet, for example, RL-A, RL-B and so on in place of the names of the students so as not to identify them. In addition to this the names of any teachers, lecturers and others mentioned in the reflective logs have been substituted from an alphabetical list of names chosen at random. In this particular study nothing is gained by identifying the author of each of the passages from the reflective logs. Of course if for some reason, it had been thought that disclosing the authors of the reflective logs would be valuable, then written consent from each person would have been requested; and only if consent were obtained would their name have been included<sup>38</sup> in line with the following:

Research ethics are about being clear about the nature of the agreement you have entered into with the research subjects or contacts.

(Baxter et al. 2001 p 158)

These reflective logs from BBO teaching students were intended to provide a key part of the data by offering a good picture of how teaching students responded to the way they were being taught on the course.

This is not what occurred: many of the reflective logs did not provide rich data of the type hoped for. Some logs were very thin as far as providing

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<sup>38</sup> Consent matters are discussed in Chapter Three.

useful data – being more descriptive about what they had done. In some cases, the logs were almost list-like in their format providing little more than a list of work taught or exercises to be included in the next class. Some went beyond the list structure but offered little in the way of evidence of application of new learning and understanding in practice. The following extract from the ‘focus of work and significant learning this week’ section of a reflective log demonstrates this point.<sup>39</sup>

My focus of work for this week is to use my - so far, successful lesson structure and try to practice different teaching methods.

I generally rely on my knowledge of the syllabus and also on the basis that I have been taught by so many teachers who know and have guided me though correct placement. This experience I hold as my advantage as a teacher, and I strive to instil this into the children I teach.

And so as an example of what methods I practice, I am not sure that if asked I could give a specific example.

Code RL-D

Others offered a richer source of reflective data about their experience on the course giving detailed explanations about the how, why and what of their learning experiences. The following extract is a good comparison of the sort of rich data that some reflective logs offered:

The teacher then, quite forcefully, told the pupils off for not remembering the dance, it was obvious that the pupils had never seen this side of the teacher before as all the pupils went silent. She then allowed them time to work it out between them before asking to see it again, all the pupils went into small groups and worked the dance through, no pupils asked the teacher for help. Before she asked to see it again she apologised to the pupils for being so stern with them earlier, but explained to them why they need to remember what they did last week. Having seen the two ways that this teacher told the pupils off for not having remembered the dance, it was evident that the pupils responded better to the softer approach. As after the teacher had explained why it was so important for them to remember the dance the students went back to asking questions on the steps they couldn't remember.

Code RL-C

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<sup>39</sup> All names have been changed.

These reflective logs formed part of each student's portfolio and were intended to be a tool to help students take responsibility for their own learning in both an analytical and critical way. Students could negotiate with their personal tutor as to how often they would send in their logs. For example, some students preferred to do weekly logs and others preferred to send them in monthly. Some students made little use of the reflective log system despite them being part of the overall coursework towards their certificate or diploma. Others found them to be an integral part of their learning and development and used them to critically evaluate their own understanding and progress. These students also gained additional feedback from their tutors in this way. It is worth noting that the latest syllabus for the Diploma includes the reflective logs in a separate reflective practice unit. It is assumed that the reason for making this an assessed unit rather than an assessed extra follows on from discussions held previously concerning the low return in some cases, of the logs. And also to ensure that the logs become a much more valued and useful part of the course as outlined in the excerpt from the latest syllabus below:

**UNIT 9. REFLECTIVE PRACTICE** – This Unit underpins all the learning on the course but is particularly significant to the work-based element of teaching in a dance school/college or other learning environment. You will write a Reflective Journal which you will submit to your Mentor each month and receive feedback. There are also 2 assessed assignments drawn from your Journal which analyse a critical incident in your work-based learning which has had a significant impact on your development as a teacher.

In looking at the reflective logs comments of particular interest related to experiences of teaching and learning on the course for comparison with body-centred and person-centred dance teaching methods to determine whether there is evidence to show that ethical practice is being actively promoted and delivered or whether the old ways are being carried forward into the next generation of teaching courses. For example, where a comment had been made about the student's view of the delivery of teaching being received on the course and particularly in relation to training the student teachers how to teach.

I do find Chris and Andi's teaching style very difficult. We did not have any tears in the class today but it still cost everyone so much in nervous energy. Chris kept asking every candidate to take a deep breath and calm down but we were all hanging from the ceiling. I wish they could find a better way of teaching these teaching classes. If I had taught this class, I would have approached it very differently, that is for sure.

Code RL-A

My request would be to have another teacher present when we have Andi or Chris again so that they can see how they treat us in class or so it stops them from taking liberties.

Code RL-B

These comments clearly raise concerns about the way that certain aspects of the courses were being delivered. They certainly do not suggest that the old methods of 'teaching by terror' are a thing of the past. However, while suggestive there is really not enough detail to be confident that their current experience reflected a broadly 'teaching by terror' style of teaching. The results did not really capture the experience of those students. Indeed, too many of the logs were thin regarding the data they offered. Their interpretation could not reinforce the anecdotal view of dance teaching. Therefore the plan to use them as a rich source of key data was not going according to plan. This lack of success with the reflective logs resulted in re-thinking the plan and considering, importantly, whether sufficient data would be collected for the project.

Written sources of data of the sort generated by the teaching students, turned out to be problematic generally. Not only were the logs a disappointment, but the written statements requested from those who had volunteered to be interviewees also turned out to be problematic in that they negatively affected the interview numbers almost to the point of disaster. What started out as a healthy number of participants (around 20) reduced to four mainly, it seems, because of the request to write a short statement about their experiences of learning to dance and learning to teach. The idea behind these short written statements was to provide a bit of background data that would help with prompts and so on during the semi-structured interviews. Similarly to the logs, the written statements did not produce the

anticipated rich-data that they might have. Not only that, the number of interviewees went down to four. Once again the plan required further re-thinking. It was at this point that it was realised that there was good access to one other teacher of dance, the one whose experience motivated the study as a whole (namely, myself). I decided to use my own story as data. After all, my own experiences of learning to dance and learning to teach are a key reason why I was doing this project. Recording my own experiences would be similar to the semi-structured interviews except I would be, in effect, interviewing myself. In order to do this, autoethnography, an unfamiliar qualitative research method would be employed. Therefore, in-depth discussions with the supervisor of the thesis, as well as, reading about this method, highlighted the need to be clear about what autoethnography is and importantly what it is not – it is not an autobiography, for example, as explained in the previous chapter. This investigation developed some confidence in the method (described in Chapter Three). The importance of making this decision meant that we were on-track again to collect sufficient data to continue with this project: the roller-coaster ride of data collection was once again chugging along.

Deciding to use my own story naïvely seemed like an easy option in the beginning. As time went on though, it became increasingly challenging to write about my own experiences in a way that was honest (as far as my memories served me) but with regard for those in my story who are no longer here – no longer able to defend themselves or able to explain why they did things the way they did. In particular, it was especially difficult to address the issue of my mother. She was my dance teacher for many years and this invariably resulted in many challenges, successes and failures. In particular, her example had provided me with a model of dance teaching - initially, of course, the only one I knew. Further, her influence bears in *some* way on my decision to undertake this investigation. I had until this point never really reflected on these issues and so it seemed that the time was right to open my eyes and look back at these experiences to see what I could learn from them. I could certainly relate to the overly authoritarian teacher in the dance studio wielding an 'invisible big stick' – in my case it was not just something that

lasted in the studio but it over spilled into my private life (if I had such a thing) long after the other students had gone home. Therefore I was expecting to churn up a lot of negative energy concerning my experiences about how my mother treated me in the dance studio. And also how it felt that the dance teacher figure was stronger than the mother figure and that this meant I was loved (or so it seemed at the time) dependent on my dance performance rather than just for being me. One of the ways that I addressed the issue of my late mother's role in writing my autoethnography involved giving a presentation, 'The Others in My Story', at a One Day Symposium on reading and writing research at Sussex University in May 2007. I found this helpful as I discovered that I do not harbour negative feelings about the way I was taught and treated in the way that I thought I did and I say more about this in Chapter Five. What I did discover was an appreciation of the knowledge, skills and understanding that I gained from my mother over the years she was my teacher and beyond. I realise that, although there were things wrong with the way I was taught and treated as a dancer, she was not approaching dance teaching very differently to anyone else at that time: we have learnt from the history section in Chapter Two that 'teaching by terror' was how it was done at that time. And I also realise that, had she still been alive today, she would have no doubt supported and encouraged me in doing this research as she too would be able to see that the overly authoritarian methods of the past need to change to encompass those new methods that are consistent with the flourishing of the whole person and not just the dancer (Botham 2000a, Brinson and Dick 1996, Buckroyd 2000, Daniels 2009).

#### **4.1.1 All good plans and all that**

Despite having thought through the plan of the research design things did not all go according to plan. So what happened to cause this? Well, the reasons were quite clear. One, mentioned above, was just that the potential participants did not realise they would be asked to write about their experiences; and this method of communication was uncongenial to them. But second and relatedly, the participants who initially signed up to

participate in the research project did so before they had written work to do on the BBO course. As the deadline date for the short written statement for the research approached, many of the students were already finding the course very demanding in respect of the sheer amount of work they had to cope with and in particular the written work. For those who had not previously or not recently done academic study, it came as quite a shock to the system and as a result the majority of them changed their minds regarding participating. It seems that once it hit home just how much study was required in order to get through the course, the majority of the teaching students realised that they had to focus on their course work without having any distractions such as this research project. Of course this was disappointing but, as an important element of research ethics concerns the ability for participants to withdraw at any time without question (Botham 2001b, McFee 2006 pp 13-30, Welsh 1999), there was nothing to be done other than thank them for their interest and let them concentrate on their studies. What had at first seemed a good opportunity to access participants, in fact did not turn out this way at all. Although those who withdrew were not asked for a reason, some wanted to give an explanation and, as suspected, the combination of a completely different style of teaching course plus the quantity of work to get through in a short time span (January to September) were the reasons given. After all a good many dance teachers in the private sector are not full time teachers of dance. They often have another full-time or part-time career or 'day job' as it is referred to. This makes it much easier to understand why this new style of teaching course with its academic as well as practical demands was for some, rather overwhelming. For not only were they holding down a full or part-time 'day job', but they were also teaching dance on one or more evenings and possibly weekends too. Add family commitments and the fact that they had to travel each month to London for the course from all over the UK, and the picture becomes clearer as to why they had enough on their plate. So although only a short statement about their learning to dance and learning to teach experiences was requested, it was in effect, 'the straw that broke the camel's back': it was one thing too many for them to cope with.

Reflecting on what has been learned from this it is not only important to be clear about what the researcher wants to achieve but to consider how easy, or not, it might be for the participants to achieve. If this same research was to be done again, for example, it is likely to opt to go straight to interview rather than request written statements. However, before choosing to do this, consideration would need to be given as to whether with a different target population, one perhaps more used to writing, it would be worth trying to request written statements once again, if the risk of losing participants seemed low, and especially if the potential of getting some rich, background data seemed likely.

On reflection, if the participant group had been larger, it is likely that finding time to fit in all the interviews would have presented its own set of problems. As the teachers came from all over the UK, there was always a rush at the end of the weekend as everyone hurried off to catch planes, trains, buses or jump into cars to begin long journeys home. The intensity of the two days of weekend learning meant that most students were worn out by the end of the first day and just wanted to get something to eat, possibly read through some material for the following day and then have a rest before embarking on the next day full of lectures and seminars. This meant that the initial idea of interviewing participants when they were in London for the course was not a good one. Future research would need to take this into consideration during the planning stage and explore other ways of accessing the participants away from the course.

At first there was a feeling of panic because it was thought that sufficient data could not be gathered to produce anything meaningful but then came the realisation of two facts that were important here. The first was that even a small number of in-depth interviews could generate a large amount of data to analyse. But, if the main interest in these data resided in exploring the viability of the anecdotal claims about contemporary dance teaching, and its connection to the 'teaching by terror' of the past, a small number of interviews might achieve all that was needed. This fact was strengthened both by the decision to use video interviewing and by Isla's generous



decision to permit the setting aside of those considerations of anonymity that might hamper the use of the videos as data.

The second fact (mentioned above) was the recognition that I could be a research participant myself, deploying autoethnography as the means to gather the data. But, as stated above, utilising autoethnography meant using a research method that was neither part of the original plan and nor one I was familiar with. Therefore it was necessary to learn about this method of qualitative research in order to be able to ensure that the difference between say 'telling your own tale' as an exposé and telling it to produce research data was understood. In the end, the combination of interview data and autoethnographic data worked well to provide useful comparisons to consider and contrast. For example, something in my own experience that I had always put down to being the teacher's daughter turned out not to be the case at all. This bears, in particular, on consideration of fairness within the teaching context - for I had explained some unfairness as a consequence of my being the teacher's daughter. For instance, I had always believed that my involvement in preparing and re-sealing the studio floor with shellac varnish was to do with me being the teacher's daughter and not to do with the training itself<sup>40</sup>. Certainly none of our other students were asked or expected to help with the floor. However, data gathered from one interview demonstrates that looking after the studio floor was something that this research participant also had to do and it was just accepted as part of the training:

... and we would walk the dogs... Linseed oiling the floor and clean the bins out.

(Iona, interview 2005)

As once one sees that one's position is not so unusual it can (paradoxically) make it easier to draw on one's own case.

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<sup>40</sup> See 5.1.1 Floored - Chapter Five.

#### **4.1.2 When it does not go to plan**

It can be very disheartening when things do not go according to plan. So we will begin with a discussion about what the options are when the plans do not materialise. And it will lead into the next section demonstrating how one can focus on the data that one does have and work with that. Of course, at times it can feel as if everything is working against you. But once over the initial emotional hurdle, one must start to look for ways of getting over the problems so that something can still be made of what one does have – focusing on the positive rather than the negative. Let us begin with saying something about the other interviews that did not materialise, and why that was. The original intention was to also interview some teachers who had also had experience as professional dancers and to compare their experiences of learning to dance and learning to teach with the other interview data from the teaching students. So that involved interviewing some senior figures in the field. But this did not go smoothly. For example, one of these potential interviewees wanted a written list of questions before the interview so that she could prepare her answers. As the structure and concept of the interviews was purposely very open, it would not have been in keeping with this to provide a list of questions for the interviewee to answer. For another such 'senior figure', interview did not take place - apparently due to the difficulty of fitting in an interview during the course. Although we had thought that it would be possible to fit in an interview say, at the end of a teaching day, this did not happen for a number of reasons. More exactly, there always seemed a new reason, or a new demand on the interviewee's time. And eventually, it was realised that it was just not going to happen. The last one, which almost took place but not quite, was organised by telephone and email; and arrangements were made for the researcher to travel to this teacher for the interview. As it was some 200 or so miles and the interview was scheduled for the early morning, it involved travelling up the night before and staying at a small local hotel to ensure that the interview would happen on time. On arriving for the interview the researcher was made welcome by the teacher. Following a short chat about the research topic the teacher explained that she had arranged for one of the other teachers to show the interviewer

around the school as she had another appointment and could not spare the time to do the interview that day. She suggested we do it another day clearly not appreciating that to do so would involve another round trip of over 400 miles. Although it was believed that a firm arrangement had been made and participant information sheet and consent form sent by email (to be collected on the day) and discussed by phone, the interview did not happen. Obviously this was extremely disappointing, in addition to the time, money and effort expended.

In discussing interviews, Bell (1996 pp 96-101) draws attention to the need for the researcher to fit in with interviewee's plans, however inconvenient it may be. However, as we see above, one can do this and still not get the interview. With regard to the long and fruitless trip, it is worth adding a cautionary note to double check and then double check again, where interviews are organised at some distance away to try to avoid, the sort of problem encountered here. Gillham (2000 pp 9-15) warns of the time and financial costs of carrying out face-to-face interviews. As he points out, the actual time spent recording the interview is nothing in comparison to, say, the time one might spend travelling to and from the interview location and setting up and so on. And then, of course, there is the transcribing and the analysis. With regard to this study one has to agree, especially with regard to the amount of time spent on transcribing data. It was not all a waste of time as two key things have been learned. Firstly, that it takes an extraordinary amount of time to process interview data and analyse it. Secondly, it is better to plan ahead when using video interviewing as to how the data can be transcribed without being unethical. For example, a lot of time could have been saved had permission been sought from the interviewees in the beginning for the video to be professionally transcribed. This is something to consider in the future. If this were not possible, then using up-to-date video technology would make it much easier to separate the audio and the video than it was in this case. All of this was a learning curve and it was necessary to look for ways to make the best out of the data that we did have.

### **4.1.3 Making the best out of what you have**

There was good reason for wanting to have both the syllabi and the reflective logs rather than just one. The Diploma syllabus provides us with a list of content to be covered during the course - it tells us what the course is all about or supposed to be all about. The reflective logs, in contrast, are the students' experiences of being on the course and of learning to teach. As we know from earlier the intended rich meaningful data about these experiences and more specifically evidence of the movement of body-centred practice to person-centred practice did not materialise. And therefore they did not provide convincing evidence of a change in the approach to dance teaching in the private sector. Although the reflective log sheet provided students with indications of which aspects of their learning experiences to reflect on, these prompts were often ignored and therefore they are quite unfocused at times. In contrast, with interviews, it is possible to probe, and prompt (Denscombe 2003, Gillham 2000 pp 45-52) and in this way have some control over the type of data that will emerge. Indeed, Gillham (2000 pp 45-52) discusses the necessary, unobtrusive, steering for direction that is required when using 'open' questions during interviewing, to ensure that you reach your research aims. The lack of success with the reflective logs made it especially important to seek richer data through the interviews. And when the numbers of participants reduced to four, another diversion added autoethnography in the data collection mix in order to achieve a sufficient amount of data for the study to continue. This taught one to think closely about what the data were for, rather than simply assuming that the norm for other kinds of data-gathering would apply in this context. The research process here was certainly not ideal but it enabled the best to be made out of what might have been disastrous as far as this research was concerned. And although it might seem as if it was mainly downs rather than ups, there have been some ups along the way as we see next.

#### **4.1.4 Remember to mention the ups**

Certain sections, when reading through the chapters, trigger a memory of something that happened, or did not happen regarding the data. A very enjoyable part of the study was spending time researching the history of the private dance teaching sector for Chapter Two and spending time at BBO headquarters going through archives of *The Dancer* magazines from the 1920s to 1940s, where in addition to finding the images used in this study I also discovered my mother's name on a number of lists of examination results (Honours, of course) and also unexpectedly, a photograph of her in one magazine.

It has been very enjoyable having the video to go back to time and time again. Time-consuming it might be, but to see the visual nuances in comparison even with the audio makes one realise how much we lose by not having the whole picture. To then compare it with the transcription makes one appreciate the video even more.

Overall, then, remembering the ups of data collection can be some kind of antidote to the inevitable downs which can form a depressing part of the life of the (fairly) isolated researcher.

Taking this rollercoaster of a data collection ride also, inevitably impacts on personal aspects of a researcher's life as is acknowledged briefly in the next section.

#### **4.1.5 Personal ups and downs**

In discussing ups and downs of data collection, Baxter, Hughes et al. (2001 pp 185-188) draw attention to the fact that data collection can be a very lengthy and demanding part of the research process. They highlight that the process can be both lonely and obsessive. I can certainly relate to the lonely or isolated aspect: although to be fair I do not necessarily mind being on my own when I am working. With few distractions, I can get immersed in my train of thought without constant interruptions. The other side of the lonely coin though is about all the stuff about the research that goes around and around

in one's head awaiting decisions to be made about it. This can be frustrating at times especially when you find yourself waking up in the morning thinking about it and inevitably going to sleep at night thinking about it. For a while I took to leaving a notepad and pen on my bedside table to note down anything that came to mind in the middle of the night: too many times I had to get out of bed to find a pen and paper because something had come into my mind that I knew I wanted to remember the next day.

This project has taken a long time, which was not the intention when I first started out. I will say more about that shortly. At one time, (it seems a lifetime ago now), I was a member of an action learning group or set as they are often called: we were a small group of PhD students and we met whilst taking the Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma in Research Methodology course. The concept of action learning proved very useful as a way to combat some of the isolation associated with our studies and also to focus on aspects of what we were working on at the time. The group went some way to reducing the feeling of isolation that were part and parcel of being a PhD student (Phillips and Pugh 2000). Unfortunately the group, which was already very small, gradually reduced down until it stopped altogether. This was a pity because, as McGill and Beaty indicate below, through the action learning group we did motivate each other to get some things done:

Action learning is a process of learning and reflection that happens with the support of a group or 'set' of colleagues working with real problems with the intention of getting things done.

(McGill and Beaty 2001 p 1)

The other element mentioned above, obsession (Baxter et al. 2001), came and went from time to time, through my research journey. The project was always at the back of my mind and so, in that way, affected decisions in my private and working lives whether to do things or not. Even if I did not feel like working on my research, I would choose not to do things because I knew that I should be working on my research. As mentioned in the introduction, I had a couple of breaks during this journey for health reasons: I needed to take some time away from my studies to focus on my health. However, although technically I was not working on my research, I found it impossible

not to think about it; and perhaps it was at these times that I became most obsessive: worrying that it might not get done or feeling guilty for taking time out, even although it was for very good reasons.

One more issue that has been present throughout this project, which at times has made the journey very difficult, is the blinkered way that many in my own profession view the current situation regarding dance teaching in the private sector: not seeing the practices for what they are; not seeing the problems and therefore not admitting that there are any problems that need to be fixed. This, for me, has probably been the loneliest part of the journey: the part where instead of having lots of colleagues in the profession to discuss issues with, I have found myself on the outside. It is not the being on the outside that is the problem, it is the being on the outside because I want to come to fruition what the others say they want - I want dance teaching practices to be ethical in order that the experiences of those learning to dance and learning to teach in the future are positive and not related to 'teaching by terror' or the typical, image of a dance teacher wielding a 'big stick'. I want the dance profession and, in particular, the private dance teaching sector to recognise the need to leave the old images of dance teaching in the past so that we can improve teaching standards for all concerned.

In raising awareness, here, of just some of the ups and downs encountered during the data collection journey, we have, hopefully, highlighted the sorts of issues that, researchers have to consider (and be prepared to adapt when necessary) when planning and carrying out data collection. In addition, we have acknowledged places where one would do something different, were one starting again; or where one's present practice is at least partly a reflection of some difficulty encountered - or one's way of overcoming it.

## 5 Presenting the Data

Dance teachers develop a point of view over time by listening to the wisdom of ancestors and to the truths of personal experience within the body. If a teacher relies only on the messages of past teachers and does not explore truths viscerally, her approach becomes didactic and shallow.

(Erkert 2003 p 5)

For reasons that should be clear from the previous Chapter, the empirical data are here presented in a different chronological order to how the research was done. Of course, some of the data we have already seen: for Chapter Three also highlighted the history, although they have been separated out. As we will discover, the findings here amount to consolidating the fact that there is a long-standing problem that has not gone away. So, first, the authoritarian style of teaching called 'teaching by terror', was a feature of the training of private sector dance teachers, to judge by those who were the research participants here. Further, we will see that unethical teaching still exists despite the good intentions of the dance societies. Indeed, we will see that although there might be these 'good intentions' to move forward towards person-centred practices, and leave the body-centred practices behind, in fact, this has not happened as claimed.

Data from the autoethnography and interviews demonstrate, in accordance with what we found in Chapter Two, that dance teaching practices of the past were indeed the sort of 'teaching by terror' or body-centred practices that we expected to find. We further find that these practices of the past have not disappeared as was suggested by the claims for the new-style teacher qualifications, and for the training courses set up to deliver these qualifications. In fact, the data demonstrate that these methods of the past are still here. It seems that although these claims exist on paper in the syllabi, for example, they have not been embodied into practice.



## **5.1 My story: dance and me**

The autoethnographic narrative “My story”, covers, the main period in my life when I was learning to dance and learning to teach dance, from around the age of about eight or nine years old to about the age of 21. Of course, since to be accurate I have never stopped learning about my craft and my profession, inevitably I stray outside of this period from time to time. So the period of time I am reflecting on covers my starting to learn to dance through to when I gained my higher dance teaching qualifications (Fellowships) at age 21<sup>41</sup>. I look back at some of the things that I remember about my own training and emergence as a dancer and teacher: some of the things that stand out in my memories of that time in my life.

I have added comment and discussion along the way from the interview data as it seems to make more sense to draw on these as we go along rather than waiting until my story is complete.

Before arriving at the story below I re-looked at My Story and modified it – like a traditional researcher giving the written work back to the research participant to check. Did I write it exactly as I wanted to? No, so with time and distance it has been modified.

*Dancing has been part of my life for so long that it difficult for me to imagine a life without it. I can't remember exactly what age I was when I started but it must have been somewhere about eight or nine years old, so relatively late compared with those who started when they were two and a half. I don't really remember asking to go to dancing school but my parents said that I did and this certainly would have fitted in with my love of activity and turning upside down at every opportunity.*

*At first I was sent along to a local dancing teacher to do ballet and tap and I vaguely remember the teacher and the class. I was not there long although, long enough to take my primary ballet examination. I do recall once the examinations were announced my mother monitored my practise each day and corrected my work. I can still remember doing retirés (skips) over*

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<sup>41</sup> Since then I have gained a number of additional qualifications.

*and over again until she felt I was improving. Every day I showed her the steps and she would watch me intensely and correct what I was doing. She was obviously worried that I was not ready to take my examination. It never struck me as odd that my mother was able to correct my dance technique. But it paid off as I got the highest grade possible, Honours. I did not return to my first dancing school. My mother decided to return to the career she had before I was born and opened a dancing school. So my life, as the dancing teacher's daughter began and I spent my time at a variety of dance classes after school most days and Saturdays too. I loved dancing and I seemed to be quite good at it. I mean I was able to do even the challenging steps. They seemed to come quite naturally to me. The things that didn't come naturally were the sort of flat turnout that is so revered in classical ballet and I didn't have the ultra high arch in my feet that again is so desirable in the pointed foot in ballet. So I had to work harder to try to improve my turnout and the arches in my feet. I studied all the disciplines that were taught at the dancing school including: ballet; tap; modern dance; Highland; national; musical comedy (which was done at that time) and any other genres that came along. We did a lot of examinations, medal tests as well as shows and performances. And I competed in Highland competitions and also Stage competitions. So we were always preparing for some exam, medal test, competition or performance. We did BBO ballet and tap exams twice a year in the summer and winter. Then there were the BATD exams and medal tests in ballet, tap, modern, Highland and as new styles were introduced we did them too: majorette and baton twirling; Jazz dance; disco and so on. These exam sessions were held about twice a year. We also did UKA exams and medal tests and sometimes travelled from Glasgow to Edinburgh for them. And finally I also did SDTA (Scottish Dance Teacher Alliance) Highland exams and medal tests maybe once a year, I can't really remember. Gosh it seems a lot now when I think about it. On top of this there was preparation for Highland competitions and stage competitions. As I recall it, I did several ballet classes each week – whatever the grade was. Early on they were all lower grades until the school became more established and then the higher level work was being done as well. Then I was in almost all the classes*

*covering all the dance genres. I literally danced from when I got home from school until classes finished for the day. There was always something to work for - something new to learn. And most of the time I loved it because I just loved to dance. I didn't notice how much I was doing - I danced almost every day. I don't know when I found time outside of class to do any practising of my own and yet I did. I can distinctly remember practising on my own even although I spent hours most days in class. I was conscious even from a relatively young age of nine or 10 that dance was hard work if it was to be done well. But I don't think I realised at that point that dance could be a never ending circle of frustration of never being able to do it as well as you wanted to.*

*I guess I always knew deep down that there were aspects of my dance training, teacher training and experiences as a professional dancer that made me feel very uncomfortable or not right. I recall the frequent instances of ritual humiliation that I experienced as a young dance student and also as a professional dancer. Even if I did know, and I am not sure that we did early on, that it was not right to treat people in this way there seemed little I could do about it – it seemed that I just had to put up with it. Learning to put up with the humiliation was all part and parcel of learning to dance. It wasn't just one teacher or one examiner (or even one choreographer after I started working as a professional dancer). Looking back they all did it to some degree (well, with one or two exceptions). They would often use humiliation if you didn't manage to get the hang of the correction – as if that would somehow improve your technique – though sometimes I suppose it did. You would try so hard that it hurt and then they would do it again because 'it had worked'. But it didn't work really because feeling scared to put a foot wrong did not make me a better dancer – of that I am convinced. What did help were the times I was genuinely praised for doing something well or doing something better. The problem was that I would get shouted at for doing something wrong and then be terrified to move and that would get me another telling off for not trying or not putting in enough effort. It wasn't all like this of course, at times we had fun, lots of fun but at the back of my mind I never quite knew when the fun*

*would stop and I would once again be at the receiving end of some pretty tough corrections.*

It was not just me who found some aspects of training difficult. If we look to Isla's data, we find that she, too, had reservations about some aspects of her training and those who taught her at that time. As she reports her teacher:

*...she was in my eyes being 60 an old lady who walked around on a stick. And she just shouted a lot.*

And if we turn to the other interview data we find that Ailsa also found her teacher's approach significant enough to mention when discussing her days as a young dance student, saying:

*....and the teacher would like to sort of shout rather a lot. Um, but it never got um - although some children would be frightened a bit, I think you sort of get to a level where you get used to it. Which is not really a good thing I don't suppose.*

Having others identify similar concerns about these issues suggest that there might be something consistent here relating to how training at that time was received by students.

*Where my training was concerned I was different. I was not one of the students. I was the teacher's daughter. This meant that certain responsibilities were draped onto my shoulders. I was expected to behave in a way becoming with being the teacher's daughter – whatever that might be. Do I know what this is even now? No I don't think I do. I do know that I always had to watch what I said and did. If I did anything that was viewed as remotely not acceptable behaviour from the dancing teacher's daughter then I would know about it very quickly. As the dancing teacher's daughter I was expected to take the blame for everything in the dance studio – students talking, for example. I remember on at least one occasion I was not even in the class when I was told off for talking. So there were times that I felt that I was unfairly treated. I am not saying that I was a 'Miss Goody Two Shoes'. I could misbehave the same as anyone else but I certainly had restrictions on what I could and could not do simply because the teacher was my mother. Probably the difficult one was the 'be friendly but don't get too friendly' in*

*relation to the pupils. Keeping a sense of distance was not easy as so much of my time was taken up at the dancing school: and looking back it was not a rule that my mother rigorously adhered to herself as there were pupils and their families that became friends too - friends that I am still in touch with decades later.*

It was interesting for me to note that the ‘friendly but not too friendly’ advice was not something I experienced because I was the daughter of the person who owned the dancing school. I had always thought that this advice was directly related to me because of this relationship – for that was how it seemed at the time. However, Iona mentioned in her interview that she received similar advice from her teacher regarding how friendly or not, to allow one’s self to become with pupils, as the following passage indicates:

And I think you should be friendly with them but you can’t be friends. But having said that by the time I was an adult it was different and more on a different footing.

(Iona, interview 2005)

It would seem that this advice was really general advice directed at those aspiring to be dance teachers running their classes and dancing schools in an effort to maintain some distance between business and personal lives. And I can see what the idea behind it was now, but of course when I was a young dance student of say 12 or 13 years old, it was difficult trying to be friendly if I was not allowed to be friends - especially when most of my time outside of school was spent in the dance school. The discipline of the dance class clearly stretched beyond the dance studio and into our private lives even dictating who we could or could not, be friends with. And it was not just friends that were monitored. According to both Isla and Iona, their dance teachers took a close interest in their boyfriends or checked their men friends, as we can see from the following passages:

We had it all and the boyfriends were monitored as well... ..It was great, “Do you behave yourself?” “Yes” you know..... But it was great, I mean that was fun but that was, that was what it was all about and it was, they looked after you.

(Iona, interview 2005)

And I mean going back to Pat his other enormous side was that he, he looked after us as human beings too. He desperately cared where we went to, what auditions we went to. What men I went out with. For instance they all had to be checked by him. Erm...he took a great interest on the human side of things and it mattered to him what was happening in our lives.

(Isla, interview 2005)

In my own situation, as the dance teacher was my mother, it is not surprising that she wanted to know about any boyfriends I went out with. That is something that one would expect a parent to do. But it is more difficult to understand a dance teacher stepping out of their role as teacher to check whom their students are going out. What right does a dance teacher have to check up on these things? What qualifications do they have for doing this? Being a dance teacher does not qualify you in 'boyfriend checking'. Even when we consider this, and clearly it was not just one person who experienced this, then it is difficult to know what these teachers would be looking for. For example, a murderer does not have 'murderer' stamped on his or her forehead. Furthermore, it is also difficult to grasp exactly what these teachers are doing this for – what kind of boy or man, for example, were they looking for? It appears from the data that the interest in boyfriends by the teachers was viewed as a positive thing and I wonder just how for example, students in other learning situations would react if their teachers were to monitor their friends and boyfriends in ways similar to the experiences of these dance students?

Dance is so often an all-engulfing activity. For those who take it seriously, it can take over one's life. Perhaps having the teacher monitor friends and acquaintances was simply viewed as an extension of the teaching role – a sort of paternalism. And yet it was happening at a time in a young person's life when one expects some degree of rebellion rather than conformity, suggesting that the discipline of the dance class, or 'teaching by terror' environment had something to do with it. What Buckroyd (2000 p 60) discusses below, concerning independence and responsibility of adolescents in professional dance training, illuminates one view of the issue here:

... With rare exceptions, institutions involved in professional dance training enact the parental functions that are appropriate to the care of children rather than adolescents. There are many rules about appearance, behaviour, punctuality and so on, which collectively recreate a highly controlling environment more appropriate for young children. In this situation, to rebel is to risk being excluded from the training, whereas to conform is to fail to perform one of the most important tasks of adolescence.

The controlling environment that Buckroyd refers to is viewed by so many in dance as a fundamental aspect of dance learning. Indeed parents over the decades, have sent their children to private dance schools because of the discipline they offer. However, the role of the teacher has limitations even where the students are apparently, willing conformists.

*In those early days there were lots of opportunities for us to perform in local events and shows. We danced and danced and danced. Performing came naturally to me. I worked hard to do my best in class but I always found that extra something to add to my performance for shows and exams. My memory was praised. I was able to remember dances with little effort and could easily replicate dance steps from films and the like. I would watch Fred Astaire and then dance a step or two from his performance. As well as the steps I would pay attention to particular aspects of his style. I seemed to have a knack for capturing the style. I loved Gene Kelly's style and would often practise hitting a typical Gene Kelly pose such as a wide second, a plié or tilt of the head. Maybe this was one of the reasons why I was used as a demonstrator in class or maybe it was just because it was convenient as I was always there. I would also help out with some of the students while the teacher (my mother) was taking some of the others. In this respect my teaching apprenticeship started early on and developed over many years. A lesson I learned early on was that the way that my mother spoke to me when she corrected my work (when we were on our own on a one-to-one situation) was not necessarily an acceptable way for me to speak to the students. I recall a particular incident in a highland dancing class when I was quite young. I was asked to go along the line of girls and check that their third positions were placed correctly. I went along the line adjusting any that were not quite in the right place. One girl's position was very poorly placed, so I*

*pulled myself up to my full height and asked sternly, 'and what do you call that'? Before the girl could respond, my mother stopped what she was doing and told me off in front of the whole class. Saying 'you can't talk to pupils like that'. I remember feeling embarrassed and confused because I was only copying teaching as I had experienced it. I realised at that point that there was one rule for me, and another for the pupils. This would become evident more and more as my training progressed and particularly during my adolescence - a difficult time for all dance students.*

We all learn, to some extent, by example - copying the way that others do things. Those we learn from are often seen as role models, who can be people who have status such as musicians or people in sport or indeed in our situation may even be the dance teacher (Botham 2003a pp 72-74, Naidoo and Wills 1994 p 187, Seymour 2001 pp 55-57). Since we learn from others, it is inevitable that they will influence what we learn but also how we learn:

Observe the manner in which the teacher explains different steps and exercises, and gives cues for performance or images that communicate movement qualities. By collecting these resources, you build a visual memory of teaching strategies and gain insights into your own teaching.

(Kassing and Jay 1998 p 4)

Clearly, in my case above, I thought I was doing the right thing by copying from my teacher or role model, but in this particular situation this was not desirable because the teacher behaviour that I was copying was not, in fact, the sort of teacher behaviour that was desirable to promote as a method to teach others by. There seems to be a lot of 'doing one thing but saying another' in the dance profession as we have learned from the data. And that is one of the reasons why teachers in training may be confused about what is required of them. However, there is evidence to show that unjust criticism during training can result in some teachers consciously changing their teaching methods to be more supportive of their students (Robson et al. 2002 p 173).

The passage from Iona's interviews below also confirms that dancers in training may copy from our own teachers - clearly Iona recognised that her



teaching was very strongly influenced to the point of being virtually the same as the teacher who taught her:

...because I picked up quite quickly when I was younger, from an age of eight or nine she would say "Iona go and help so and so." So that was the start in a way of the, the teaching grounding, albeit I was going to use exactly the same tone of voice as her, even at that age. Um, so, but that was the start of the, the teaching training without really even thinking about it....

...So she was my only teacher so I was obviously teaching the same way she was and um, so there, and using the same tone of voice probably because that's what I was used to all those years, um and while that wasn't wrong but years change and you know, fashions if you like or styles change, children change, develop, you know times have changed. So you've got to keep up and progress and I think it's so good to go off and listen and observe dance and have fun in their classes go off with another teacher, see how they explain something and you think "I've never thought about that before" let me try that now....

We can see from these passages that how we behave as teachers has an impact on the people we teach and also those we teach 'how' to teach. This is why it is essential for teacher trainers to refrain from taking a 'do what I say, not what I do' attitude as this would be sending out the wrong messages. And this certainly would not be in line with the sorts of claims made in teaching qualifications documentation:

You are expected to adopt methods of teaching which are positive and supportive giving each young person in your care the best possible chance to gain from their learning experience both dance knowledge and self-confidence.

(BBO 2005 p 5)

If methods that promote these outcomes are to be adopted then the passage below (presented earlier in 2.6.2) suggests that at least some of the methods used, fall far short of the claims:

...the biggest thing is as a teacher you need to be able to stand in front of a class not with arrogance but with, with a calm kind of confidence that you do know what you're talking about. And that you know how to get someone safely from A to B. Well we didn't do any of that, we really did not do any of that. A lot of it was straightforward humiliation.

(Isla, interview 2005)

And yet another teaching student looked at the unethical teaching differently as we can see:

.... I realised that I don't have to be scared of ballet teachers anymore. I have had quite a few bad knocks from teachers but still live to see another day.... Teachers that come from the old school would find it hard to change or teach any other way but if we are willing to work along side them at this stage then we can harness a lot of very important knowledge. If we don't do this then it gets lost and ballet won't be pure anymore. I realise that we can't punish people for the way they were taught but hopefully if we respect where they are coming from and what they are trying to do then we can form some sort of working relationship with these professionals. After all they have got what we need.... I believe we can make a difference with new approaches to how we communicate with the class, but the technique needs to be kept pure. I think this might be what is worrying some of the other teachers. You have to forgive people when they treat you badly otherwise if you store up anger and bitterness about someone I would have thought it would poison everything you do.... I just have such a heart for these people but also recognise that we need to grow past angry teaching. After all this is supposed to be dancing, isn't it!

Code RL-H

Here is a student who clearly has had problems with teachers in the past but is still trying to justify unethical teaching in order to hang onto technique. The problem with this view, is that if we continue to condone unethical teaching (for whatever reason) then we are not acting in accordance with the course syllabi or the codes we have signed up to: and furthermore, it shows that there is no attempt to move away from the body-centred ways of the past and work towards a person-centred approach in the present. If we continue in this vein then we run the risk of each layer or generation of teachers being able to opt out of ethical teaching as long as he or she has a good reason (in his/her opinion) to continue teaching unethically. This cannot be an acceptable way to proceed and does not offer trainee teachers the sort of training that they need to have in order to be effective dance teachers in the private sector today – teachers who are able to select appropriate teaching styles for the learners they are teaching to dance. And teachers who can contribute to making the dance experience a positive one. We cannot assume that trainee dance teachers can learn by

unethical means and then simply adapt this learning so as to teach ethically when they teach their own students. Furthermore, this does not make sense either from a student teacher perspective or indeed an organisation one.

*One problem of having your mother as your dance teacher is that you never get away with anything. I don't mean that I wanted to be particularly badly behaved. I just wanted to be able to do things that the other students could do without my mother knowing about it or stopping me before I started. Something I found difficult was that because I danced my parents didn't want me to do other activities that might cause problems for my dancing - in those days cross-training was not recognised and valued like it is today. So although I was very good at athletics and sport I was not allowed to be in the netball and hockey teams at school. I managed to play once or twice in the school teams but that was only because I persuaded my parents that the teams were a player short on these occasions and I needed to play to complete the team. I enjoyed running, jumping hurdles and high jump at school. But I was not allowed to do any of them. My mother got me special exemption from PE at secondary school because I danced. I felt that I was being prevented from doing things at school that I was good at. I remember one year where I ignored the fact that I was not supposed to do athletics. My parents did not usually attend sports days so I thought I could take part. I got through to the final of the 800 metres and was at the starting line waiting, raring to go. I had run like the wind earlier and won my heat easily so I knew I had a good chance of winning the final. Just as we took our places I saw a familiar figure heading across the field towards us. My father. He kept coming closer and closer until he crossed the lanes of the track and came right up to me. When he closed in on me, he said something about the fact that I should not be running in case I damaged my muscles for dancing. So before the race could get underway, my father grabbed my arm and unceremoniously led me off the track in front of the whole school and everyone at sports day. That was the end of my school sports.*

*Towards the end of my primary school education we moved into a larger house that meant my mother could have a dance studio at home. She*

*said that it meant she could be at home when I came in from school and that I would not need to go straight to class in various places after school. It was literally true that my mother was at home much more but of course she was in the studio working. She was there if there was an emergency but generally she was in the studio. And so was I a lot of the time. I would come home from school have a quick drink and possibly a sandwich before changing into a leotard and heading into the studio where I often stayed until late in the evening.*

This exclusive emphasis on dance is certainly understandable, and (with hindsight) perhaps I would have 'voted' for it, if asked. Further, at this age, I could not give my consent, one way or another. But an attitude to the importance of dance, and of what must be tolerated to succeed in it, is being imbued on the child I was.

### **5.1.1 Floored**

*We had a lovely maple floor in the dance studio. It was great to dance on. The floor had to put up with a lot because it was danced on from morning to night, six or, at times, seven days a week. Apart from the regular cleaning, the floor was thoroughly cleaned and re-varnished with shellac twice a year just before the ballet exams. This process involved spending hours on hands and knees thoroughly scrubbing the floor with steel wool to take off any ingrained dirt and to prepare the floor before painting it with shellac varnish using a paintbrush roughly the same width as each one of the narrow, floor boards. I must have been about 12 when I got involved in helping with the twice, yearly, floor spruce up. I don't think I minded helping out with it but it was always stressful because time was so limited. Often it involved working late into the night or on occasions, doing an all night stint, in order to get it done and leave sufficient time for it to dry. It always looked good afterwards and examiners often commented on how nice the studio floor was for the students to dance on. Another job that was done to coincide with examination sessions was painting the front door. I think the aim was to create a good*

*impression for examiners as well as other dance teachers bringing their students to the examination sessions.*

*Painting the front door could be quite a job. The studio at 10 Moray Place was within our house –it was the large front room on the ground floor and it was a real dance studio with ballet barres, large mirrors on the wall and a lovely maple floor. It was a lovely studio to work in, bright and sunny, and when I close my eyes I can still see the pictures hanging up between the huge windows that I used for spotting when I did pirouettes.*

*This is the house that I think of when I think about me growing up. It was a wonderful house at the end of a terrace of 10 Grecian, two-storey houses designed by the eminent Glasgow architect, Alexander ‘Greek’ Thomson and completed in 1861. It was a listed building and I remember the amazing high ceilings decorated with stunning, relief plaster work, like upside down wedding cakes and the huge windows with their wooden, storm shutters. The chimney pots were styled like lotus flowers and I would always look up at them as I walked along the street heading home. The front door was half glazed with the original engraved glass that, somehow, survived years of dance students pushing it open as they rushed in to get ready for class. It was painted white and there were two large, storm doors that were painted green with a big brass letterbox in one of them. Sometimes the front door and the storm doors were painted. But if time was too short, the storm doors had to make do with a good clean and the letterbox would be polished with brasso until it sparkled. From time to time we would be reminded of the importance of the building when architects would knock on the door to ask if they could take a rubbing of the original glazing in the front door. And I am not surprised to learn that the terrace including our old house and studio is now recommended as being of architectural significance in the visitor information of Glasgow. Photographs of number 10 are widely used on websites relating to Alexander ‘Greek’ Thomson and his work.*

*I don’t remember being particularly bothered about helping with the cleaning and re-varnishing of the floor. It was just something that had to be done. The finished result was always good and you knew that there was an*

*end in sight when you started. It was the inevitable arguments or tension that I didn't like. It was always a case of waiting for the inevitable row about: it was taking too long; or, it was not being done thoroughly enough; or, it was not drying fast enough. Even when I was not actually in the firing line of any accusations, I would still feel that somehow that I was doing something wrong.*

*There was one time when I remember that the floor was done without the inevitable rows. I was in my teens, probably about 16 or 17 years old, and my mother was away examining overseas when our summer exams were being held. So I was in charge of running the exam days and all the preparation for them too. To be fair, when my mother agreed to do the examining trip, my father was to be around to help. However, he became unwell and ended up in hospital for the whole time she was away. This left me running the school, doing the final preparation of students for exams (and my own practising) and of course doing the studio floor and front door. Somehow I had to fit it all in. I would have felt such a failure if I had not managed to get it all done. I knew that it was very important to my mother that the floor and front door were thoroughly cleaned and spruced up for examination sessions. I also knew, from experience, that my mother would work all night if necessary to get a job done if the alternative was that the job remained unfinished. So although my mother was not there, I felt obligated to do everything that she would have done herself in preparation for the examinations. What I had not realised when I started, was just how long these jobs would take me to do on my own. Even just scrubbing the studio floor with steel wool seemed to take an eternity. I could not take short cuts because I knew that if I did not do the job properly I would feel guilty. And so by missing out on sleep and sticking at it hour after hour the floor got done. I certainly felt a sense of achievement when I put the last brush of shellac varnish on the floor and closed the door on the varnishy odour that would gradually disappear as the floor dried. The only problem was that the front door still had to be painted. I could not leave it. It had to be done. But I was running out of time. So it had a quick wash down with sugar soap instead of its usual rubbing down with sandpaper then I painted it very early one June*

*morning and willed it to dry quickly so that it did not get messed up once everyone turned up for class. Luckily there were no mishaps and the door looked good even although it had not had the full treatment.*

I had always assumed that getting involved with looking after the studio floor and such like was down to me being the teacher's daughter and therefore the reason why I got roped into having to do all these other things that were not directly related to teaching dance<sup>42</sup>. So I was quite surprised when caring for the floor came up during one of the interviews:

So others didn't help her. And I was there all day Saturday and that was a variety of dancing and I was always there helping and then we would have lunch there and I would, the older ones would serve the younger ones and then the younger ones would sort of wash dishes and we would walk the dogs... Linseed oiling the floor and clean the bins out.

(Iona, interview 2005)

Something else that Iona mentioned makes me think that perhaps helping out in this way could be attributed to being family, or, if not actually family, being treated as family:

Family, it was a family. But there was still that level of, don't step over, Miss Amber's Miss Amber.

(Iona, interview 2005)

When I see how much I have written about matters concerning the floor I ask myself, how could I have found so much to say about a floor? But if we consider the discipline (the 'invisible big sticks') it seems likely that it is connected. It was clearly not just the students who had to be immaculately turned out for dance examinations: the floor and the studio had to be presented in their best costume too.

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<sup>42</sup> It has to be mentioned that when one owns a dance studio, then of course, these sorts of things are all part and parcel of running the business.

### 5.1.2 Very trying

*I can remember the frustration of being accused of 'not trying' in class. I can see 'you're not trying' the teacher would say accusingly. In class I worked hard. I am sure there were times that I didn't work as hard as others but I loved to dance and I wanted to do well. I remember when I was about 13 or 14 years old, I would spend hours trying to increase the height of my développés. I would watch the professional ballet dancers from Scottish Ballet when I did class with them on Saturday mornings as part of the new educational student programme. There were a couple of dancers in particular who, in my eyes, had the most wonderful développés in second and it was my goal to be able to emulate them. They could hold their raised leg above shoulder height with such grace and apparent ease. I even plucked up the courage to ask one dancer how she managed to hold her leg so high. She said 'it is just work'.*

This comment 'it is just work' mistakenly implies that the typical repetition and applying oneself to the task is all that is required. However, we now know much more about how the body works in dance and how to achieve these sorts of feats through a combination of good teaching, conditioning work and other methods as well as of course careful practise. Taking a whole-person approach as highlighted by the statement from Daniels (2009 pp 8-10) at the beginning of Chapter One is what we should be aiming for.

*So I worked and worked and worked at it. I would go into the studio early before the first classes started in the morning and spend ages in front of the mirror watching my leg as it hovered in the air around my shoulder, willing it to go just a little bit higher. I would lie in splits on the floor while I watched television to work on my flexibility and to make sure I didn't lose my stretch by the next day (a constant worry – having got this far I might suddenly lose it overnight if I didn't keep stretching every day). I would practise in my bedroom, in the hallway and even in the bathroom while waiting for the bath to fill up. I remember making sure that I worked more on my left side (as I was told in class), as it was my weaker side, so that I could hold my left leg*



*almost at the same height as my right one. I felt good inside as over the months and years I could hold my leg at shoulder height and above. I liked knowing that this was something I had worked to achieve. But there was always something else too. The higher I was able to hold my leg the higher I wanted it to get. It always seemed that no matter how high it was it was never quite high enough. It seemed that the higher I could hold my leg, the higher the expectations were. It was as if teachers always wanted you to achieve that extra little bit that you could not quite manage, no matter how good you were or how much effort you put in. So although I was pleased inside that I could see my leg getting higher and higher there was always that frustration of never being able to get it as high as it could possibly go – as high as I could get it when I supported it with my hand. The pressure of always trying to achieve what was 'just out of reach' meant that I was never satisfied with the work I produced. If my teacher was not there telling me to try a bit harder then my own internal voice acted as a surrogate teacher telling me instead.*

*Nowadays I cannot hold my leg anywhere near as high as I could then but I can still remember the feeling of drawing my leg upwards against the other leg and unfolding it so that my foot was level with my ear. I can also remember that as my leg got higher then something else would be criticised. I wanted to achieve the apparent effortless grace that I witnessed on a Saturday morning with the professional ballet dancers at Scottish Ballet. So I also worked hard at making it look as if it was effortless. Big mistake – I was then accused of not putting in enough effort. If only she knew. I was pushing my leg higher and higher. I was trying to maintain my turnout. I was trying to force my foot to look prettier by pointing it so that I couldn't point it any harder. The leg I was standing on would burn with the effort of holding me steady. My head would be bursting with all these things I was trying to think of at one time. And still I would hear 'you're not trying'. I think that was one of the differences when I did class at Scottish Ballet – there was a different atmosphere, a different level of tension. Yes the teachers there gave us corrections but there were not as many as at our usual technique classes with our own teachers. So from that perspective there was less to think about. But then the work was challenging and dancing alongside members of*

*the company was both inspiring and a bit daunting. The artistry built into the work at Scottish Ballet gave us a real sense of performing at class but it also encouraged, in me at least, a feeling of never quite being good enough to get it right.*

I can feel the frustration here when I read this, caused by wanting to achieve something so much but finding that, no matter how much effort is put in, it doesn't happen. This is like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow – never to be reached. So it is not surprising that these experiences when training and how we feel about them negatively affect confidence and this in turn affects performance (Tajet-Foxell 2000 p 31). And, as we see above, my way of trying to overcome these issues at that time was to try harder. I can see now that all that over-trying must have made my muscles work overtime and their inevitable tightening would certainly not have made performing the work any easier. The conditioning and imagery work of Eric Franklin (1996, 2000, 2003, 2004) shows us the importance of relaxation and reducing muscle tension, as does Tom Welsh's (Welsh 2009) recent book *Conditioning for Dancers*. We need to take this knowledge and understanding on board when we train teachers so that they can avoid the sorts of pitfalls relating to over-exertion and over-recruitment of muscles that I, and many others, experienced in the past. Furthermore by becoming more aware of whole-person issues like these, teachers can be better prepared when selecting suitable teaching methods and styles as well as content. Some work I have done with highland dancers pays particular attention to trying to release muscle tension in the arms and shoulder area, caused by over-recruitment in an effort to keep the arms steady when raised. Ironing out the tension issues has a positive affect on the dancer generally – as it removes the obstacles preventing the dancer's shoulder joint moving as it should and unintentionally preventing the very image strived for. We look to new qualifications, such as, the Safe and Effective Dance Practice qualification mentioned earlier<sup>43</sup>, to contribute to the whole 'releasing tension' issue for dance teachers.

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<sup>43</sup> See Chapter Two section 2.5.

*I recall a few years later being in a post-exam class of senior girls. The examiner was taking the class but our teacher (my mother) was there too. I was working professionally by this time but still attended classes when I was not at rehearsals or performing in a show. There was a very challenging adage exercise that I loved to perform. If it went well it felt like a continuous wave rising and falling as I transferred my weight from one foot to the other, creating alternating arabesque lines with one leg raised high at the back and développés devant as the other leg unfolded upwards to the front. My body would rotate, stretch and extend as my arms floated from one position to the other, just arriving at each position in time to move onto the next. One of the girls was technically very strong but she struggled with the presentation of her work. The teacher asked her to dance the exercise for the examiner to see if she could offer advice about how to improve this particular exercise. I was asked to dance the exercise with her. Afterwards the examiner was asked what she thought. She said we were both technically strong but the difference was that I danced it. I recall being inwardly delighted at being complemented by the examiner. But this didn't last long. I had on an all-in-one knitted body suit and the teacher (my mother) pointed out in front of everyone that she noticed that wearing this emphasised my lack of waistline. That soon put me back in my place and much as I loved my knitted practise suit each time I wore it after that I was reminded of that comment. And so my waist joined the growing list of body parts that would benefit from being altered in some way to improve my anatomy for dancing (and ballet in particular).*

This sort of personal comment can have a very negative effect and could hardly be described as following the suggestion by psychologist Lynda Mainwaring (2008 p 116) as to what a teacher should be striving for:

...As teachers, the trick is to encourage students to learn, develop mastery, continue to love dance, and feel good about themselves....

If teachers are more aware of the impact of their feedback to students, take some time to reflect on what they say then at least, some of the damage done by unguarded, personal remarks might be avoided. In paying attention to these sorts of issues teachers are concerning themselves with the 'how' of

teaching mentioned earlier rather than always focusing on the 'what'. They are considering the sorts of things that someone teaching from a person-centred perspective would consider as Isla points out below:

...And that is to do with if you have a teacher that looks after you as a human being and you feel safe with that because...because they are not...not just treating you like a contract.....

(Isla, interview 2005)

In contrast, Ailsa discusses her first teacher and recognises the need to do things differently to how she was taught in the beginning. By reflecting on how things were done then she sees the problems of that method and how it stopped some people enjoying their dancing to the extent that they gave up altogether. Despite Ailsa recognising the problems with her earlier experiences, she does mention that she still managed to enjoy her dancing.

...yes, I think, again, just coming back to my first teacher, because of the experience I had there, although actually I did enjoy it,... led me to other people where, the way it basically destroyed them ...gave up dance and never went back to dance again, and seeing how the way she spoke to people, I do try and think, you know, that's how things were dealt with when I was young, try and do it different.

...yeah, and deal with parents differently as well, because like at the end of the day, the parents are happy, well that's another important part. Um, and I think I've learned a lot from the wrong way of being taught then –

(Ailsa, interview 2005)

*Another, 'you are not trying' example surrounded my ability to pull out that extra bit of 'je ne sais quoi' when it came to exams or performing in front of an audience. The accusation was usually along the lines of 'if you can do it better in your exams and for competitions then why can't you do it like that all the time?' It was true that something seemed to happen at exams or when I performed with an audience even if the audience was just a few people. I can't explain what would happen, it just did. It wasn't something that I consciously did or turned on. It was just there. No matter how hard I tried in class I could always add that little bit extra when it came to exams or performances. A fellow student who trained with me was the opposite of me. She excelled in class but found the stress of exams very challenging. If she*

*had been working at a particular step for the exam she might find that it didn't come off as well as she would have hoped in the exam. Whereas I usually found that under the stress of exams I could pull off that extra pirouette or maintain my balance that little bit longer. And as I say, this wasn't something I did on purpose. It was a change that occurred when I performed. When I worked professionally, it was the same. I would feel that I was working flat out at rehearsals but then the adrenalin would kick in once I was in my costume, under the lights with the music carrying me across the stage. It was as if that was the time to enjoy it – perhaps the fact that while I was actually performing the constant criticism was absent. For those moments on stage I could lose myself in the dance and enjoy it. It was when I felt I could really dance. All the negatives would be forgotten whilst I performed. It was a wonderful feeling. A feeling that never went away, it was always there when I performed. Even doing the same show, night after night, seven days a week, for six months, did not detract from the enjoyment of performing. It always felt special. A great audience could make it feel extra special somehow. But even when it wasn't a great night, or I did not feel at my best, that would all change for me when the overture started. I have always loved the anticipation of the overture. It harnessed my (always present, pre-show) butterflies and put them to work creating just the right amount of stress that helped me give a good performance.*

Loving to dance and the enjoyment of dancing are reasons commonly given for people putting up with the unethical practices in dance. Somehow, because we love it, it is assumed that we will put up with anything. But even those who love it must have limits to what they will put up with. We can see from the passages below that the love of dancing contributes something for each interviewee:

...because I just loved it so much and yes, I had run-ins with Miss Amber and she would have me in tears you know, but that's going through the ages isn't it and teens probably, but I didn't argue back. Definitely not.

(Iona, interview 2005)

...the, the thing that was exciting for me is that, is that I'd finally found something that I was good at....It allowed my creativity to come out because everything was done to music. Erm...and then I just enjoyed the physical challenge of, of moving and getting my body to do all sorts of things which I didn't think I was capable of doing....

(Isla, interview 2005)

...which was all show show show, which at the time, was lovely, as a child, pretty costumes on stage, I thought it was wonderful...

(Ailsa, interview 2005)

Loving what you do should not be viewed as a way for others to take advantage of you, as can happen in dance. The concept of dance seems to be thought of, by some, as special, in that they deem it to be acceptable to behave in dance in a way that is not acceptable in other areas. But this should not be the case. Often things done in dance are done so under the guise of 'teacher knows best'. For example, the 'teaching by terror' approach is often justified by way of a remark of the 'you'll thank me later when you are dancing on the stage' type - as if the unethical behaviour is somehow acceptable as long as it provides the desired outcomes: this is consistent with a reflective log 'RL-H' comment earlier in this Chapter.

This is a strange kind of paternalistic view – almost as if the behaviour is specially targeting those who might make it in the dance world and therefore it is done in the best interests of the student dancer, even when such behaviour would not be acceptable at, say, a public school. This 'whatever it takes' attitude seems to ignore what is in the best interests of the child and are not consistent with ethical teaching practices. A teacher might be permitted to teach a student to dance but is that teacher permitted to teach that student by any means possible even if that means by unethical methods? There are no guarantees that a dancer will make it no matter how he/she is taught. So 'whatever it takes' may not achieve the goal anyway. Promoting a 'trust me, I'm a dance teacher' image, has the potential to allow unethical practice especially where students are vulnerable through their love of, and desire to, dance.

### **5.1.3 Scary stuff**

*Trying to dance with style, grace and presentation is not so easy when the tears are running down your face and dropping off the end of your nose and chin. It was bad enough being shouted at repeatedly or being told that you are not trying or not doing what was asked of you but to also have to cope with the embarrassment of tears too seemed very unfair. The last remnant of dignity (if there was any to begin with) disappeared as the tears started. I lost track over the years of how many times I danced as I gulped back tears. I tried when I was a teenager, leaving the class a couple times, when it all got too much. But the embarrassment of having to go back into class with a puffy face with everyone knowing that you'd been crying was probably worse than staying in class and dancing through the tears. I remember that feeling of eyes on you as you returned to class and went back into line. I remember the fear of wondering what might happen after class and after the other students had left. Would there be a row? Would I be accused again, of not behaving like a dancing teacher's daughter should behave? To be fair to my mother I have to say that although there was a lot of things that I put down to being the teacher's daughter that now when I look back were not really about this at all. During my main training years I had classes with other teachers from time to time. Sometimes these would be special classes or workshops organised by dance organisations and I would be able to attend them. Other times there were visiting teachers at the studio and the ones I remember best are the ones that made me feel that I could do something. I remember one particular tap teacher from USA who came to the studio to give me a private lesson. I loved the lesson I had with him. He encouraged me to try things I had not done before and when I was able to do them he was enthusiastic about my ability. He was inspirational and his sheer enthusiasm for tap and how it can be built up was infectious. I found myself loving tap again and loving the challenge of trying new steps without fear of getting them wrong.*

#### **5.1.4 My bleeding toes**

*They talk about ‘suffering for one’s art’ – well I think I did quite a lot of that if I take into account literally, the blood, sweat and tears, that were part of my training. And, yes, everyone does their own bit of ‘suffering for their art’ but looking back there were times that my teacher (mother) seemed totally indifferent to my pain and suffering. She seemed oblivious to it: as long as it was seen as being good for dancing. Getting on with it when it came to pain and injuries became part of dancing.*

*Pointe work and me never got on well together. I can remember feeling the skin on my toes disintegrating in my pointe shoes, as I danced. But I persevered. I can remember that my ballet tights would be stained blood red when I took my pointe shoes off. And I would gingerly tug at the material of my tights to pull it away from my toes before the blood could dry attaching my toes and tights together. On the occasions that this did happen, prising my tights from my toes usually involved loss of some of the mashed skin that was my toes. So I learned that it was best to separate tights and toes while the blood was still wet. The pain of removing small amounts of mashed-up skin from my toes was nothing compared with the eye-watering sting of plunging my raw skin into a bowl of surgical spirit. I would hold my breath until I got used to the pain, and watch the liquid turn a pinky colour from the oozing blood, as the skin on my toes was apparently, being toughened up. My mother never seemed to mind my pain when I performed this ritual night after night. This was the recommended way to toughen up the skin of the toes for pointe work. I can say, hand on heart, that for me at least, this did not work. Yet, I religiously plunged my feet into the clear, strong smelling liquid for many years but my toes still bled when I did pointe work. Any time I catch a whiff of surgical spirit I immediately get transported back to the days of what was inaccurately called ‘looking after your feet’. Despite all of this, I actually love the smell of surgical spirit. I did then and I do today. When I was doing the surgical spirit thing, I never questioned the fact that it was agony each time I did it. I was told by my teacher to do it, so I did. And even although it didn’t help I carried on doing it all the time I did pointe work. I don’t*



*know if my toes would have been worse without the surgical spirit treatment although I can't imagine quite how worse it could have been.*

*At dance competitions (and examinations) I always had to be careful not to let the blood seep upwards from my shoes to stain the pale pinkness of my tights bright red. I remember one competition where my sister was helping me change instead of my mother, since my mother was organising the stage festival and so had other things to do. I was probably about 13 or 14 at the time. I came off stage from doing my ballet solo and pulled off my pointe shoes, automatically ignoring the material sticking to the skin of my toes and the rising redness against the pale pink ballet tights. My thoughts were already on getting ready for my tap solo and easing my feet into my new tap shoes, which were not fully broken in – so those shoes were doing to my heels what my pointe shoes were doing to my toes. When she saw my toes my sister gasped and immediately kicked into medical mode (she was a nurse). I remember telling her not to fuss, although it was actually quite nice that she was concerned. I pressed on with stuffing my bloody feet into my tap tights and shoes. My heels felt raw as the fishnet tights rubbed the skin between my heels and my shoes while I wait at the side of the stage to go on. When it was my turn, I went on, pain ignored and danced my heart out for the allowed, one and a half or two minutes. I recall the pain returning with a vengeance as I left the stage. My sister's face was a picture of concern as she saw the redness of the blood rising up from the backs of my shoes like a rambling stream moving against gravity. "You can't dance like that" she said. "It isn't right". "Oh, don't worry", I said, "this always happens. My feet are hopeless with new shoes. It takes a while for the shoes to soften up and then they'll be okay". "You can't carry on dancing with feet like that" my sister said. "But, my feet are always like this" I told her as I once again got on with the process of separating blood-soaked tights and sticky, mushy, skin to get ready for the next dance. It is odd, I don't remember the results of that competition. But the memory of my sister's reaction to my bloody feet has stuck with me.*

*There were other incidents too, such as when I had a semi-hard plaster on my lower leg and it made it difficult to get my dance shoes on. So it was removed to let me dance in a performance and then put back on afterwards. There was no such thing as really taking time out even for injuries – I don't suppose I was meant to be jamming my plastered foot into dance shoes, never mind, dancing. It was a bit like having a badge of honour if you danced with an injury – you were just working through the pain. I remember going to class at Scottish Ballet one Saturday morning with a bruised and swollen ankle and showing it to the teacher as proof of why I had turned up without my leotard and shoes and just wanted to sit and watch the class. I wasn't surprised when he asked 'are you not going to dance, this morning?'*

*One particular injury related to pointe work stands out as it could have prevented me from taking my advanced ballet exam. But first let me explain my introduction to pointe work (ignoring the bloody toes for now).*

*When I began pointe work, it was with another highly experienced teacher who was teaching a group of her students at our studio. This was seen as a good opportunity for me to get some useful experience in beginning pointe work which was the stage I was at. There must have been some misunderstanding between teachers because I expected to be given some introductory exercises to teach me how to go en pointe – bearing in mind at that point in time my total experience of wearing pointe shoes was trying them on in the shop. Wearing pointe shoes in class for the first time, at least for me, meant that my balance was different, it felt as if my toes were encased in a solid, close-fitting box and I seemed to have lost all ability to pointe my feet and move through the foot with any grace at all. And yet there I was, doing barre work with my pointe shoes on struggling to feel the floor through thicker soles that I was not used to wearing. As the barre progressed I continued to struggle with my pointe shoes and then we came to relevés on one foot – an exercise that involved balancing on one leg and then rising up onto pointe on that leg before lowering into a demi-plié still balanced on the same leg – this was performed some 8-12 times before turning to do it all again on the other side. I knew this exercise from doing it rising onto the*

*demi-pointe (ball of the foot) and as no help was offered I just got on with doing it en pointe. I can still remember how I strained to get up onto pointe and I could feel that everything was going out of alignment in my efforts to get up there. I don't recall anything being said although it must have been clear to the teacher that I was not ready to tackle such a challenging exercise as my first attempt at pointe work. It never struck me not to do the exercise. After all I must have been at risk of injury. I just accepted that I had to try as best as I could. I don't think my disastrous entry into pointe work was ever addressed. Assumptions must have been made that I was getting the work in that class even although I was struggling to do it. And for my part, I just assumed that the failure to conquer pointe work immediately meant I had to work harder. I never did get the introduction to pointe work that I was supposed to get and this might have played some part in the struggle that I always had to feel comfortable doing pointe work. Although in truth, I do not believe my feet were ever going to be comfortable doing pointe work even if I had had a proper introduction to it. I know now that pointe work was never going to be right for my feet (I am deliberately not saying that my feet were not right for pointe work).*

*Along with relentless corrections in class was the need to find time to practise to try to eradicate the incessant list of errors that was always growing. I recall when preparing for my advanced ballet examination spending every moment I could, practising and practising. This examination was extremely demanding physically and required enormous quantities of stamina and strength all wrapped up in a sensitive, sense of performance. As mentioned earlier, pointe work was not a natural thing for me to do (the bloody toes) and there was a considerable amount of challenging pointe work to do for this exam. So I spent many hours, at any time of the day or night, in the studio when it was available, practising all the various double pirouettes en pointe, the repeated relevés on one foot en pointe and the 'pièce de resistance' the 16 fouettés en tournant which also had to be performed (en pointe). Doing 16 fouettés on your good side is tough but doing them on your weaker side is really tough and you never knew whether the examiner would make you do them on both sides so it was vital to practise them*

*conscientiously on both sides. The thing with fouettés was that I loved them. I loved the challenge of them, the feel of my head whipping round as I did each turn and the satisfaction of being able to do such a difficult step. I was good at them and at my peak I even managed to achieve performing the famous 32 fouettés on a few occasions in the studio without travelling too far from the spot where I started. For me though, performing fouettés meant reversing my turning preference. My natural turning preference was to turn to the right. But my right leg was strongest when it came to performing pointe work. So I had to work hard on turning to the left so I could use my right leg as my standing leg. All of this I was willing to do and did do. And then disaster happened. One day a few weeks before the exam I was practising in the studio on my own, taking the opportunity of an empty studio before the evening classes started, when I stood en pointe and then paused to think about my placing – I don't know whether it was a loss of concentration or tiredness or what, but I suddenly felt my ankle go from under me and I heard a loud snap as I went down. I lay on the floor unable to move at first (from fright I think) and shouted for someone to come. I could feel my foot swelling up but I could not undo the ribbons of my shoe and I knew that I had done something serious. I was still lying on the floor when one of the senior students came in about 30 minutes later and found me. I was whisked off to the hospital where my foot and lower leg was strapped up. No x-rays were done (apparently it was the tea-break when I was there) to determine the extent of the damage and I was sent home. Over time I learned that there was damage to the ligaments and my leg should have been put in plaster to immobilise it and allow it to heal. But that didn't happen and as therefore as soon as I could stand on my leg I was expected to be back in the studio squeezing my strapped-up ankle back into my pointe shoes – my exam was getting closer. There was no rehab stage in those days – if you were in class you were there to work so I just made sure the strapping was tight enough to support my ankle and I got on with it. As far as I remember, the post-class bruising that happened for quite some time was viewed as being more of a nuisance than anything else. When I took my advanced exam my ankle was still too weak to do without strapping so a thinner stretchy bandage was used*

*in order not to draw too much attention to the fact my ankle was strapped up. Despite, being worried that my ankle would not last the whole of the exam, I managed to survive the gruelling two-hour exam and passed it as well.*

We have a very different understanding today about how to deal with dance injuries and there is much more access to treatment and remedial work to help with recovery. Before though, things were very different and dancers did not have specialists who understood dancers' injuries, as Isla's story about the accident that finished her career as a dancer, demonstrates:

...the accident happened because I was asked to do something which I was physically not capable of doing. And that happened also because the class had something like 50 dancers in it. The classes were massive erm...and you do go into those classes at your own risk.

Erm...now the teacher in question couldn't possibly know that I'd been polishing the floor that morning with one of those heavy machines which you swing from side to side. And so my back was already sore from that plus I'd washed down er...a Victorian stone staircase every morning on my hands and knees (Laughter). So before I got to class I was already physically wrecked.

And to do...a variation en pointe was something I could not do at that point. (A) I hadn't...hadn't mastered it on half pointe let alone en pointe. I got too much speed, I fell very badly. I fell forwards, the leg came over me and it cracked through the...through the lumbar. As it turned out lumbar four and five<sup>44</sup>.

...I remember crawling out of the Studio down to the Medical Centre and the guy there had a look at me and he was pretty convinced that I wouldn't be able to move within 24 hours. Erm...I got put in a taxi, I got sent home. Erm...the nuns were horrified because I was...I was erm...working with nuns in a, in a centre called, well it doesn't matter what it's called but anyway erm... They looked after all the students and I...I was part of the staff that helped looking after the students. I did all the cleaning and of serving of food and whatever and for that I got my board and keep. And that made it possible for me to go to classes in London. So in other words I had to work for it (Laughter).

...But the nuns were horrified when I came back. And one of them in particular insisted that she took me straight to erm...hospital. And they immediately put me in a metal corset erm... I then spent the next three months on my back...

Erm...the whole thing, it took altogether before I could walk again with

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<sup>44</sup> See Figure 8: Intentional Demonstration and also DVD interview clip 'gestures'.

the operation and everything it took seven years, I lost out of my life. Erm...and, and the idea of having an operation was I, that I could do something with my life. At least out of the wheelchair I could have a job, I could you know do something with my life. Whereas it was I could walk one day and not the next, I couldn't keep a job down because I was often in enormous amounts of pain erm...and I was just a waste of space. So they said that if they do the operation I would never walk again and I had to sign a piece of paper to the effect that I wouldn't attempt to do that (Laughter). So erm...in hindsight of course we all know that doctors don't al- know everything.

I had an operation by a brilliant surgeon... And I was one of the first people to have this operation and there are several who've had the same operation as me and they're still in wheelchairs. So I'm incredibly lucky I got away with it. ...But of course having to learn to walk again ...the goal was to try and walk to the end of the bed and then the goal was to move from the bed to the door. And then...and so it goes on, you know. The first time I managed to walk to the newsagents or to three or four months down the line it felt like I'd walked half way round the world (Laughter). And it was a very useful experience because it...I had to work out how to put one foot in front of the other.

So of course when I eventually came back to dance I wanted to make sure that what happened to me wouldn't happen to anyone else. And so long before the world started talking about Health & Safety, it was a huge issue (Laughter) because I paid a very heavy price for it. And so I...when I started teaching I had an osteopath on the team with me erm... And I, I started from the very beginning to have medical people round me like physios, osteopaths, dieticians. They're all people that I had an enormous interest with.

Clearly this was a hugely tragic issue in Isla's life and her inner strength and perseverance helped her to get through it. Not only that, she got back to a career in the dance profession, as a teacher. She has used her experiences of injury caused by trying to do something before she was ready to inform her teaching practice and, as she mentions above, she was very conscious of health and safety matters long before the topic found its way into the syllabi of the dance societies. Conscious that what had happened to her 'wouldn't happen to anyone else' (as mentioned above). So her students have benefitted from her paying attention to preparation and ensuring that she was teaching them dance content that they could cope with. Through her injuries, she developed a person-centred approach to her teaching, always

considering what was right for her students rather than being driven by what was right for the syllabus.

*Back then, you could tell from the teacher's voice what kind of mood she was in. Sometimes there was shouting because someone was talking when they were supposed to be doing something else but other times the raised voice was motivating us to jump higher or travel more across the floor or turn faster. I would sometimes listen to my mother's voice when she was in the studio teaching from my bedroom upstairs. I could tell from her voice what she wanted the pupils to do even although she was not actually saying it in words. It was the tone of her voice that told me what was happening.*

The voice being used to motivate and control the student dancers arose a number of times. It was clearly viewed as a form of discipline: a way of maintaining a well-behaved class. But sometimes it was not the voice that would be used, to control the class. Sometimes it was a look that was used instead, as Cara explained when asked about how her teacher managed to maintain discipline if she did not shout or raise her voice.

I think a lot of it was respect. You respected someone, and you liked someone, and I think that was it. The rules of the school were, you got on with the class and worked. She would give you a look. She could give a look (Laughter)..... I can't remember a situation when the classes were unruly....So as children we were maybe more disciplined than what I experienced as being a teacher...but she was not a person to shout.

I should point out here that it was after Cara's interview, once the camera equipment was packed away, that she mentioned about her teacher 'carrying a big stick'<sup>45</sup> in class. Although she not associated the 'big stick' with discipline and everyone being well-behaved, it seems very likely that the good behaviour was down to, at least in part, the 'big stick' rather than the suggestion that it was due to the reasons given above. Clearly she did not think of the 'big stick' as discipline but she did retain the memory of it, so it must have had some impact. She did not think of it as a key tool for discipline but sub-consciously it was there. She denies that the stick had a bearing but it was important enough to mention afterwards.

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<sup>45</sup> Discussed earlier in 3.2.4 and later in 5.2.

*I loved to dance and I was in classes of all levels whether this was dancing or helping or teaching. I absorbed ways of breaking things down and building them back up again. This was how we did things – a step or movement would be broken right down into its simplest form and then gradually it would be put together again, correcting the technique all along the way until you were doing the full step again. This meant that we had a very thorough knowledge and understanding of each movement that we did at that time. Now when I look back I can see how our understanding has developed through research and dance medicine and science. We were always encouraged to read our technique books and anatomy books so we could apply this knowledge to our teaching practice. There were always technique books and theory and anatomy books lying around in the studio and we were encouraged to refer to them if we were unsure of something. I liked this. I felt part of it. We had great discussions about movements and steps in our teaching classes and tried lots of ways to improve steps. Some of these would work for some but not for others so we were being taught about teaching individuals even although it might not have been formally noted as this. I think my passion for developing and learning stems from this – the way we were encouraged to always be curious and want to learn more about what we were doing. We didn't know about psychological aspects of how dance was taught back then. I wonder how different my training would have been if we had? What I did know deep down was that I didn't like the feeling of never getting anything right. There was a hopelessness that hung around. I knew that no matter what I got right there was always something else that would not be right, something else that would need to be worked on. You could never rest on your laurels and think 'I can do that now'. Even today, when I demonstrate a step I need to banish the inner-voice of persistent criticism so I can enjoy the feeling of dancing. When I work with teachers today I choose to promote person-centred teaching approaches and methods that recognise and value effort as well as achievement.*

*The one constant thing that you could be sure of no matter which teacher you went to or had lessons from was that you would be corrected. Persistent corrections were what it was all about. In fact I remember being*



*taken to a couple of teachers at some point because they might be able to see something that needed correcting that my own teacher had missed. I also remember one such teacher saying that he could not see that he could do and say anything different to what my teacher was already doing. With the progress in understanding in dance medicine and science I now believe that what I was really up against was my inbuilt limitations: not even the best teachers in the world could alter my anatomical and physiological make-up. Returning to the studio day after day to be corrected was something we had to get used to. A lot of the time it was just part of dancing and it didn't feel hugely negative. But there were other times when the criticism felt relentless: at those times, it felt as if what was being criticised was something that you were deliberately doing wrong – if only it could have been that easy, then I could have done something about it. Competitive work resulted in more criticism and failure to succeed could result in personal accusations of 'not trying'. When I think back, I always went up onto the platform or stage to try to dance my best. I don't think I knew how to get up there and not try my best. But the post-competition criticism if I didn't win, often revolved around what was seen as a perceived lack of effort on my part rather than perhaps, others simply being better on the day. Despite all the criticism I was still first to volunteer for extra classes or work. At one point I was entered for an exam and as I was the only one doing that particular exam, time had to be found to check my work. So my mother suggested doing a class at 5am before I went to school. Next morning I took my mother a cup of tea just before 5am (I was already dressed for class) – she was horrified when I woke her up as she had only meant it as a joke – I didn't get my 5am class.*

*There were times that you just wanted some acknowledgement of how hard you had worked or studied for your achievement. When I took my teaching examinations at Membership level<sup>47</sup> I worked hard at both the practical and the theoretical aspects of each genre (Ballet, Stage and Highland) that I was taking at that time. Highland was notoriously difficult due to the highly technical knowledge that had to be retained and referred to at*

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<sup>47</sup> This was the second teaching level in these qualifications – first was Associate, then Membership and the highest level was Fellowship.

*examination. When my result came through I was absolutely delighted and more than a bit amazed to have received 99%<sup>48</sup> - a result that I had not known was possible to achieve in a teaching examination. After such an intensive, study time all I needed was someone to say, well done in recognition of achieving such a good result. Instead, I was asked 'what happened to the other mark'? Looking back I am sure that this must have been meant in jest but at the time I felt crushed and somehow the sense of my achievement was lost. Although these memories are a long time ago now, I can still recall how I felt at the time and so I am aware that at least, some of the comments made, stick with you for a lifetime. I try to remember this when I am working with teachers: I aim to encourage memories that are positive and uplifting.*

*Having spilled the beans, as it were, on my experiences I look back and see a life that was challenging and not easy at times but would I do it all again? Much as there was a lot wrong with aspects of how dance was taught in those days, I, like so many other dance professionals would do it all again because I, like them, love to dance. It is something I just have to do: something I have to be part of. What I would wish for though are for more ethical ways of training dancers and dance teachers to be the best they can be.*

### **5.1.5 Reflections on my mother**

*My late mother was my main dance teacher. She had a particular gift in helping dancers to achieve certain skills. Pirouettes for example, she taught many to improve their ability to achieve solid, well placed, turns. Indeed she often had professional dancers and dance teachers come to the studio for private lessons with her. She got excellent results with individuals and I would say her willingness to open her mind to new learning was a key factor here. She always had dance books by her bed, in the studio and scattered around the house. She was always learning more about technique and the*

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<sup>48</sup> 99 marks out of a possible 100.

*body in dance. She taught at a time when dance teaching followed a model of fault correction and in many instances this is still the dance teaching model used today. Indeed teaching examinations focused on being able to identify what was wrong with the technique and performance rather than identifying and building on what was working well, the value of which is much more recognised today, although not by everyone. My career in dance followed on from the teachings of my mother. So I appreciate that the skills I learned as a dance and teaching student with my mother gave me the foundation for my career as a professional dancer, choreographer, teacher and educator of teachers. Furthermore she instilled a curiosity within me for new learning. Books were part of our dance education and today I have hundreds of books relating in some way to dance and the pursuit of greater understanding about dancers, teachers and their wellbeing. Some of them were my mother's books and still have her notes in the margins. Some of these notes I can remember being written in during lengthy discussions about the topic.*

*Thinking back I can recall so many teachers coming to my mother for training and development. From ballet to tap to Highland to modern to acrobatic and so the list went on. When something new came on the dance scene my mother was first in line to learn all about it. So we were involved with new dance trends as they developed. Probably the biggest trend of the moment was disco<sup>49</sup>, which we were able to include in the school classes because of my mother's willingness to move with the times.*

*If my mother had been around longer she would, I am sure, have totally embraced technological advances. She would have had, a computer, a video camera, a digital camera, an iPad and all those things that we take for granted today which make our learning and development easier. She would have been up to date with new knowledge and have attended conferences in pursuit of enhancing her understanding. She would have embraced new learning and new approaches to dance teaching. In other words she would have moved with the times. Of that I am absolutely sure. So why is it that I am also so critical of the way I was taught?*

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<sup>49</sup> Now more usually referred to as Freestyle.

*Since starting my doctoral research I have had conversations with some people whom I trained with or who trained with my mother and then myself or who simply knew my mother in her professional capacity as a dance teacher. All of these people hold her in very high regard. They praised her abilities as a teacher and as someone who was passionate about dance, dance teaching and those she taught. She was very hot on technique and worked tirelessly with students and teachers to pass on the intricacies of movements and alignment demanded by each dance genre. She could see the strengths and weaknesses in each individual's technique and she helped them to find ways of enhancing their performance.*

*When I first thought about writing this section I assumed it was going to be very negative but over time I have written it and re-written it and then re-written it over and over again. This is because in part, as I have re-examined my experience I realise that I do not feel nearly as negative about my experiences as I assumed I would. Yes there were many things, that looking back, were not right. But many of these things were simply because 'that's the way it was done then'. As I have said previously, dance teaching at that time was very much a model of fault correction. So my mother was not doing anything that was different from the norm of the time. She was focusing on what was going wrong with technique, alignment and performance just the same as many other thousands of teachers were doing. What was different was the fact that she was not just my dance teacher she was my mother too. And I can see now that this is where the key differences in experiences lay. But before I go into that, let me first touch on my experiences with other teachers and people who influenced me.*

*I recall at primary school being hauled out in front of the class because the teacher did not like the fact that my mother had put my hair in ringlets. At the time my hair was waist length and my mother often put it in ringlets to keep it tidy for school – for dance classes it was mostly worn up. My school teacher on several occasions, ridiculed me in front of the class for having ringlets and I can remember not understanding what my hair had to do with my school work. I still don't see what her problem was. This treatment*

*certainly did nothing to foster self-esteem or confidence in me at that young age. At secondary school I remember one teacher who kept telling me that dancing would never get me anywhere. She would, like the previous teacher, ridicule me in front of the class. I must confess to returning to the school to visit my old teacher a few years later to let her know that ‘my dancing’ had got me around the world. Her previous scorn was immediately forgotten as she puffed out her chest with pride as she told her class of ‘first years’ how proud she was of her ex-pupil. But it wasn’t just in school that I experienced negative teacher behaviour. My mother would give me exposure to other dance teachers through private lessons and workshops and so on. These other teachers also, in the main, were totally focused on fault correction. Rarely would they tell you what you were doing well. But they would persistently tell you all the individual mistakes that you were making. So it was a situation of no matter how hard you tried you could never get it right. One time I was told ‘there is no point in telling you when you do it right, you need to know what you are doing wrong’. As a young dancer, though, it seemed that there was always going to be things wrong and never anything becoming right. Looking back I realise that we had a sort of inbuilt understanding that once the teacher stopped going on about certain faults, we should take this to mean that we must have improved. This of course was not the same as actually being told that what you had worked on had improved. Furthermore, it did not allow for the teacher choosing to leave one fault, even if improvement had not been achieved, in order to move onto another one that perhaps was deemed more important.*

As I see it, the emphasis on fault-correction had two main deficiencies. First, it only addressed what was wrong – without praising the things done well. Second, it indiscriminately attends to all faults (or at least tries to). It did not give a clear sense of the priorities to what needed correction. And another aspect of this – beloved by the ‘inner-game’ theorists – is that such all-embracing fault-correction actually gives one too much to think about: it would be better to try to correct only some of the faults. It would be better finding one key correction to give that when corrected would improve several things. For example, giving a vital postural correction will have a knock-on

effect on a whole lot of other connected faults. Without making the postural correction the other faults might be pointed out but be impossible for the dancer to eradicate. The idea of giving too much information is recognised in sport coaching and, as is so typical in sport, they give it an easy to remember slogan:

All people including young performers, are limited in the number of pieces of information they can concentrate on and use at any one time. Giving too much information may confuse and hinder the learning of a movement or prevent the young performer from concentrating on the movement at all – often referred to as paralysis by analysis.

(Hagger 1999 p 51)

And although, in dance, we may not always have natty slogans for everything, that does not mean that these principles were not recognised and applied, as we can see in the following passage:

...Very much so and also to protect something that's precious. You know the...the ballet is something that is dear to him and he wanted to make sure that it was taught correctly. Because it takes too long if you're being incorrect with it. So instead of giving 101 corrections, what is the one correction that makes everything else fall into place? That's one of the key issues that I...I got confronted at very, very early on.

You know for instance if somebody erm...is...is...got their tail out and got their head forwards and what have you, well if you actually notice that they've rolled their ankles and if their ankles were back into centre then everything would pull up from the floor. And everything else would fall into place.

So instead of mentioning all the hundred mistakes it's finding the key thing that will make it fall into place. And that's something that he was very good at. He, he, he could look at something and he'd be not just stating the obvious of what's wrong but he could always get to the heart of the matter. So one learnt very quickly with him because there was always a logical reason ...

(Isla, interview 2005)

Just as in the inner-game (Gallwey 1986 pp72-76) and the 'analysis by paralysis' (Hagger 1999 p 51), the value of making a key correction, rather than persistent criticism of many things, is recognised by Isla as an important approach to teaching. The test of the teacher's abilities then lie in his/her

analytical skills to seek out and find that key correction that will have the most positive impact and not simply in looking for a whole host of errors that may confuse and overwhelm the student. This is also demonstrated by Maria Fay's comment below:

I remember in my early teaching days – and the same has happened to so many other young and eager teachers – I showered my poor students with an endless number of corrections and felt immensely satisfied.....I must have taught like this for some time before I noticed that the majority of my pupils, a group of girls aged between thirteen and fifteen, had become nervous and inhibited.....as the class atmosphere took a turn for the worst the dance standards dropped dramatically and the number of minor injuries noticeably grew. I wanted to change this situation for the better so, in desperation, I tried to teach even more conscientiously, so I thought, and kept on with more corrections – obviously, as there was more to criticise..... I started to become impatient with my students, often losing my temper as well as my confidence in their ability, and my own. This vicious circle seemed to be complete until, one day, I found enough courage to talk these problems over with my students.

.....Hearing all the time from their teacher only about their shortcomings and hardly ever about their merits, they first found their self-confidence crushed to pieces and later they lost confidence in my competence too. Unknowingly, I had set the scene for a feeling of absolute hopelessness.

(Fay 1997 p 97)

In discussing these methods it seems clear that what they are all considering is the person to whom the corrections are aimed – in this case, the student dancer. Considering the impact of our teaching on the learners is vital if we are to teach ethically and promote ethical teaching that leaves the 'invisible big stick' and the 'teaching by terror' firmly in the past.

*Some teachers were scary. They would shout and raise their voices so that you were petrified to put a foot wrong. The tension that this created though meant that you danced as rigid as a poker and of course this led to more screaming from the teacher in an effort to get you to relax. This sort of vicious circle was common. When I went into the dance profession I found that choreographers too could shout, scream and treat dancers badly. It was common for some choreographers to take (what seemed to be) great delight in criticising not just your technique and performance but your physique too. I*

*recall being on stage during rehearsals one day and the choreographer laughing and telling the whole company that he thought the shape of my pelvis was not right because my bones were sticking out at the front (I was wearing a leotard). I didn't know where to look or what to do. So I just laughed nervously with everyone else but inside I was dying with embarrassment. I don't know why he made fun of my physique out of the blue especially as there was nothing I could do to change my anatomical structure. The result of this particular incident was that I became very conscious about wearing leotards, which was a bit of a problem being a dancer because I spent a lot of my life wearing leotards. I don't know why this criticism hit home so hard as I had been made very aware of the limitations imposed on me by my anatomy and physiology during my training. I was already aware that I needed to be taller, with a longer neck, shorter toes and a different shoulder line. I needed longer Achilles tendons and calf muscles to enable deeper demi-pliés - interestingly, my limited range of demi-plié did not stop me loving and being good at all kinds of big jumps even although I was told by various dance experts that it would. I needed more range of movement in the hip joint, better shaped knees, different shaped legs to give the pretty leg and foot line so often desired in ballet. I also needed a flatter bottom because it would make certain movements and lines look more streamlined. Of course, I couldn't actually change my anatomical physique in the way that was wanted. I couldn't make my neck longer and my toes shorter. It was joked about from time to time that I could have the first joint of my second toe removed to make my feet more suitable for point work. It is just as well that cosmetic surgery was not as readily available then as it is now. If it had been, I suspect that I would have been encouraged to go under the knife in order to pursue the ideal form for ballet. In conversation, I was told a story about a dancer who did make a number of changes to herself in response to comments made about improving her abilities, as a dancer. Having undergone these changes she was then, apparently told, that what she really needed to do next, was to change her face surgically. At this point the dancer decided enough was enough deciding not to make any further changes, in order to pursue a career, as a dancer. I believe that I would have*



*let myself be cosmetically altered for dance (had it been readily available as it is today) if so advised by my dance teaching, mother. This is the sort of thing that Buckroyd (2000) is referring to in her book *The Student Dancer* when she says that instead of thinking about the dancer being wrong for dance, it should be that dance is wrong for the dancer. Perhaps my wish to go into theatrical shows, instead of considering a ballet company as a career option, came from knowing deep down that my body and ballet were never going to be right for each other no matter how much effort I put in. Ballet was not right for me.*

When I read the passage above it makes me think about how much I put up with in order to dance. So many dancers have tales to tell about suffering for their art – the young Texan girl at the Bolshoi, mentioned in Chapter One already knows what it is like to work with pain and injury and she is still a student dancer, not yet embarking on her professional career. My heart goes out to my previous self - making light of derogatory remarks and trying to pretend that the insults did not matter, when of course they did. The old saying 'sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me' is not true – verbal criticism can be every bit as damaging as physical injury and we must consider this when we are teaching. I know now that no matter how hard I tried I was up against the impossible where my anatomy was concerned and it makes me angry to think that I always felt let down by my body's long list of inadequacies.

*With some choreographers there was also the accusatory mode of working. By that I mean that if a dance number was not working as well as it should you were accused of deliberately not working hard, or not trying. When you felt you were giving 110 percent, it was very demoralising to be accused of not trying. Looking back, I realise that I, like so many dancers, must have had a strong will to keep going despite all the constant criticisms. There were other choreographers who treated us well and, although I worked very hard for them, I felt that my efforts were appreciated. I know that I felt I worked every bit as hard for these choreographers as I did for the ones who ridiculed and criticised us, much of the time. It was as if I wanted to do really*

*well for the choreographer who treated me like a person, almost like, saying thank you, for their humane treatment of me. It was as if I didn't want to let them down. It was a whole different working environment, like a weight being lifted off your shoulders to feel that your efforts were recognised. It was like having room to breath so that the dance could happen.*

It seems when I read this passage now that the choreographer who treated me with respect was the one that made me feel different – as if I mattered<sup>50</sup> and not just how I danced. This is how we all should feel when we dance – that we are valued for who we are and not just what we can do (Botham 2000b p 146).

*Returning to my student days, though, much of my training was with others and most of the time in class (especially when I was a full-time student) I was treated the same as the others in relation to training. We all worked hard, discussed how to correct faults and the like. Perhaps the main things that were different for me were the result of my being the teacher's daughter. The next section considers some of the issues that influenced my experiences of learning to dance and learning to teach.*

*Some viewed my being the teacher's daughter as 'lucky'. I was always at the studio. I could go into so many classes. The 'dancing teacher' was my mother. Everything was there at my fingertips. Although all of that was true, I did not see it in quite the same way. Yes I was always at the studio but so was my mother and, whilst the senior students could tell her things that they would not share with their own mothers, I could not. We could talk about anything to do with dance but it was not so with non-dance matters. The understanding shown to the students was often missing where I was concerned. I don't think that this was a deliberate action by my mother: it was just the way it was. Where the students envied my being at the studio all the time, I sometimes wanted to be able to do other things and this was not always possible. As a teenager, for example, I wanted to be able to do the things my school friends were doing: playing badminton, doing athletics,*

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<sup>50</sup> After not seeing this choreographer for about 20 years I was unexpectedly invited to see him when he was visiting London for a few days. What a wonderfully, inspiring day we enjoyed.

*going to the café in the evenings and so on. But in those days cross training was not recognised in ways it is today and so I was banned from athletics and sports at school. Indeed, you will recall from earlier that when I dared to take part in the school sports day against my mother's wishes I was unceremoniously removed from the starting line of the 800 metres final by my father – to prevent damaging my muscles for dancing. So in an attempt to do something away from the studio I took up another activity – Latin American dancing. I joined a local class taught by dance teachers that my mother knew. Although it was still dancing, it was more of a social atmosphere and certainly much more relaxed than the highly technical world of classical ballet and competitive highland dancing that I was used to. For the first time I realised that not all dancing had to have the element of fear surrounding the learning of it. It was relaxed and fun. My mother was not very happy that I was learning Latin American because she believed that it would negatively affect my posture and in particular put a curve in my spine that would be bad for ballet. At the time I thought it was just sour grapes, but now when I watch the Latin girls on Strictly Come Dancing they do have very pronounced curves in their spines.*

*Going back to my experiences in the dance class: as I have mentioned, the model of teaching was one of fault correction. This meant that each and every fault was looked for, pulled apart and built up again. Now in principle this did end up improving my technique and performance. However, it had also made me feel as if I was never actually achieving my goals. It was as if the goals were not attainable no matter how much effort and dedication were put in. Being the teacher's daughter meant it was easier for me to get the blame for, say, talking in class whether it was me or not. I even recall one time when I was upstairs in my bedroom when I heard my mother shouting at me to stop talking in class. Incensed that I was totally blameless, I went thundering downstairs and into the studio to inform her that I was getting the blame and I wasn't even in the class. There were lots of incidents like this one where it was always easier to blame me than one of the students. I got used to this but it never felt fair.*

*Another thing that happened quite a lot was that I would have to practise or be available for a class at a moment's notice. Perhaps a teacher had come along for a private lesson and my mother wanted me to demonstrate. This was one of the anomalies. I would be chastised in class for not making sufficient improvement one minute and then the next I would be demonstrating to the class of students or other teachers how to achieve the correct placing or technique. This was confusing, to say the least. It was good to be asked to demonstrate as it made me feel that maybe some of my work was okay. But if I demonstrated and didn't achieve the level expected then my mother would simply point out what I was doing wrong. So there was never any chance of getting ideas of being a better performer than in fact I was. In fact when my mother had other teachers visiting of some repute then I would be invited in for a double helping of fault correction. It wasn't that I didn't appreciate having others assess my work – it was just at times I felt as if my work was just never going to be good enough. Being such a stranger to regular, positive feedback was highlighted when, to maintain some level of fitness, I joined a weekly ballet class after my son was born. I explained to the teacher my dance background and that I had recently had a baby followed by a period of being unwell. I told her that I was simply looking for a gentle class for me to do to ease me back into activity. After the first class the teacher came over to speak to me and said, "you cannot hide a good foundation no matter how long it is since you danced. It is obvious that you have had an excellent foundation". Her comments took me completely by surprise. I was not used to having genuine positive feedback and I was simply unprepared for it. On the drive home her comments went around and around in my head. By the time I reached home I was thinking that 'maybe I was a good dancer after all'.*

This completes the autoethnographical journal as I will be presenting it here. In conjunction with the other data, it should make vivid the conception of dance teaching, and of the model of dance teachers implicit in that practice, in general as well as in the more specific incidents on which I have commented. If a part of the appeal to my memory is the way that it reflects the relative importance of things in my (past) life, the reflection on that life as

it was impacted on by dance teaching (and some of its key moments) should illustrate both the narrative itself and the lasting of the events it depicts. For it offers access to my 'subjective experiences' in just that way, since it inevitably stressed my feelings, emotions and embodiment.

As I have presented it here, the autoethnographic material does indeed suggest both that 'teaching by terror' was a powerful force in the teaching of a young dancer and that its impact can be lasting: certainly I have found myself struggling to come to terms with it. I would present it as depicting a kind of struggle typical of the experiences of dancers in training. To the degree that this is true, it will make vivid the claims of the (other) participants, by presenting them in a concrete way.

## **5.2 Further Findings**

If these discussions thus far has given us confidence in the reality of the anecdotal picture of dance teaching, we can turn to the present. The present, recall, was to be reflected primarily by the reflective logs and interviews, as described in Chapter Three. For they would offer a snapshot of the present state of the training of dance teachers for the private sector. Had there been a radical shift in the manner of teaching? Or did the same authoritarian model dominate? Or was there another alternative?

The first response for the potential research participants, recall, were the written statements they provided. But data provided by the written statements from interviewees were purposefully not intended as data per se. Their purpose was as a lead-in to the interviews. In the end the data from the written statements did not contribute a huge amount to the interviews but nonetheless they did offer some insights into the learning and teaching backgrounds of the interviewees.

As a young pupil of this school I was very happy with my experience, however there were pupils who did not enjoy the classes due to the favouritism that went on.

Dance training at a young age I remember it to be great fun and I counted the days until the next dance day would come. My own

teacher would never raise her voice and yet we knew there were rules and they were to be followed

...When I left school at aged 16, I started ballet seriously and after a couple of false starts found my teacher Pat. He was a major influence on my life and is responsible for me becoming a ballet teacher. He recognised I had a possible talent for teaching....

There were several teachers on the course each with their own teaching methods. Some teachers although tough, gave encouragement to the students whilst others were very intimidating. The latter did not gain the respect or get out of me, my full potential as a student on the course.

As indicated in the previous chapter it was hoped that the reflective logs would provide a picture of how teaching students responded to the way they were being taught on the course. Those that were thin as far as providing useful data, offered little insight into their experiences of learning about teaching on the course. Of the logs that did offer some useful insight into how students responded to the course it is clear that at least some highlighted confusing and concerning methods relating to the delivery of the course. Of the 158 reflective logs looked at, only a very few provided some degree of rich, useful data about the training on the course.

We had a brilliant class with Della .... Being put on the spot with this exercise brought back my school days with a vengeance and I had a panic. Della noticed this immediately and came over ... she helped me through it while still running the rest of the class ....

Then we had a class with Chris. It turned out there were others who were also worried about the forthcoming class .... However Chris was much nicer this time and did not shout at all .... We talked about how to begin a class .... There was no discussion as to why pliés or tendus or what they are for. Therefore there was no discussion about the quality of these steps or the reason for doing them.... we again attend a teacher's course where these issues are not covered. If teachers do not know these things then their pupils will not know.

Code RL-E

...she gave us a clear demonstration of what teaching is about....You, Della and Beula seem very clear about how we should teach by the end of this diploma course....Does this also apply to our teachers like Chris and others? Or do they have rules of their own? It will be very hard to get through the course with such double standards. ...the worst scenario is to be adjudicated by these kinds of teachers.

Code RL-F

... Well I must say, I still find this teaching style difficult but I finally learned something useful....I had promised myself not to get upset again or put myself in a position of extreme stress so when it was my turn I said 'I am so sorry but I do not want to do this at this point and time,' Chris just accepted my decision and moved on.

Code RL-G

The next source of data about present practice came from the video interviews which also provided a rich source of data concerning the interviewees' experiences of learning to dance and as well as their present experience of learning to teach. They touched on their early experiences as children through to the present.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter Three, a 'data gem' was given after the video was switched off. Much of this material has already been presented in the course of discussion of the autoethnographical journey. But one case, in particular, should be emphasised again, since it highlights how in interviews the questions alone do not always generate the interesting or revealing responses. One interviewee was quite emphatic about her teacher's ability to control the class without any obvious discipline. When asked about how her teacher managed to maintain discipline if she did not shout or raise her voice, she responded:

I think a lot of it was respect. You respected someone, and you liked someone, and I think that was it. The rules of the school were, you got on with the class and worked. She would give you a look. She could give a look (Laughter).

. ...But you were all being a bit noisy and wanted it to calm down maybe. Um no, I don't think – I can't remember a situation where the classes were unruly.

...I think so. I think I wouldn't go back to being in school where we were brought up on the cane. Not dancer's school, we're talking being in school. So as children, we were maybe more disciplined than what I experienced as a teacher.

(Cara, interview 2005)

As the video camera was packed away and we chatted about discipline in the dance class, the 'data gem' noted previously in Chapter Three, was casually mentioned. 'Of course our teacher always carried a big stick in

class'. So the positive impression of the maintenance of discipline was, after all, achieved by conveniently forgetting to mention the stick.

More than any single comment, this exemplifies the claims elaborated by the empirical part of this investigation: that one's past might be dominated by this authoritarian model of teaching, seen as normal or natural behaviour, to the extent that one did not really notice it. Clearly, such a person might continue to use the method equally subconsciously.

Someone might think that this is all history but Renée D'Aoust who trained at the illustrious Martha Graham School in the nineties shares the toughness of her training on her and her body as well as her life as a professional dancer in her book *The Body of a Dancer* (2011). The following two quotes from her book could easily have come from an earlier time several decades before but they did not. They come from a much more recent past. Once again the role that fear can play in dance training is highlighted and we are reminded of the damage that can result from always trying to achieve the impossible.

The spirit can be broken, but not from an aching body. The spirit is broken because often the dancer's dream is unattainable.

(D'Aoust 2011 pp 9-10)

Several dancers actually let go of the barre and fall on their butts. They are the ones who always follow directions, especially when screamed in high pitch. If you hadn't been so terrified of Ms Buglisi, you might have laughed ...

(D'Aoust 2011 p 15)

### **5.3 Conclusion**

We can see from the data above that the ways of the past are still here despite claims that we have moved away from these 'teaching by terror' and 'invisible big stick' methods. According to the findings here, these methods have not gone away. There is clearly something here that needs to be fixed – so how are we going to fix it?



But as noted above, one might then wonder whether the situation it describes with respect to the attitudes and training of private sector dance teachers is still current: or, at least, as current as it realistically can be. Yet the 'data' were collected some time ago; and much relates to a yet earlier time. Can it bear on today's problems?

To reply, we must recall the precise project the empirical enquiry was supposed to inform. As expressed in Chapter Three (3.1), it was: *What goes on in dance teaching (for this sector) past and present?* And, while this question was further refined, it clearly admits no simple answers, especially given the changes in the sector, including those produced as by-products of this on-going investigation. More explicitly, the topic involved demonstrating the persistence of authoritarian teaching, offering as rich an understanding of those teaching methods as was possible.

To put that another way, the aim was to give a richer understanding of the *lived process* than would be provided simply by looking at some examples. So the virtue of recognising both complexity and richness was prioritised over the virtue of being 'up to date' (in a world that was sometimes changing rapidly).

With this in mind, these styles of teaching were located in the recent past of the preparation for private sector dance teaching, as represented both through the documentation and the interviews. And additional depth was developed through the autoethnography (see comments below), where the authoritarian process was seen *throughout* aspects of the life of the dance student. We should conclude that unethical treatment of this sort was, and is, pervasive – at least to some degree. Hence the conclusion of the empirical phase of the investigation here must be to recognise that this model of teaching (better, of student treatment) was still in place, even though some aspects of contemporary training in dance teaching were explicitly designed to offer alternative models of that teaching, as ways to acknowledge the students' rights to treatment that was not humiliating, or terrifying, or otherwise unethical.

Perhaps aspects of the autoethnography hint at the longevity of the traditional model: its emphasis on content, rather than pedagogy; its concern with being the 'best dancer one can', expressed in terms the teacher brought to the context; its belief that, since dance is inevitably a hard task-master, often delivering a short working life, students should learn from the beginning to 'grin and bear it', to 'toughen up', and similar expressions for the toleration of otherwise unacceptable conditions and behaviour. We have already recognised some areas of possible improvement, resulting from modifying such a mind-set. In the next Chapter, recommendations for continuing improvement are drawn from a conceptual investigation of one of the tools widely offered here: the introduction of codes of conduct or practice.

So, taking seriously our exploration of the autoethnographical data will be fundamental here just because it offers a fully elaborated account of the 'life' of a dance student in the private sector. It affords us a detailed and comprehensive look at that world. So it offers fine detail, which can be drawn upon to address central issues of dance pedagogy on that model. And, in line with the autoethnographic process, this offers the opportunity to consider something known as well as one can.

But the account is obviously limited in three ways: first, and most obviously, by the time-frame — on the time-frame of the events investigated: that they were long ago; and on the currency of the results: they describe the situation of some time ago. Second, there are sets of issues relating to the process of recollection: what was *not* recalled (and why)? Third, to what extent was my experience (especially as the teacher's daughter) distinctive? And of course it must be granted that many of the points made are inflected, to some degree, by the fact of my being the teacher's daughter. Our reply is that the other key points — especially those concerning pedagogy — remain substantially unchanged once the focus on 'the teacher's daughter' is removed.

Structurally, our answer for the first two aspects involves recognising that if one follows with close attention the *process* of autoethnography, then past work validating the results of such autoethnography can be brought to

bear here; we can draw on recognised procedures towards the reliability and soundness of data. In this way, the kinds of review of data-soundness already taken to yield reliable conclusions can illuminate our data: indeed, it implicitly is drawn on in this way. So a thorough on-going commitment to a well-founded methodology (with autoethnography fast becoming one of the methods) brings with it some assurance for the data thereby generated. The other aspect comes from our other vein of empirical enquiry: that we have found parallel results through our other investigations. Thus the interviews suggest that the themes themselves have a generality: they are not unique to *my situation* as the autoethnography elaborates it. And both some interviews and the reflective logs show that these themes are current — or, at least, that they were until recently. Our theme was also to provide a justified answer to questions about the training of private-sector dance teachers; and to prefer the detail that could be offered by the investigative techniques deployed here, rather than searching for, say, the fragile generality that might be offered by, for example, questionnaire techniques. The results here give confidence that there are recognisable trends or tendencies, such that one can ask how best that situation might be confronted. As we will see, the answer proceeds by putting aside, through conceptual investigation (in Chapter Six), one obvious answer (in terms of codes of conduct for the regulation of dance teaching for the private sector. What follows, then, is that we can enquire what (if anything) our investigations have told us of the options here: in particular, the unsatisfactory character of adopting codes of conduct. Once we arrive at that conclusion, we will turn to whatever other strategies are then suggested, strategies that cannot depend on *importing* codes or other rules.

## 6 Got a Problem, Get a Code

A national automobile association recently called upon the Government to curb the excessive zeal with which car parking wardens were performing their duties by establishing a code of professional conduct, and the Church of England (surely immune from ethical-fad addiction) has found itself looking toward a code of conduct in the wake of its recent outbreak of over-zealous 'preaching'. 'Got yourself a problem? .... Get yourself a code' seems to be the public relations solution to the 'contemporary' professional moral malaise.

(McNamee 1995, p 104)

### 6.1 *Introduction: codes*

This chapter is fundamental to the project as it is part of the resolution strategy towards ethical dance teaching practices. Having considered the situation as it is developing in the world of the training of dance teachers, locating key moments in its history in the methods by which the teachers were trained, we turn now towards potential solutions, although of course aspects of these solutions have already been incorporated into present provision. In Chapter Two, the profession was rightly called 'unregulated': that might suggest a way forward, one way of regulation, as that is an aspect of the solution considered here. Faced with concerns about behaviour, the suggestion that a code of practice might be helpful often arises. Could the current situation be improved by the introduction of regulation in the form of codes of practice? In considering such codes in this chapter, we highlight, in particular, three main issues: (a) the problems associated in simply formulating such a code; (b) unsurmounted assumptions about what such a code could achieve; (c) the need for codes to be "internalised" for their value to be apparent. Building on the last of these, a positive suggestion is offered; namely the need to teach in such a way as to internalise the content of the code, for then the code itself can serve much, as the codification of extant beliefs.

The past decade or so has seen the emergence of a variety of 'codes' advising how members of the dance profession in the private sector *should* conduct themselves. Despite this, there are still general concerns about recent and current teaching practices (Buckroyd 2000, Williams 2003). So could such codes achieve the desired outcomes or are they, as McNamee (1995 p 145) suggests in the quote at the beginning of this section "the PR solution to the 'contemporary' professional moral malaise?" Could it be that the codes emerging are, in essence, the dance world's way of *being seen to do something* in response to criticisms of the traditional teaching methods so vividly described by Geeves (1993, p 8) as 'teaching by terror'? To answer, it is helpful to offer some general thoughts on the usefulness or limitations of such codes as well as addressing their more specific application to dance teaching.

Whether or not the motive for having a code is to satisfy the outside world, it is interesting to note that, although the variety of codes or rules emerging in recent years are not necessarily labelled as 'ethical codes', that is what, in effect, they are, since their aim is to regulate members behaviour; to induce 'right action' – which, in effect, will be ethical action. So, if we consider some of them and their purpose, each has the intention of guiding professional behaviour. The Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing has a Voluntary Code of Ethics. The Council for Dance Education and Training started out with a Code of Professional Conduct but revised the title in 2008 to 'Code of Professional Conduct and Practice' to more accurately reflect what the code is about. In the 'Safe Dance Report' (1990), Tony Geeves lays out a Code of Ethics for the dance teaching profession. Dance UK's (1998) *A Dancers' Charter for Health and Welfare* [first published in 1992] is effectively a code of professional conduct. The names given to the codes may be different however if we were to compare all of these codes we would be able to find general consensus in their purpose and content. Therefore the name given to each set of codes or rules is simply demonstrating individual label preferences. One such example would be point 9 in Appendix 5 of The Safe Dance Report and one of the bullet points under the 'teacher' heading in Dance UK's charter.

Individual teachers will recognise the role of dance in the development of the whole person. They will also seek to recognise and develop each student's potential, whether it lies in dance or in related fields, and offer appropriate guidance for further progress.

(Geeves 1990 Appendices: 60)

seek to develop thinking dancers able to respond intelligently to all aspects of their training, including new ideas, rather than dancers who 'react as puppet' with good techniques.

(Dance UK 1998)

Both examples are concerned with developing cognitive as well as physical abilities in dancers and in this way are supporting a person-centred approach to the teaching of dancing that educates the mind and the body (the whole person) and promotes the flourishing of the full person (Botham 2000a). The person-centred or holistic approach is fundamental to ethical practice in dance as discussed in previous Chapters<sup>51</sup>.

Let us return to the issue of what the set of rules or principles are called, it appears that although one of the examples shown can be found within a Code of Ethics and the other within a Dancers' Charter, the difference in title is not of great significance. What is of importance is that we recognise that by giving a code a certain name that does not mean it is restricted to cover only the area mentioned in the title. With this in mind, I suggest that as a starting point here, we recognise:

- The assumption that codes of practice will include codes of conduct;
- That codes must fit into the legal framework but not be exhausted by it;
- That codes are not aimed at avoiding litigation as such (nor securing insurance), although these may be side effects.

That is to say, we begin from a focus on the codes themselves. And we assume that the context here is of (moral) agents, those who could give their consent: so, roughly, adults rather than children.

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<sup>51</sup> Ethical practice is discussed throughout the thesis and particularly in Chapters One, Two and Five.

It is also proposed, for ease of reference, to use the term 'codes' as a universal way of referring to the range of dance related codes of ethics, practice, conduct, rules and guidelines under discussion in this chapter.

### **6.1.1 The purpose of codes?**

Of course, one part of the problem arises from expecting too much from such codes. Codes are so often viewed as a sort of 'cure all'. People seem to look to them, not for guidance, but to obtain the 'right' answer or find out the 'right' way to do something. They are viewed as prescriptive. And it is not just a case of being seen in this light because many of those who sign up to them apparently want the codes to be prescriptive as this would, in their opinion, remove any grey areas. Prescriptive codes remove the need for people to concern themselves with weighing up a situation or problem and deliberating often, extensively before coming to a decision about what to do. Prescriptive codes that simply give a black and white view of professional practice and conduct would be impossible to produce. Even if it were possible to produce such codes, they would have extremely limited use because in ethical practice there is often more than one potential method of dealing with a situation, and each method can be ethical. Indeed, sometimes we recognise the need to act on 'the lesser of two evils' in such a case. So applying the code is not a simple black or white solution to the problem. In reality perhaps a code offers guidance or a framework and not a list of yes and no answers. But those who hope codes will solve their problems also hope that they will do so clearly and exceptionlessly; they see codes as essentially clear in just this way since, they argue, codes which were *vague* could not do their job. And this *seems* to go along with the role of codes in arbitrating fairly. For one role of codes as guiding professional practice which we can usefully explore by considering, as an example, one account of professions – the sorts of things typified by doctors and lawyers. Then we can consider the contribution of the codes themselves.

It is important to understand the purposes of codes of practice, and especially of the 'code of conduct' aspect of each. For one we can profitably begin from the list, from Koehn (1994)<sup>52</sup>, of seven (typical) conditions which as McNamee (1998b, p 149) puts it, (in quoting this material) are '... intended to ground the moral authority of a given profession, and the professionals therein, in a trustworthy relationship'. They are:

- 1 the professional must aim at the client's good (whose desires do not simply entail that good);

*[Thus we expect our doctors to do what is best for us, whether or not we specifically ask for this.]*

- 2 the professional must exhibit a willingness to act towards that aim;

*[It is not enough to aim in the direction; the doctor must act on that ask.]*

- 3 such willingness to act thus must continue for as long as is necessary to reach a determination;

*[And, as above, must persist until a satisfactory outcome is achieved.]*

- 4 the professional must be competent (in the appropriate knowledge and skills);

*[This is a key feature: we need knowledgeable doctors.]*

- 5 the professional must be able to demand from the client (specific appropriate knowledge and performances);

*[So as a professional, I must be able to ask you to, say, take the pills.]*

- 6 the professional must be free to serve the client with discretion (which, as with (1) above, need not be consistent with their desires);

*[If the professional's judgement and discretion cannot be relied on, the client will not carry through with the treatment.]*

- 7 the professional must have a highly internalised sense of responsibility.

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<sup>52</sup> In his list above, McNamee does not review Koehn's arguments which he believes are incomplete. Instead his list draws on the spirit of Koehn's analysis and puts it in the context of sport coaching and we are considering with dance teaching in mind.



*[So that the professional typically does the right thing because it is the right thing: or here we might set aside explicate, certain prudential reasons for action, such as avoiding litigation or becoming famous].*

These are all plausible especially if we see them exemplified through our typical *professions* (lawyers or doctors); and can point us in a useful direction with respect to codes of conduct. Identifying these typical features of professions highlights the sense in which, in them, the profession's concern is first-and-foremost with the client's wellbeing or welfare: that is any case where the client's welfare conflicts with his/her wishes or desires, the professional should act in line with the client's welfare. Although they do not strictly *require* it, such features tend towards a person-centered approach of practice since they prioritise the professional's responsibilities. And professional bodies have typically seen such priorities expressed through the code of conduct for that body: for instance through the British Medical Council's regulation of the practice of doctors. Then, to regulate the behaviour of professionals (in line with these conditions), codes of conduct might be drawn up to offer:

... authoritative support for ethical commitments to avoid caprice or arbitrariness. (McNamee 1998b, p 151)

In intention, then, such codes:

- '... offer *apparent* clarity and simplicity in a confusing world'
- '... set out standards or criteria to evaluate provision and expectation in relationships that are consistent over time'
- '... offer a neutral framework for resolving conflict or ambiguity to those under the authority ...'
- '... in constraining certain actions, they allow exclusion ... [of] anyone who will not conform to that code' (McNamee 1998a p 151: see also McNamee 1995 p 146, offering a similar list, from Dawson)

In summary, then, McNamee highlights the apparent clarity and simplicity the codes offer; that they set out clearly fixed standards for, among other things, provision and expectation; that they provide independent and

pre-determined criteria to minimise ambiguity; that they reduce litigational conflict, resolution and increase satisfaction for all parties; that they guarantee a standard of practice within the client/professional relationship that is consistent over time and between those persons governed by the authoritative body; and that they provide a neutral framework, responsive to different populations. So these represent the potential benefits desired (or hoped for) from such codes.

Consider a recent example in one of the social dance areas, namely Line dancing. A group of people running and teaching classes, who from a professional dance teaching perspective, are inexperienced, untrained and unqualified, are eager to set up a Governing Board to be 'the' authoritative body for Line dancing. From their discussions it seems that such a Board would be set up to act as a sort of professional advice centre providing 'yes or no' answers to all teaching dilemmas as, it has been implied, an alternative to individuals undertaking dance teacher training. This group effectively sees teaching dilemmas in black and white, with a simple right or wrong answer for everything, and no grey areas. The group argues that they do not have time to explore a variety of options relating to teaching and that it would be better to have a governing body that tells them 'yes, you can do this' or 'no, you cannot do this'. It is interesting to note that within this same culture and group of people, any attempts to promote injury prevention through good teaching practice are all too often met with resistance to consider changing existing behaviour. Furthermore, when the subjects of teacher training and qualifications are raised, the response or comment often repeated by people teaching Line dancing is 'we are only teaching people to Line dance – it is not as if we are teaching ballet'. Thus implying that teaching social dancing does not require the knowledge, skills and understanding that teachers of other dance genres are expected to have. Part of the reason for people teaching social dancing without training and qualifications must surely be that they do not see it as a profession. They often do it as a hobby and therefore as it is not their main source of income they do not see why they should invest in teacher training and qualifications especially when they are managing to do it without either (Posey 2002, pp 44-45). That said, it is also

worth noting at this point that it is not just the social dance sector that wants to be 'told what to do'.

Further activities such as these were understood in this way in practice. At the IADMS conference in Stockholm, Sweden in November 2005, a panel discussion about ethical principles and standards of practice for working with dancers drew attention to the body of people in the dance profession seeking definitive answers to what can only be described as 'grey' areas. These people not only see a purpose of codes as being able to provide yes or no answers to difficult questions, they want it to be so. They want the dilemma taken out of the dilemma and replaced with the sort of 'if' statement found in computer programming – 'if this, then do 'x', 'if that, then do 'y'. They would prefer not to have to consider how to deal with each individual dilemma but to have a code for every eventuality. This is of course, not going to happen because, as will become clear, codes cannot possibly cover all situations (Cribb and Duncan 2002, pp 132-136)<sup>53</sup>. What about the situations that have yet to arise? Or what about the difficult cases that by their very nature are outside of the usual issues that codes are developed to assist with? But these are topics to which we can return.

Moreover, existing codes relating to dance were created for the purpose of promoting and guiding good practice or health and welfare (CDET 2008, Dance UK 1998). The following extract from the revised Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for Teachers of Dance 2008-2009 produced by the CDET, demonstrates that this continues to be the purpose of the Code.

This is a recommended Code of Professional Conduct and Practice by the Council for Dance Education and Training to guide dance teachers on issues of good practice.

Then, where practice has been identified as problematic (Geeves 1993, pp 8-19) as is the case in dance teaching, the purpose of codes can also be seen as ways of instigating change in behaviour. For example, if dance teaching generally is to become 'person-centred' and reject the model that

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<sup>53</sup> In discussing health promotion as an unregulated profession (similarly to dance teaching in the private sector) Cribb & Duncan pursue a theoretical argument concluding that codes have limitations and they: are not immune to ethical critique; cannot be applied to reality in an unproblematic way and codes cannot encompass all ethical thoughts and actions.

Geeves (1993, p 8) referred to as 'teaching by terror', then it is necessary for teachers who are not teaching from a person-centred approach to alter the way they teach. In this instance, a code of practice or written book of rules may be seen as a type of framework that teachers can look to for guidance. Although some may believe that adopting a code of ethics is sufficient in order to effect the desired change of behaviour, it will be argued that this is not the case and that encouraging and achieving behaviour changes is complex and far from being simple. Furthermore it will also be argued that the existence of some sort of code is no guarantee of teachers behaving ethically. Sue Stinson's (2004, pp 235-279) work on teaching dance teachers to think ethically, discussed later in this chapter, is an example of the sort of depth of attention and education required in order to effect a level of change relating to ethics and dance teaching or education.

Still on the matter of achieving behaviour change, there is no evidence to support the idea that the provision of written information, on its own, results in a change of behaviour. And the context here need have nothing to do with dance. From a health education perspective, the evidence is all around us to indicate that simply giving people information does not, in itself, change behaviour. For example, there is a huge amount of information available in supermarkets, schools, healthcare sites, magazines and so on, relating to healthy eating and the sort of balance of nutrition that we should all be aiming for. Despite this information being readily available, obesity in children (and the population generally) is rising year on year with more than a third of British children being overweight (foreword by Collins in) (Gavin et al. 2004). Currently the UK government is running a campaign 'Change4Life' to tackle obesity in England ([www.nhs.uk/Change4Life](http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life)). As Lucas and Lloyd (2005, pp 136-137) note, a key problem with health promotion projects that attempt to reduce risk relating to certain medical conditions or improve particular aspects of health is that an assumption is made that people want what the health promoters or organisers of the campaigns are offering. For example, there is an assumption that families want to tackle the current rising obesity problem where, in actual fact, these families might simply want to be

happy and content. Of course the point is reinforced, when – as with much dance training as with health – the activity in question is voluntary.<sup>54</sup>

Although the majority of codes in the private dance teaching sector are voluntary, some organisations such as the United Kingdom Alliance (UKA) have, as a condition of continuing membership, that members must uphold their code of practice. And this is in line with the suggestion (above) that codes should ‘allow exclusion’ (McNamee and Parry 1998, p 151) of those offending against the code. Therefore, in essence, any member not upholding the code could have his or her membership terminated. What this means is that teachers not conforming to the codes should be excluded from their professional, dance teaching and examination body. Such rules are on a par with McNamee’s (1995, p 146) suggestions of codes being part of a blame culture, where breaking the codes is linked to fear of being held responsible for such breaks and possible reprisal. It is interesting to note that in the case of the UKA, excluding members for breaking the code has, it seems, yet to be put to the test. So far, in situations where this rule might apply, as far as one is aware, the code has not been consulted as part of the decision making process and therefore it has not been enforced. This suggests that the code is not functioning as a code but instead, it exists, as a code designed to look good to the outside world rather than to encourage and develop ethical behaviour and practice within the membership. A code used in this way can be referred to as a ‘shelf’ code and this is discussed later in this chapter.

### **6.1.2 Rules and codes**

Let us begin with some general features of codes although drawing on relevant examples.

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<sup>54</sup> Social dancing such as Line dancing exploded onto the activity scene in the mid 1990s with hundreds of thousands of people taking to the dance floor. Whilst there are obviously some potential health benefits to be gained from these people doing some physical activity, the most common response that seems to be given when asked what attracts them to Line dancing is ‘you don’t need a partner’. This concurs with Lucas & Lloyds argument above regarding what clients want often differs to what the health promoters are promoting.

If we think of the codes being discussed as a species of rule, two points must be kept in mind (McFee 2004b, pp 44-47):

- ‘rule-following’ cannot be explained by further sets of rules (on pain of regress); that, if a second rule is needed to explain obedience to the first rule, a third rule will be needed to explain obedience to the second and so on. But if the second rule can have force *without* an additional rule, the first rule too might as well be given that force.
- no set of rules can cover all cases, because new cases could always arise – there is no finite totality of possible cases (McFee 2006, p 21); hence it makes no sense to imagine that any code will deal with all cases.

The second point is complex, with two main aspects. First, the central idea is that, in any situation, something unexpected could always arise; hence any rule written (or any part of a code) could always be confronted with a case that has not been considered when the rule was written or the code was drafted. The rule would either be silent on that case (one would have to decide what to do independently of the rule) or it would suggest some unsatisfactory behaviour. For example (McFee 2004b, p 104), at one time a rule in baseball covered *runners* tackling the catcher; but once such players had crossed home plate, the rule no longer applied to them. So there was no *rule* precluding them from tackling the catcher. But commonsense suggests that this was inappropriate behaviour. Yet there was no rule against it. And new situations could always, in principle, confront any rule (or any formulation of a code). The second point is to recognise that one could set aside that possibility only if one could identify *all* the cases that could ever arise: if such cases comprise a finite totality, such that they could *all* be listed. But this is not so. For this reason, all rules are always *open* – in principle, although typically not in practice.

Although it is not required here to explore these two theses thoroughly, it is worth saying something in explanation and exemplification. The point of the first is just that, if one has a rule, the person who sees or reads it must be able to act on that rule. If you now ask, ‘How does one act so as to follow the rule?’ There is no single answer: it is a rule, or we are creatures capable of

rule-following. In particular, it does not in general help to have a rule which says how to follow the first rule, or that one *must* follow that first rule. For, if the first rule left a gap between the rule itself and its implementation, so would the second. Thus, although sometimes there will be rules which explain why we follow a prior rule, this will not be the norm; and certainly cannot be required.

It is important to keep in mind the contrast between prudential concerns and moral ones: the people who repay the money they borrowed only because they are frightened the lender will beat them up are not behaving morally — even though repaying the money is (in the situation imagined) the morally correct action. Rather, they are just behaving prudentially. To apply: if one's behaviour is in accordance with the code of practice, it does not follow one is acting on the code of practice: the reason for one's acting as one does is important too. So, roughly, one must act in line with the code *because of the code* if one's behaviour is to be explained by that code.

Further, as noted above, our view of moral obligation admits of actions done as 'the lesser of two evils' or 'the greater of two goods': that is, we grant that, in a particular case, there might be ethical motivation in each direction. Perhaps one's desire to do one's best for one's client (in line with one's professional obligations as teacher, and with the contract) conflicts with what is in the client's best interests: for instance, given how tired she is. We do not assume that there is a single, morally right behaviour (if only we knew it): rather, we concede the possibility of genuine dilemmas here. But that means that the 'advice' from codes too might seem contradictory.

Moreover, one thought might be that — faced with such a dilemma — one's code of practice might help. We doubt that this is probable; and try to make that clear in what follows.

### 6.1.3 Sensible codes

It is worth highlighting, initially, two major issues for any code: first codes require careful drafting; and second, they should involve only reasonable restrictions. Let us consider each of these in turn.

So, first, the need for careful drafting of any code may seem obvious. Of course, codes of practice must be carefully written: but, more importantly, they must be written so that those who are to use them can understand both what is proscribed and what is prescribed — that is, what they are ‘signing up to’. A useful parallel here is with the notion of informed consent as it is used in research ethics: in order that I consent (or that my consent be genuine) I must understand to what I am committing myself. And here as Onora O’Neill (2002a, pp 42-44, 154-156) notes, if I consent to be a subject under one description of what that involves (the one you give me), I still might not have consented under the other descriptions. The same applies to our code: if it is formulated differently, that might ask different things of those who sign up to it.

Further, the restrictions imposed by the code must be reasonable: we cannot expect that those to be covered by the code will accept just any restrictions. For instance, they cannot be given restrictions that want to preclude their continuity with the activity. Suppose that a code of practice for dance teachers required that all dance classes of teachers ‘signed up’ to the code — say, in virtue of membership of this or that organisation — were conducted on dance floors of a certain quality as in the example extract of the original CDET Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers of Dance, given below:

Health and Safety - A teacher should:

ensure that facilities provided are adequately maintained and provide:

- suitable flooring appropriate to the technique taught, with a safe surface; designed and constructed to minimise the risk of injury.



Well, is that a realistic requirement? If not, it is not useful to put it into one's code of conduct. And is it enforceable? Again, there is no point in including elements in one's code of practice which could not (or would not) be enforced. Most dance teachers in the private sector will not be using a floor specifically 'designed' and constructed to minimise the risk of injury. For that would require a purpose-built floor. And not forgetting bare feet - there is also need to consider how teachers can make the dance session safe for them if necessary. So if this were part of the code of professional conduct, most of the dance teachers will be behaving unprofessionally (or at least in contravention of that code).

Against us, it might be urged that there is a point in articulating the *ideal* — what *should* happen, if only ... But that ideal, while no doubt laudable in itself, cannot be offering the kinds of clarity which (as McNamee showed us) represents a major reason for drafting such codes. So we should conclude that this regulation, and hence the code that includes it, is not realistic. For the very reasons given here, it is worth noting that the researcher was able to encourage and contribute to changes being made to the CDET code above. Following lengthy discussions with the organisations concerned the code has been altered to:

Health and safety - A teacher should:

ensure that teaching facilities are adequately maintained and provide:

- suitable flooring appropriate to the technique taught, with a clean, safe surface; to minimise the risk of injury;

Now the requirement is one that the relevant dance teachers can more realistically meet: and it will still offer a level of safety.

#### **6.1.4 Three kinds of peril for putting one's trust in codes**

**a) Implementation:** the code must actually be used so as to make a difference in the practice of (in our case) a typical dance teacher. In making this point, we are contrasting what should happen with three other kinds of cases:

Firstly, 'opting out' of the organisation: faced with a code placing genuine constraints on practice, the teacher might prefer to leave the organisation. But, if the constraints are appropriate to dance teaching (and especially ethical dance teaching), doing so is - in effect - deciding to teach in an inappropriate way (Brackenridge 2001, pp 18-19).

Secondly, 'lip service': a teacher might officially 'sign up' to the code of practice, but then not act in accordance with it. (In the most extreme case, the code might simply remain on the shelf — perhaps pointed out to prospective clients [or insurers].) So just because a code is in existence does not mean that it is embodied in practice. For example, there are many codes or policies devised by organisations that sit on a shelf gathering dust. They may have been created initially in order to demonstrate that the organisation has a code or to satisfy a particular need, such as, an insurance company wanting evidence of a code or policy being in place to deal with certain situations in professional practice, for example, as a condition for obtaining liability cover. The rationale underpinning the creation of such a code does not lie in a commitment to the promotion and development of good practice. Nor does it provide a neutral framework, responsive to different populations as we have seen. Instead such codes are simply a means to an end, a form of paying lip service to having a code. For example, if the organisation can fulfil the condition of the insurance company by producing evidence of the existence of a code then the insurance cover will be obtained. In other words, the organisation needs to demonstrate the existence of a code but it does not need to demonstrate that the code is actively used or embodied within the practice of the members. What this means is that a code can be created and then relegated to a shelf without affecting practice at all. In this way, therefore, shelf codes are misleading because they are pretending that there is an active code in place guiding or controlling behaviour when in reality, it is not. Codes that are developed in this way do not serve a useful ethical purpose because they are little more than a form of tokenism to satisfy the outside world that a code exists. For codes to be meaningful and influence professional behaviour then we first need to ask ourselves who the codes are there to protect.

Thirdly, 'organisational support withdrawn': the organisation does not enforce its code (say, by expelling members who breach it, such as the person 'opting out' above) - again, in the worst case, the code is not supported by the organisation. As this will often be something the organisation keeps quiet, concrete examples are hard to find - but we know, from Brackenridge (2001, pp 163-186), that parallel cases occur in sport: it is plausible to assume that they take place in respect of dance also.

A concern relating to codes of ethical conduct for the dance profession, is that they can be viewed by those who use them as external. By that it is meant they are separated from the dance practice. For example, as mentioned earlier, dance teaching organisations that subscribe to certain codes may not even be aware of the content or implications of these codes. In this way, these token or shelf codes are in existence to be seen by the outside world and not to become an integral part of the practice. This means that practice can and does continue to make use of traditional teaching methods that have been heavily criticised such as the use of negative assessment (Botham 1997, Botham 2001a, Brinson 1993, Buckroyd 2000, Geeves 1993, Robson 2002) despite such practice not being in accordance with the codes or even the spirit of the codes. This suggests that having a code is not enough. For the codes to impact on practice they need to become part of the practice they are intended to influence. There is need for them to be embodied within the practice.

So these are three situations where a code might exist but where it was not safeguarding the relevant practices. And these are all practical difficulties, in the sense that they could be remedied by people acting differently: here the flaws reside in the people, not the code.

One revealing factor here is that although codes are explicitly to protect the clients (here, those in training), very often this is not what occurs. But codes usually indicate the population they are intended to protect. For example, Dance UK's charter says it is concerned with looking after the health and welfare of dancers. In contrast, the Nursing & Midwifery Council Code of professional conduct (2002) says on its cover 'protecting the public

through professional standards'. The CDET's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers of Dance is a guide to good practice (2008). In effect, the code promotes professional behaviour of a positive nature that facilitates the health, wellbeing and development of their students.

However, if we look below the surface of who the code is indicated to protect, it is not unusual to discover a second agenda or purpose. Codes may be designed to appear to indicate protection for one population when in fact they are protecting another population. An example of this might be when a code indicates that its purpose is to protect children when in fact it is really protecting the adult from possible litigation. Where a dance teacher is following a code that dictates how they should behave in the dance studio, the code may advise, for example, that teachers should only use physical correction or teaching by touch in a sensitive manner and only if other methods have been considered first. Although presented as a method of protecting children from any inappropriate behaviour, in reality, the code is safeguarding the dance teacher and perhaps even, the dance profession, from possible litigation arising from any allegations of inappropriate behaviour between teacher and student. In numerous discussions with dance professionals about this particular issue the concern is almost always for the protection of the teacher and not for how inappropriate physical contact might affect the student as suggested by the code. This raises an issue about codes and whether they do what they say they are doing.

**b) The Need to Apply the Code:** in order that it covers lots of different situations, the code will be drafted in a fairly abstract or non-specific way. So one must first turn the code-formulation - the words in the document - into a working code: what practices does it prescribe? And what does it proscribe? And then the dance teacher must see exactly what this means in his/her context.

An example of this comes from our work with dance teachers where we have explored the codes and their purpose and function in relation to dance teaching practice. Pre-workshop preparation for such sessions includes teachers familiarising themselves with the code and noting any issues or

questions that they want to discuss or highlight. The 'floor' example above is one that has been used to demonstrate to teachers the need for codes to be drafted carefully offering only reasonable restrictions. And the need for those signing up to codes to be aware of what they are signing up to. In other words, teachers need to read and understand the codes before signing up to them.

It is interesting to note that when teachers at a workshop were asked if they had any issues or queries about the (original CDET) codes they had signed up to, no one did. And yet when asked if they all had ideal floors to teach each dance genre on, the majority said 'no', giving explanations as to common floor-related problems that are often present when teaching, in say, a hired church or community hall. When it was pointed out that, in signing up to the code, they had agreed to provide suitable flooring for each technique taught and that this might mean they had to design and lay a new floor with a safe surface to minimise risk of injury, the teachers were not only surprised they were horrified. A heated debate followed focusing mainly around the impossibility for a dance teacher to change the flooring in hired premises; cost issues for studio owners and the different flooring needs required by different dance genres. All agreed that it was not possible to uphold this part of the code. And yet they had not questioned it when they signed up to it<sup>56</sup>. The outcome of the discussion was that the code needed to be changed in order for it to be something that teachers could reasonably achieve. As mentioned above, this was taken back to the CDET and this point was eventually changed to be less restrictive. It should also be noted that instigating this change was a challenge in itself. The argument put forward was that no one expected teachers would actually have to design and lay a new floor as that would not be possible and that the code was only giving the ideal. It can be argued that if no one expected members to act in accordance with the code then it seems pointless having such a code. So an argument was put forward for re-drafting the code in a form that made it possible for teachers to act in accordance with it while maintaining the central

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<sup>56</sup> This matter is further discussed later in this chapter.

commitment to safety. The challenge here was not the re-drafting of this point in the code, but rather helping the others involved to see the importance of having a workable code.

Further, the code will not be exceptionless: in line with our recognition above, there will be cases which the code as formulated will not cover, but which will be within the 'spirit of the code'; or cases where the code might seem to prescribe or proscribe the wrong behaviour. To illustrate this point, McNamee and Parry (McNamee 1998a, p 154) offers 3.3 of the Code of Practice for Sports Coaches:

Coaches should not condone or engage in sexual harassment [...] with performers or colleagues. It is considered that sexual relationships with performers are generally inappropriate to the professional conduct of coaches.

Consider the second sentence here: since an exceptionless prohibition would be inappropriate here — coach and athlete might, say, be a married couple — the code is drafted so as to make the possibility of exceptions explicit: it operates only 'generally'. But, of course, that does not show us the scope of the 'generally' — when can a particular teacher claim that his/her situation is covered by that 'generally'? We do not know.

**c) Codes cannot cover all cases:** this is the strictly philosophical worry raised above — that there is no finite totality of cases to consider, such that a code could deal with *all* of them. Rather, in principle, new cases could always arise. There are, in effect, two sorts of difficulties here: the first are so-called 'hard cases' not obviously covered by the code — these will arise only occasionally, and so will not be readily handled by looking to precedents. The second are the hypothetical cases beloved of philosophy. And these can be as fanciful or improbable as one likes. So that even if/when the 'hard cases' are resolved, that still leaves yet others unresolved.

However, this point can be read more positively: that codes can only be expected to deal with usual or typical or traditional cases: this is all that can be expected of them.

The big point we have tried to make thus far is that codes of practice — and, more specifically codes of conduct — cannot deal with all the ethical

issues that might arise in the chosen context: here, dance teaching, broadly conceived.

### 6.1.5 Some Virtues of Codes

In line with the point above, we should recognise that codes of practice (and especially codes of conduct) cannot deal with *all* cases — there is no such finite totality. And, in particular, we should not expect them to deal with ‘hard cases’. So we should instead look for the virtues of such codes in their ability to deal with the standard cases. So, a first virtue of codes is that they offer:

- **some consistency** (within shared application or contexts). We see that this case is like that one, and treat it accordingly. Or we predict what might be the reaction to our doing such-and-such by noting the response from the governing body for the code to a colleague doing so-and-so, a similar practice. And so on. Further, codes can be:

- **effective in favoured cases**: consider again McNamee’s example (given above) concerning sexual relations between coach and athlete. The role is clearly designed to prevent the exploitation of athletes by coaches, granting that this is a power-dynamic — in that example, we can see both why (in favoured cases) it was thought worth considering (namely, to preclude the misuse of power) and what behaviours it proscribes. We can see it, then, as a summary of a debate (in the profession) about the misuse and abuse of power. If we understand the debate, perhaps we will be well placed to consider hard cases that might arise in respect of it. So here the code is not so much identifying which behaviour to adopt as suggesting the considerations that might be used in the debate.

And (of course: see [c] above) there is no exceptionless resolution available here, at least if we consider the philosophical thought-experiment cases. But, in spite of that, our code could be seen as:

- **the starting point for another debate?** And that is what we hope for — that the code be seen as a guide for discussion, rather than a set of abstract prohibitions to deal with all cases. For, as we have seen, to view as

a set of abstract prohibitions, they fail both to prescribe and proscribe behaviour (and certainly the appropriate behaviour) in all cases, real and imagined.

To see codes for dance in a clearer light, it may be useful to consider some examples of issues that have arisen in respect of them. One way to generate those issues directly is to make them concrete. The discussion thus far has focused on codes quite generally, and especially their limitations, although using some relevant examples from the literature on the training of dance teachers. Now we turn briefly to two intermediate cases; ones that concern a dance-related case although not strictly one relating to the training of dance teachers. But they do relate to the moral obligations of two different cases within dance teaching. The first one asks whether a dance teacher has a moral obligation to allow students with anorexia to participate in dance classes (Botham 2005 pp 152-155 ). In contrast, the second case considers the moral obligation of dance teachers in the private sector to actively engage in regular continuing professional development or CPD as it is commonly known.

## **6.2 Do dance teachers have a moral obligation to allow students with anorexia to participate in dance classes?<sup>57</sup>**

Dance teachers are increasingly expected to be able to deal with a wide range of health, wellbeing and safety issues, in addition to everything that can be viewed as dance-specific. With these added responsibilities come a growing number of ethical dilemmas that need to be recognised, acknowledged, and debated. One such dilemma, exemplifying some of our difficulties here, concerns the participation of students with anorexia in dance classes as raised in a paper (Giordano 2005 pp 15-20) in the *Journal of Medical Ethics*. Giordano highlights the lack of guidance in ethical codes or legislation. She shows us that there are strong ethical reasons to let

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<sup>57</sup> The first case was presented at the 15<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the International Association for Dance Medicine & Science, in Stockholm, Sweden, in 2005.



anorexics participate in exercise classes. However, she also explains why, despite these apparently convincing reasons, there is no moral obligation for an instructor to allow a person with anorexia to participate in exercise classes. Using Giordano's paper for a comparison, one can demonstrate that, despite its being possible to present convincing reasons why students with anorexia should be allowed to participate in dance classes, there is no moral obligation for a dance teacher to allow such participation.

First of all, a key difference exists between the exercise to music (ETM) classes discussed by Giordano and dance classes. It is true that both types of classes involve participants being physically active, but a fundamental difference can be found in the character of the activity and the constraints it imposes. For example, dance classes focus on developing technical ability, choreography, or artistry rather than physical activity and fitness. This does not mean that physical fitness is not desirable for dancers; quite the opposite is true. But in order to improve physical fitness dancers often need to look outside of the dance arena. They may participate in aerobic classes (Glance 2004 pp 19-25) or other fitness-based activities, and for this reason view exercise and fitness as being something quite separate from dance. This is an accurate perception insofar as dance classes focus primarily on dance education, while ETM classes by way of comparison explicitly offer exercise-related health benefits such as improvements to cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, muscular strength and self-esteem. Reducing the risk of major diseases such as coronary heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis are also key selling points for this type of class (Giordano 2005 pp 15-16, 18, Lawrence 1999, Lawrence 2009 pp 2-4), as is weight reduction, and this is particularly appealing to people who have a desire to be thinner.

There is a variety of information available to teachers and students about eating disorders and dancers. Much of it focuses on recognising and managing the physical and psychological symptoms (Botham 2005, Buckroyd 2000, Dyke 2001, Glance 2004, Robson 2002, Robson 2003). Advice is rightly aimed at the student as well as those involved with his/her dance education, wellbeing and care, and highlights the need for teachers to

be able to make adaptations in class content to accommodate injury, disability, or other needs (Dance UK 1998, Dyke MBE 2001, IADMS Education Committee 2000). Furthermore, *Your Body Your Risk* (Dyke MBE 2001 p 32) reports that vocational dance schools and dance companies are increasingly likely to have a written policy regarding their attitude towards disordered eating. We are not aware, however, of a policy or code of ethics that deals specifically with the ethics of teaching dance to students with anorexia or other eating disorders. It is a similar situation for teachers of exercise and fitness (Giordano 2005, Register of Exercise Professionals 2004). Even if there were an ethical code dealing with this particular issue, it would not necessarily be successful in achieving the desired outcome.

At the beginning of this chapter, attention was drawn to McNamee's (McNamee 1995, p 145) description of 'Got yourself a problem? ...Get yourself a code' attitude, as 'the public relations solution to the 'contemporary' professional moral malaise'. He points out that codes have limitations and should not be viewed as providing the ultimate answer to ethical issues. Codes are like other systems of rules in being unable in principle to cover all cases; difficult cases can simply opt out of following them. Furthermore, in order for codes to be effective they must be understood by those they seek to control, and there must be commitment to them. This agrees with reasons Stinson (2004 p 235) offers for developing a program to teach ethical thinking to prospective dance educators. This has also been evident in our work with dance teachers (Botham 1997, Botham 2004a). That said, codes can provide a useful, general framework when considering issues of good practice (McNamee 1995 p 155). In the case of the student with anorexia, there is a possible conflict for the dance teacher between a desire to act paternalistically to protect the student and avoid harm on the one hand, and to respect the student's autonomy on the other. However, as Giordano (2005 p 19) notes, it is possible to argue that the desire to exercise (or in this case, to dance) is a symptom of anorexia. As such, it cannot be autonomous; therefore, the ethical option for the teacher would seem to be to act paternalistically, in the best interest of the student, even though this may be against the student's wishes. By acting in this way,

however, the teacher is not allowing the student to take control, thereby increasing the sense of lack of control, which is a recognised trait of anorexia (Giordano 2005 pp 17-18). So this option is not attractive.

The dance teacher of a talented but anorexic ballet student might be motivated to ignore the issue altogether, arguing that if up to 25% of female ballet dancers are dancing with anorexia or bulimia as currently estimated (Glance 2004 p 19) then it must be acceptable. Otherwise all of these dancers would not be attending class and performing. This might be reason enough for some dance teachers to be persuaded in favour of allowing students with anorexia to participate in dance classes.

### **6.2.1 Why dance teachers do not have a moral obligation to allow anorexic students to participate in dance classes.**

The existence of ethical reasons for allowing anorexic students to participate in dance does not mean that dance teachers are obliged to allow them into their classes. By allowing a student with anorexia into his/her class the teacher is agreeing to something other than the usual (formal or tacit) learning contract he/she has with his/her students. It changes his/her role from teacher to something else, requiring different knowledge, qualifications and competencies. For these reasons, just as in the case of the fitness trainer (Giordano 2005 pp 15-20), there is no moral obligation for a dance teacher to allow an anorexic student into his/her classes. This is not to say that dance teachers cannot have ethical reasons for agreeing to teach anorexic students.

This is only a very brief presentation of ethical considerations relating to this important issue, and further debate is needed. But it does highlight that the provision of a code here is not helpful; and it makes concrete some of the reasons why.

### **6.3 Dance teachers and CPD**

Continuing professional development or CPD as it is commonly referred to has been around in the professional world of accountants, doctors and lawyers, for example, for many years. The need to update and maintain skills has been formalised to ensure a minimum attendance at conferences or lectures together with a minimum amount of self-study. For professions such as dance teaching in the private sector CPD is very much still in its infancy for some and not even on the agenda for others (Bonbright 2002 p 64). Over 10 years ago the researcher was giving a seminar, organised by one of the dance teaching societies, about child protection issues and dance teaching. The seminar was for dance teachers in the private sector. During the course of the session reference was made to the need for dance teachers to do a certain amount of CPD. After the seminar, one of the teachers shared her thoughts about this comment, saying how wonderful it was for someone to raise the issue of CPD with dance teachers. She went on to say that, in her other job, regular CPD was compulsory and she believed that it ought to become compulsory for dance teachers who are, after all, responsible for teaching children and adults how to dance and use their bodies. She rightly raised the issue of safe dance practice and the need for teachers to keep up to date with current understanding and practice. Disappointingly, since then some aspects of the private dance teaching sector have stayed much the same with little or no increase in the attention paid to encouraging:-

- greater understanding about what CPD is and how it contributes to dance teaching practice
- greater commitment to CPD by dance organisations and dance teachers

And although societies which offer the new teaching qualifications, are offering an increasing amount of CPD opportunities for their teaching members it is not clear at this point in time as to what extent this CPD has become (or not) compulsory. Where CPD is voluntary with no requirement for the teacher to undertake a minimum amount of CPD then it can be argued that for some at least, CPD will be ignored. Teachers who do not attend conferences, meetings or lecture opportunities may well continue to teach

without updating their knowledge, skills and understanding at all. Just as mentioned earlier in this chapter commitment is needed to CPD in a similar way that it is required for codes. From personal experience, opening one's self up to new ways of learning or new ways of doing things provides constant stimulation and motivation and sustains curiosity about what we do as dance teachers. Being able to access new ideas or research findings concerning improved ways of teaching dance or improving safe dance practice is vital for teachers who want to be the best teacher he/she can be. Taking advantage of a whole range of CPD opportunities including, reading texts and journals, attending seminars, lectures, conferences and events and even having professional conversations with others to exchange ideas and information, is an essential part of being a person-centred or learner-centred dance teacher. For teachers who are not familiar with the term "CPD", it would appear that there is quite some resistance to the concept. For example, some teachers seem to believe that CPD is not for them but only for people (including dance teachers) who are actively engaged in academic studies. They apparently view CPD as being something for others and not for themselves. When talking to teachers about CPD the level of resistance can be quite substantial which is very concerning. The arguments most often put forward are time related, such as 'I am only teaching part-time' or 'I am only teaching one night a week' or even 'I don't have time to do any training or attend lectures'. Somehow these teachers are (mistakenly) convincing themselves that teaching part-time removes any obligations for them to update their knowledge, skills and understanding. It is as if they are saying that only full-time teachers need to fully immerse themselves in the private dance teaching profession and its obligations to the students they teach. Clearly this cannot be correct otherwise doctors, lawyers, accountants and other professionals who work part-time would be able to opt out of CPD requirements too. But they cannot. Accountants for example are required to complete a minimum amount of CPD in order to maintain membership of their professional organisations. As members of the Register of Exercise Professionals, exercise instructors have to achieve a certain amount of CPD in order to maintain both membership and level of membership.

For about 100 years it has been the norm for dance teachers in the private sector to attend the annual conference of their 'home' society<sup>59</sup>. It has also been the norm at these events for some training or development to take place. Although (until very recently) this has not been called "CPD", one could argue that is what it has been, in effect. So dance teachers who attend their society's annual conference or district meetings have been doing a certain amount of CPD even although it might not be formally referred to as "CPD". At these events, the CPD would usually take the form of new dance content, a review of syllabus work or similar. What has not been typically encouraged in the past is for dance teachers to reflect on the type of CPD in which they have participated and the specific learning and development resulting from it. For example, differentiating between:

- gaining additional qualifications;
- attending courses ranging from a few hours to one or more years;
- seminars that provide instruction about a specific topic or field of study;
- classes and lectures;
- observation of classes or visual materials such as television or video content;
- furthering knowledge and understanding through reading books, articles and materials about topics relating to the learning and teaching of dance.

In very recent times, the events previously listed as conference lectures are now being advertised as offering CPD opportunities for teachers. The problem here is that too many teachers are still in the dark about what CPD is and why it concerns them. So it is welcoming that CPD is being addressed by, at least, some of the societies. Being asked to give a seminar at the UKA conference in June 2010 to raise awareness about CPD, what it is and what teachers need to do in order to achieve and record their CPD was one such example. An introductory booklet for the teachers was prepared explaining the basics of CPD and the various forms of learning and development that

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<sup>59</sup> See Chapter Two.

can be recognised as CPD for dance teachers. However, a few weeks before the conference when the lecture list was published, the CPD seminar was no longer on the list. The concern here is that such a vital input for teachers was, once again buried in favour, one suspects, of lectures that typically offer dance content. A suggestion was put forward that the CPD booklet be included in the conference pack and attention drawn to it, as one way of raising awareness of this important topic for teachers, however, this did not happen and teachers were not given the CPD information. So this was a missed opportunity to facilitate teacher development and understanding in the broader sense. What it stresses then, is the need to keep on thinking through one's role as a dance teacher. And that suggests that a formulation of what to do, as in a code, will – by itself – not achieve what is required.

#### **6.4 *Moving forward***

Thus we have highlighted some practical issues where the formulation of a code or something similar, is unhelpful. This prompts three further thoughts about codes. First this discussion about codes leads us to agree with McNamee's (1995 pp 145-157) argument that codes have limitations. In particular, concerns exist about codes being seen or accepted as the global answer to ethical issues when, in fact, having a code or set of rules for professional dance teaching practice does not in itself improve teaching practice. The value and effectiveness of codes are influenced by how they are interpreted and implemented. That is not to say that I am against codes per se. There is value in having codes of ethical conduct for the dance profession to offer flexible frameworks or guidelines and ultimately support and contribute to the development and maintenance of ethics embodied within dance teaching practice. McNamee (1995 p 155) does not seek to write off codes as being pointless within sports coaching and it is not the intention to write them off within the dance profession. He recognises their value but supports the need for such codes to be developed with proper input from those they seek to control rather than being developed by 'masked elites' and 'moral philosophers'. Equally he advises caution in the linking of

morals and legislation too closely so that ethical considerations in sport and leisure can consider the wider ethical issues beyond minimal moral obligations. What this means is that dance teachers need to be involved in the development of ethical codes for the dance teaching profession rather than simply being expected to implement them. That said we have to start somewhere. Current codes in the dance world could be viewed as an attempt at changing or constraining behaviour in an effort to improve the health and welfare of dancers. For example, Dance UK's charter was developed from discussions between dance and health professionals at a conference in 1993. Despite this charter being in existence for over 15 years, there is little evidence to demonstrate that it has instigated change in for example, the private dance sector.

In the health sector, there are many different types of rules or codes governing professional behaviour. When sport first adopted a code of ethics for coaches in 1986 (Brackenridge 2001 pp 18-19) it was based upon the code of ethics of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists.

The problem is that there is little, if any, commitment to codes in the private dance teaching sector at the present time. In order for codes to be effective there needs to be commitment to them, and they need to be understood, by those they seek to control. For example, a doctor ignoring that a patient has withheld consent for access to personal data, in the belief that he or she is acting in the best interest of the patient, is also ignoring existing NHS Confidentiality Codes of Practice (Department of Health 2003). Moreover, he or she is not respecting the patient's right to choose as outlined in the code of practice (Department of Health 2003 p 8). By acting in this way, the doctor is demonstrating that he or she is not committed to the code of practice and is not upholding it. This almost certainly, has implications for employment because it demonstrates the breaking of patient confidentiality which has legal implications relating to data protection (*Data Protection Act 1998*). It further suggests that the doctor may not fully understand the code, his or her professional and legal obligations as well as the moral ones. Where health professionals do not fully understand the responsibility they



have about matters relating to codes of confidentiality and practice, breaches can and do occur. Such occurrences can have devastating consequences. The point here is that if problems of this nature can occur in the medical and health professions where for example, confidentiality is paramount, then it is reasonable to assume they can occur in other professions.

It may be useful at this point to briefly mention Seedhouse's (1995 pp 127-149) Ethical Grid which is a model of a person-centred, principle-based approach to healthcare discussed in a previous document (Botham 1997 pp 31-33). In essence, the Grid is like a set of rules or framework. We will not go into detail about the Grid itself here other than to point out that in Seedhouse's opinion, the Grid can be used legitimately only by those who are consistently opposed to dwarfing or in other words, by those who do not deliberately prevent a person being able to reason or reach autonomous decisions (Seedhouse 1995 p 89). What Seedhouse is saying is that in order to apply these rules one has to be committed to ethical or person-centred practice.

There is an argument that reasons that any code in the dance teaching profession is better than none. Such an argument would say that having shelf codes is better than no codes even although they are not actually influencing practice in the way stated within the codes themselves. In this case, the code does not need to function at all. It simply needs to exist. An opposing argument arises from a concern for the potential risks of complacency caused by the knowledge that codes are in existence. Here it is acknowledged that knowing that the codes are in existence leads wrongly to assumptions being made about the codes guiding dance teacher behaviour and decisions. Furthermore, where codes exist in professional practice, there is a risk of complacency concerning the codes being taken at face value with no steps being taken to find out if they are affecting practice at all. It is concerning how easily people are reassured because they know that a code of practice exists. They may not have any evidence to demonstrate that the code does what it says it does but that does not seem to matter. It seems to be a case of, if a code exists then, for some at least, it is viewed as being a

kind of guarantee of a minimum standard. The problem with being so trusting is that whilst sometimes the code is actively promoting and guiding practice as indicated on other occasions it may not be. An example that might affect most of us at some point in our life relates to the accessing of our medical records. We are led to believe that such information is confidential and except for specific reasons such as legal duties, cannot be shared without our consent. Many patients would not consider asking whether or not their medical information has been shared without their knowledge simply because they are aware that it should be kept in a confidential manner and have faith that if the code says it will be kept in this manner then it will be. However, for anyone who does ask questions, the results can be very worrying indeed because medical information is not always treated confidentially as it should be. In other words, the practice is not doing what the codes say it is doing. This suggests that there is need for the user of a service not to simply believe that a code does what it says it does without satisfying themselves through having some sort of evidence. Lulling people into a false sense of security is a negative factor and needs to be addressed in order to prevent the sorts of surprises that can arise when things are not done in the expected manner. It is similar in many ways to issues of concern surrounding the use of criminal records bureau checks (CRB) (Home Office 2010)<sup>60</sup> being described as 'clearing' someone to work with children or vulnerable adults. These checks are only as good as the information on the database. In the case of, say, a paedophile who has never been caught, his/her lack of having a police record or some other issue that would appear as a warning, could in effect allow the very practice that CRB checks are designed to prevent. For him/her being granted a CRB disclosure would be like having a license to continue abusing children.

The problem with codes generally is that they have to be committed to and upheld. Without this they are worthless. In speaking to many dance teachers and other dance professionals who have signed up to a code of ethics or practice it is not surprising to find that the majority have never

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<sup>60</sup> Website: [www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk)

actually read their code. Even when student teachers were asked to read the code before attending a seminar to discuss it, either they did not read it or they read it but did not understand the implications of it for their practice. This is worrying to say the least because the code is held up to the public as some sort of guarantee of standard. It seems that the code is viewed by many in the dance profession as something that has to exist. But in reality it does not serve any useful purpose at all. In fact, it could be argued that having a code that is ignored or paid lip service to is worse than not having a code at all. At least when there is no code then the public is not being misled into thinking that there are minimum standards of behaviour. When a code exists and that code is drawn to the attention of the public as a way of knowing teaching standards and behaviour then it is unethical.

Codes should not be something superficial or extra viewed by those they seek to control as a burden or something that needs to be there for the outside world to see and feel comforted by: something which gives protection to those who are possibly vulnerable such as children learning to dance. It can be argued that in order for codes to be meaningful and worth having they need to be embodied in practice. By that we mean they cannot simply be signed up to so that the teacher or dance organisation satisfies the public that they follow good practice and conduct guidelines by brandishing the codes in public like an award that looks nice and shiny on the shelf. In reality it seems as if these codes that gleam from the shelf are rarely if ever read. And if they are read, they are mostly not read in depth or with much understanding. This is evident from discussions with many teachers and teaching students in recent years. As an example when teaching seminars for teaching students a session on the codes that they all have to sign up to in order to participate on the course has been included. As prior reading, students were asked to read the codes before the session and make notes of any issues that they wanted to discuss or anything that they felt would be difficult to uphold. No one ever came to the session with anything to discuss about the codes. When questioned about them everyone agreed that they had read the codes and no issues had arisen. And yet when asked if anyone had designed and laid a new dance floor in accordance with the point that

said they would if the floor they were teaching on was not ideal for dance, they all said that they could not possibly do such a thing. Reasons given were along the lines of the costs, many teach in local halls rather than their own premises and the simple impracticality of laying a new floor for perhaps a class that happens once a week. There were quite heated discussions about this matter and how ridiculous (their words) it was to expect anyone to uphold this point in the codes. But, as it was pointed out, not one teacher had questioned this point when they read or signed up to the codes. In fact they had, earlier in the seminar, all agreed that there was no problems in upholding the codes. This example, demonstrated to the student teachers the impossibility of upholding the codes in their present form. There was general agreement that this point at least, would need to be amended to something that was possible to be upheld if the codes were to be workable.

As mentioned earlier, having some input when the codes were being reviewed resulted in managing to succeed in having this point amended to something that is possible for teachers to uphold. Having said this, the review of the codes does not change the fact that the codes are still ignored by the majority and therefore have little if any, impact on practice. In order for this to change, it is essential that we view codes differently. They need to come off the shelf into the studios and halls and into daily teaching practice. We need to discuss them and consider if they are doing what we say they are doing – positively influencing practice. It is not enough for organisations to use codes to pretend to the public that minimum standards exist when they know that they are not doing anything about increasing the understanding and implementation of the codes within their membership of teachers or dance schools.

#### **6.4.1 Are Codes the Answer?**

Some would argue that the dance teaching profession is well on its way to having ethical practitioners now that there are some Codes of Professional Conduct and Practice in existence. However, in order to change teaching

practice from what Geeves described in 1993 as 'teaching by terror' to a more ethical, dancer-centred practice, requires much more than simply devising and adopting professional codes of conduct. Having a code does not in itself change behaviour. There are many codes or policies devised by organisations that sit on a shelf gathering dust. They may have been created initially, to satisfy a particular need, such as, an insurance company wanting evidence of a code or policy being in place to deal with certain situations in professional practice, as a condition for obtaining liability cover, as mentioned earlier. The reason behind the creation of the code was not therefore to provide a neutral framework, responsive to different populations (Dawson 1994 cited in McNamee, 1995, p 146). Instead it was devised to serve a purpose and be a means to an end. It was a way of obtaining insurance cover for the practice. In other words, the purpose of the code was to demonstrate to the outside world that a code exists. It is not difficult to understand how such codes end up on the shelf. Codes that are developed and used in this way do not serve a useful ethical purpose because they are little more than a form of tokenism to satisfy the outside world that a code of ethics exists.

Where codes have been devised and implemented with the intention of them actively providing a framework for practice it is necessary to flag up the importance for them to be understood. Where codes are not understood, it would be difficult to apply them.

There are real concerns about codes being seen as the way to solve all ethical dilemmas when actually having a code or set of rules for professional dance teaching practice does not in itself improve teaching practice. The value and effectiveness of codes is influenced by how they are interpreted and implemented. That is not to say that we are against codes per se. Codes in the dance world are seen as ways of changing or constraining behaviour in an effort to improve the health and welfare of dancers. Dance UK's charter was developed from discussions between dance and health professionals at a conference in 1993. Despite this charter being in existence for over 15 years, as mentioned earlier, there is little evidence that it has, by itself,

instigated change. In talking to teachers and other dance professionals it is clear that some are aware of the existence of codes such as Dance UK's. Of those who are aware of their existence, very few indeed appear to be familiar with the content and few of them have explored it in any depth. This suggests that in order for codes to contribute effectively to good practice some sort of education about the content of the codes and how they can be used in practice needs to be provided. The next section discusses Sue Stinson's (2004 pp 235-279) action research into teaching the Code of Ethics that her student dance educators were expected to abide by.

#### **6.4.2 Teaching Dance Teachers to Think Ethically**

One problem, then, is that *possibly* a code (however well-formulated) is of no use unless one *acts* on it; and this has been especially problematic if, like some of those discussed above, one falls naturally into a kind of command-style of teaching that, with only a small 'tweak' becomes 'teaching by terror'. So one needs to be reflecting on one's teaching. But another related problem is that the code (or whatever) must be experienced as powerful, such that one acts on it. Then one would hope for teaching that, through its methods, gets students to understand the values, embodied in the code – where reading the code itself might not be involved.

Merely having a code of ethics is no guarantee that it will be read or if it is read, that it will be understood accords with Stinson's (2004 pp 235-279) reasons for doing action research into teaching ethical thinking to prospective dance educators. Stinson discovered that little attention was being paid to the Code other than there was an expectation for students to read it. She questioned the ability of a Code to ensure ethical behaviour when, in essence, no input into ethical decision-making was given. This resulted in her deciding to explicitly teach the Code of Ethics and process to her students as a piece of action research. She hoped that in doing so her own and others' teaching could be improved. That said, Stinson was aware that the most

difficult ethical issues she faced personally and professionally were not easily solvable by simply following standard rules of behaviour.

In her review of the literature, Stinson uses a passage from Fain (1992 p 3) to illustrate one of the outcomes where no code of ethics exists. Fain puts forward the notion that where no guidance from a profession exists then each individual practitioner will determine what needs to be done. Without input from others, the practitioner has to make decisions about good practice. These individual decisions make it impossible for unity in a profession. This could be said to describe how the private dance profession operates. It is not unusual for individual, private dance teachers to make decisions about ethical issues, based on their own experience, without the understanding of a professional framework or code to guide them.

In fact even when a Code of conduct or ethics exists, it has been known for it to be put to one side by the professional dance body when deciding how to deal with an ethical dilemma simply because following their own Code would not give the desired outcome. As mentioned above, Stinson recognises that the difficult ethical cases need more than a following of standard rules in order to resolve them. A professional body putting aside their own ethical codes in order to achieve a certain outcome is not what Stinson is referring to. To agree that codes can be put aside each time they do not say what is wanted would be unethical because, in doing so, there is a risk of encouraging the sort of behaviours that the codes are designed to protect against. Furthermore the whole point of having codes in the first place would be lost.

Stinson used six scenarios as a way of introducing her students to ethical dilemmas and sought information about what they would do and the thinking behind their choice. Following two rounds of analysis of scenarios, a formal class session was held to present stages of moral development to the students. This was based mainly on Kohlberg's (1981 cited in Stinson, 2004 p 238) work in this field. Stinson acknowledges that the design of the assignment would have been different had she accessed some of the literature prior to the design stage. The conclusions of her research, finds

value in formally preparing students to deal with the sorts of ethical dilemmas that they will face as teachers. It is interesting to note that Stinson thinks of this action research as phase one of a continuing project.

We can see value in having codes of ethical conduct for the dance profession that offer flexible, frameworks or guidelines and contribute to the development and maintenance of ethics embodied within dance teaching practice itself. If we return to look in some detail at McNamee's argument we can see that our concerns are justified. In effect, then, we are seeing at least two moral obligations of the dance teacher. The first is that one's behaviour must be appropriate - it must respect the students as persons, since this is one way to avoid behaving unethically. In effect, this amounts to one's behaviour being in accord with one's code of conduct, at least if that code is well-formulated (as above). And this shall preclude 'teaching by terror'. Second, one must understand that this is the *reason* for acting as one does. So that one must see the obligation to behave well here as a moral obligation.

### **6.4.3 Codes of the heart**

For codes to be of use to us, we need to take them seriously and internalise them so that we all benefit from them. We need to take them into our hearts, embrace them and embody them within our practices so that they become as much a part of our teaching as, say, our knowledge of the dance content and technique. There is little to be gained from having a code that is viewed as something separate to our dance teaching practice just sitting on the shelf for all the world to see. For that will not improve dance teacher behaviour nor promote person-centred practices where the individual needs of the student are at the heart of the teaching. By taking the codes to our hearts, we are then more likely to open our minds to the growing body of knowledge surrounding dance but not necessarily dance specific, such as dance science and education, then teachers might see the problems in dance teaching and dance teacher behaviour and therefore begin to understand the impact of



unethical teaching methods (Botham 2000b, Botham 2003b, Botham 2005, Brinson 1993, Buckroyd 1991, Buckroyd 2003, Geeves 2000, Radell 2001, Radell 2002, Robson 2002, Roff 2004).

If we are to truly move towards person-centred practices then we need to commit to changing dance teaching practices so that the unethical ways of the past are left behind and we can improve dance teaching practice in the private sector for all who are involved with it. Taking codes into our hearts is one way of committing to ethical practice. Without such commitment, where will we be? Having good intentions about changing how dance is taught to students and student teachers will not in itself develop the sorts of ethical practices that we are aiming for. This sort of change can only happen through commitment: taking our codes to heart so that we have an internal ethical guidance helping the decisions and choices we make as teachers. Then we can work towards improving standards through encouraging individual growth and development, the building of confidence enabling learners to be involved in their learning and to take responsibility for their learning and to value these people for what they are and not just what they can do (Botham 2004a)<sup>61</sup>. Taking the codes to our hearts is the first step.

But what would it involve? The problem here is that it is really not enough to act on the code when one confronts a situation that calls for that code – for then one is only influenced by the code when one activity considers it. Instead, one should simply *do the right thing*, and of course, that right behaviour should be what the code prescribes. Yet then the code is not, itself, actively functioning in one's decision-making: one just knows what is right! And then the code itself is (almost) superfluous (Brecher 2005 p 12). Of course, one might still explain one's behaviour by referring to the code, if asked why one behaved as one did. So, in that sense, one behaved in that way *because of* the code: one's behaviour was based on the code, not merely in accordance with it. Still, that behaviour was ethical because one understood what ethical action demanded.

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<sup>61</sup> Copy of slides from a presentation *Embodying Ethics in Dance Teaching Practice* available to download from [www.ethicsdance.co.uk/downloads.html](http://www.ethicsdance.co.uk/downloads.html)

## 6.5 Conclusion

Our discussion here has spoken against the possibility of simply using codes of conduct (or other, similar rule-systems) to resolve the difficulties for an ethical dance-teaching pedagogy for the private-sector dance teacher. We have recognised that this is not a difficulty for which codes of conduct (or anything similar) provide a suitable answer.

In one way, then, this unites our conclusions from the empirical investigation — that in summary an appropriate pedagogy for private-sector dance-teaching is needed; and that it cannot proceed in an unethical manner. So it cannot be, say, ‘teaching by terror’. Indeed, insofar as it was to count as teaching, it must attend to the manner of the delivery of content. In fact, that thought too may be unduly simplistic; for we should recognise that the model for understanding needed here is professional knowledge, perhaps on Donald Schön’s model. For, as we saw in Chapter Two, Schön (1987 pp 182-216) was keen to stress how his interest in *professional* knowledge aligned with a concern with *knowledge embodied in practices, that was sustained by values* to generate artistry. And these are just the characteristics that, as we saw in Chapter Two, are plausibly ascribed to the dance-teaching profession. Of course, the conception of such ‘professional knowledge’ required here need not derive from Schön’s writing. (Throughout, we have been clear to leave obscure the detail of any theory here: it need not be Schön’s.) But our early elaborations of the requirements here mean that a direction may be arrived at by such speculations.

Here, the point would be to recognise that the desired outcome would be with the dance teacher who acts ethically in his/her teaching without explicitly appealing to some set of explicit rules or principles; as we have seen above, there are no exceptionless rules or principles here to deal with all cases. Moreover, many dance teachers fail to offer more than *mere* lip-service to such rules. And our elaboration of the nature of rule-following above makes clear that point. This just reinforces the need for teachers of such teachers-in-training to have internalised such ethically-reliable practices of teaching. For they must simply have learned to behave in the appropriate

manner, and their so behaving should be a pedagogic model for ethical dance-teaching. These, then, might be suitable goals for the training programmes of, for instance, BBO. But, as we have already recognised, the goals must be made concrete in the practices; and at the centre of any training regime of this sort are the practices of the teachers.

These are the proposals to take seriously when moving onto the final Chapter where we consider the conclusions and recommendation of the study as a whole.

## 7 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 7.1 Conclusions

I think that that for many dancers class is a highly stressful, confidence undermining, demoralising, unpleasant occasion. I think that this is not because of the activity itself but because of the way it is taught. There is an urgent need for us to change from negative assessment and carping criticism to student-centred learning, positive assessment, confidence building and more respect for students.

(Buckroyd 1991 p 35)

Buckroyd's statement above was made over 20 years ago. It is disappointing to report that some two decades later, despite recent changes to teaching qualifications, and claims of change regarding the way dance teachers in the private sector are trained, the 'teaching by terror' ways of the past persist.

Our initial concerns with these overly authoritarian methods, raise the worry that these ways have not been left in the past as claimed. It turns out that these worries are justified. There is still evidence of the traditional 'big stick' (real or invisible) used as a means of instilling discipline.

In two recent interviews singer Paloma Faith described her experiences in the dance training environment as horrific.

At dance school I became immune to criticism, as there was so much of it.

(Mulloy 2012 pp 87, 89)

I started dancing when I was really young, I even trained as a contemporary dancer but it was a horrific experience.

(Pemberton 2012 p 8)

Our empirical investigations have confirmed that the anecdotal evidence about the past of the training of dancers (and hence dance teachers for the public sector) indeed reflected the experience of some dance teachers who were training to move forward. In particular, it located that impact in how they (or should it be 'we'?) thought about experiences. But that investigation also

suggested that, in too many cases, the methods of the past persist: that the good intentions of the new documents are often thwarted by a practice of the teachers of these dance teachers.

That in turn clarifies the difficulty. For if change towards a person-centred approach to the training and development of dance teachers is to occur, more than a change to the content of the syllabi is needed: there must be commitment to such change by all of those involved in the planning and delivery of these qualifications. It is no longer acceptable to continue with the methods of the past, while pretending that everything is fine when it is not. Moreover, the difficulties identified for such methods must be recognised as ethical difficulties. The sooner that is realised, the sooner there can be that commitment to the ethical practices that is claimed in the syllabi and that student dance teachers deserve.

By drawing attention to the issues discussed in this study the hope is to bring about fundamental change: of the sort that changes practice. So, for example, change that sees dance teaching societies reconsider their approach to current dance teacher training with a view to fully achieving the ethical practice claims made within the syllabi. In this way, the investigation undertaken here can act as a type of agent of change, giving the investigation an added dimension. A certain amount of change has always been a motive for this study, and the empirical evidence confirming the need for change merely corroborates this. However, if the inquiry were to function as an agent of change then something more is needed: the ideas here will need to be disseminated. Time will tell whether the change agent aspect of this investigation succeeds in initiating and achieving the desired fundamental changes within the private dance teaching sector.

In part, the interest in the ideas explored and elucidated seems a promising sign — the attention paid to the website, for instance (see 7.3 below); and the invitations to contribute directly, in person, to debates around the future direction of qualifications and courses for the training of dance teachers for the private sector. In that sense, the mechanisms for the wider

dissemination of the ideas from this investigation are in place: if they operate productively, the investigation can function as an agent of change.

Our brief exploration of the history of the private dance teacher sector illustrates key differences between the approaches and development of dance in this sector in comparison to the public sector. One such was the focus in private sector dance preparation throughout its history on dance content at the expense of developing pedagogical skills, in direct contrast with the public sector and especially the PE syllabi with its development of pedagogical ideas. With the development of pedagogical skills comes a better understanding of the impact of the teaching on the student. That in turn would suggest a move away from the type of discipline, power and surveillance that creates the docile bodies discussed earlier (2.6.3), towards a dance pedagogy that encourages fully flourishing persons as well as dancers.

It must be recognised that the codes of conduct and practice that are already in place can be of little help on their own, and especially, if they are left on the shelf as a showpiece. They must be read, discussed, and questions asked about them. We need to understand them, consider what they mean in practice and internalise them. Only once that has been done can suitably revised codes be taken to our hearts and to the heart of our teaching, for the benefit of all in the private dance teaching sector. For when the codes are taken to our hearts we will be better placed to recognise and reinforce ethical teacher behaviour and leave the unethical behaviour behind.

The private dance teaching sector is not at the forefront of dance research in the way that other areas of the dance profession are. Therefore this study offers, not only useful insight into the past and present practice of the private dance teaching sector, but it also raises awareness of the need for others to carry out research in the private dance teaching sector which is, for many, where their first steps towards a career in the dance profession are taken. Here, these are just first steps, but in a fundamental area since the model (or models) of teaching deployed can have a crucial impact on whether that teaching is ethical – with the ‘teaching by terror’ cases

illustrating this for the malign case. So then appropriate person-centred teaching methods will be an important step to recognising the taught as persons.

## **7.2 *Limitations of study***

The key limitations of the empirical phase of this study are discussed in Chapter Four. There, it was acknowledged that a small scale study automatically involves a small sample population. Although in this case, the autoethnography enabled further value to be added and also some corroboration of the data. Further, the empirical data were not themselves designed to generate the conclusions of the enquiry, but simply to clarify (and make concrete) the background for its conceptual consideration of the place of codes in any way forward.

The study reflects, at best, the situation in the UK and not internationally: therefore it is not possible to comment on whether or not the situation is similar in other countries. But, of course, the argument has a normative dimension: it is about the ethical concern, or what ought to happen. So, in any place where these teaching methods (or something like them) are in place, they should be censured: and the direction suggested in Chapter Six encouraged to replace them.

Next, as presented here, the central autoethnography might seem under-theorised. Certainly some writers in this field will feel that more should have been done to explain and justify this method. But, first, autoethnography is not such a big step if ethnography as such can be taken for granted: if ethnography can draw on narratives (as it obviously can), the difference here concerns only the author of the narrative. Moreover, some of the specific objections typically raised have been met in detail (see 3.3.1; 3.3.2). And care was taken as described in Chapter Three, to distinguish (within the autoethnographic process) the role as researcher from the role of participant. This is a part of the strategy to generate the maximum plausibility for the reliability of autoethnography. Second, the method is one with a developing

history, which the passage of time might bring to bear. So that, where the arguments here appear weak, later theory might strengthen them.

With the benefit of hindsight there are some aspects of the research that would be done differently if carrying out another similar study. In view of the challenges experienced writing the autoethnography, consideration would be given to approaching the gathering of data in a different way: firstly, writing down a number of general questions or topic headings (in a similar way for the interviews conducted) and finding an experienced researcher to carry out an interview using these headings. In this way the gathering of the autoethnographical data would be done in a manner much the same as the one used when interviewing the participant dance teachers. And by following this method and then going on to have the interview transcribed as with the other interviews it might be possible to avoid the problems experienced concerning the “write and delete” method as the text would be written down as a transcript. This transcript would then be the primary source of data just as it would in any research project of this nature.

But that ‘solution’ would set aside any direct benefits of autoethnography: in particular, any gains from seeing the issue ‘from the inside’. If the defences of autoethnography given in Chapter Three carry sufficient weight, it may be preferable, after all, to continue with it as one (or perhaps the) major data source for the empirical enquiry here. And, of course, it will be important to keep stressing that the final conclusions here depend only in part on that empirical enquiry: that the conceptual enquiry (in Chapter Six) is fundamental to the research protocol.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

For there to be a genuine move towards more person-centred or ethical dance teaching practices changes need to happen not only at the level of individuals but at organisational level. Paying lip service to changes within the dance teaching profession is not acceptable: it does not work as we have



seen earlier and cannot facilitate a move towards ethical practice. Therefore a fundamental recommendation has to be for:

- *commitment to ethical practice throughout the private dance teaching sector.*

Moreover, we have seen that such a commitment must be full, internalised, to become a 'code of our hearts'.

For this to happen, there is a need for dissemination of the ideas that have emerged from this study. There are many ways that this might be achieved and we shall mention just a few here, giving concrete examples of how each has (or will be) begun:

Conference presentations – a presentation given about this study to the 20th Annual Meeting of IADMS in October 2010 was very well received.

There are plans to publish (or otherwise disseminate) some aspects of this investigation.

- *Ethics and dance teaching resource paper* - a resource paper about ethics and dance teaching has been requested by IADMS for dissemination to members and others.
- *Enhancing the ethicsdance website* – further development of the site is planned with a view to adding further articles and papers to the free downloadable resources already available; by writing short articles for the website to raise awareness of ethical issues in dance teaching and dance generally and to consider new ways that the website can effectively promote ethical practice in dance.
- *Teaching styles* – to promote greater use of teaching styles as one way of 'thinking about what you are doing' and to assist in the development of reflective dance teaching practitioners in the private dance teaching sector.
- *One Day Symposium or Conference* – it is the intention to organise a one day event about ethics and dance in order to promote and share the ideas from this study and others.

- *Dance Teaching Development* – to continue to promote ethical dance teaching practices through work in teacher development and training in the private sector.

All of these suggest ways in which the results of this investigation may reach the wider audience necessary if the ideas are to be more generally appreciated; and ultimately applied.

I take some pride in the extent that I have begun with others, to investigate these sorts of changes already. But, of course, that is partly a function of the length of time I have thinking about, or working on, these issues.

When I embarked on my doctoral journey, I had no idea how long it would take or the challenges that I would face along the way. Everyone undertaking this type of research project will each have his/her own particular problems to overcome, especially when the project stretches over a number of years. Mine came in the form of health issues that caused me to take a couple of breaks from my studies in the hope that this would in effect, 'wave a magic wand' resulting in me returning to my studies in tip top form. This did not happen and for a while it seemed (at least to me) that I might not complete my studies. However, just as I did many times as a young dance student and later a professional dancer, I gave myself a good talking to and set my focus on finishing the journey I started and reaching my goal.

Reaching the conclusion of this study is just the first rung of the ladder; there are many more rungs to be climbed in the journey towards ethical dance teaching practice in the private sector. This is a journey that, for me, started many years ago and one that I feel sure will continue in pursuit of ethical practices so that we can truly leave the persistent unethical practices in the past. Let us put down the invisible big sticks for the last time and look to a positively charged future for the private dance teaching sector.

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## 9 Appendices



## ***Appendix A: Participant forms***

## Participant Information Sheet

### Experiences of Learning to Dance and Becoming a Dance Teacher

Researcher: Sho Botham MA email: S.Botham@brighton.ac.uk

As part of my doctoral degree at Chelsea School Research Centre, University of Brighton, I am carrying out research into dance teaching, under the supervision of Professor Graham McFee and Professor Julia Buckroyd.

You are invited to take part in this study. Before deciding if you want to participate please read the following information carefully so you know what is involved. You may wish to discuss it with others before making a decision. Contact me if you need more information about participating in this research.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

I am interested in finding out about your experiences of learning to dance and learning to teach and becoming a dance teacher.

#### **Why have I been invited to take part?**

In agreement with BBO I am inviting all of the students enrolled on the Certificate and Diploma teaching courses to take part in the study.

#### **Is the research part of the BBO teaching qualification courses?**

No

#### **Do I have to take part in the research?**

It is up to you to decide to take part or not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

#### **If I take part what do I need to do?**

You will be asked to write a short piece about your experiences of learning to dance and becoming a dance teacher. The deadline for this piece is the end of May. I will then invite you to take part in a short interview of about one hour. With your agreement I will record the interview.

#### **Will my identity be revealed in the research?**

The data gathered will be anonymised so that your identity is not revealed. Once the research has been analysed and written up for my PhD and possible publication in appropriate journals, conference papers etc, recordings will be erased and written data shredded.

#### **If you decide to participate in the research, please keep this information sheet.**

**I need you to sign a consent form agreeing to participate in the research.**

**Thank you for reading this.**

## Participant Consent Form

I agree to take part in Sho Botham's doctoral research investigating dance teaching 'experiences of learning to dance and becoming a dance teacher'.

I have read the participant information sheet and understand it.

I understand that I can withdraw at any time from the research without giving a reason.

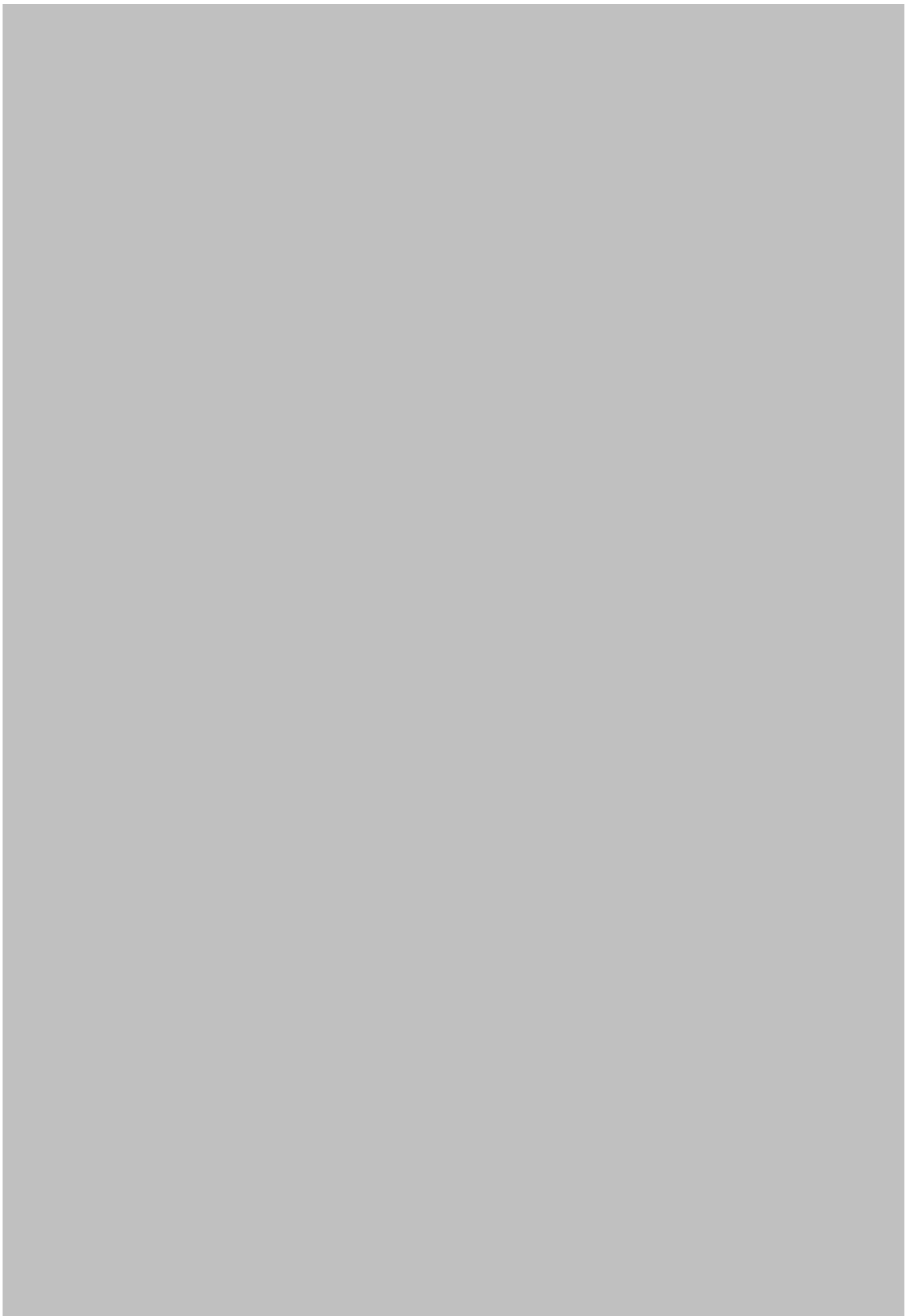
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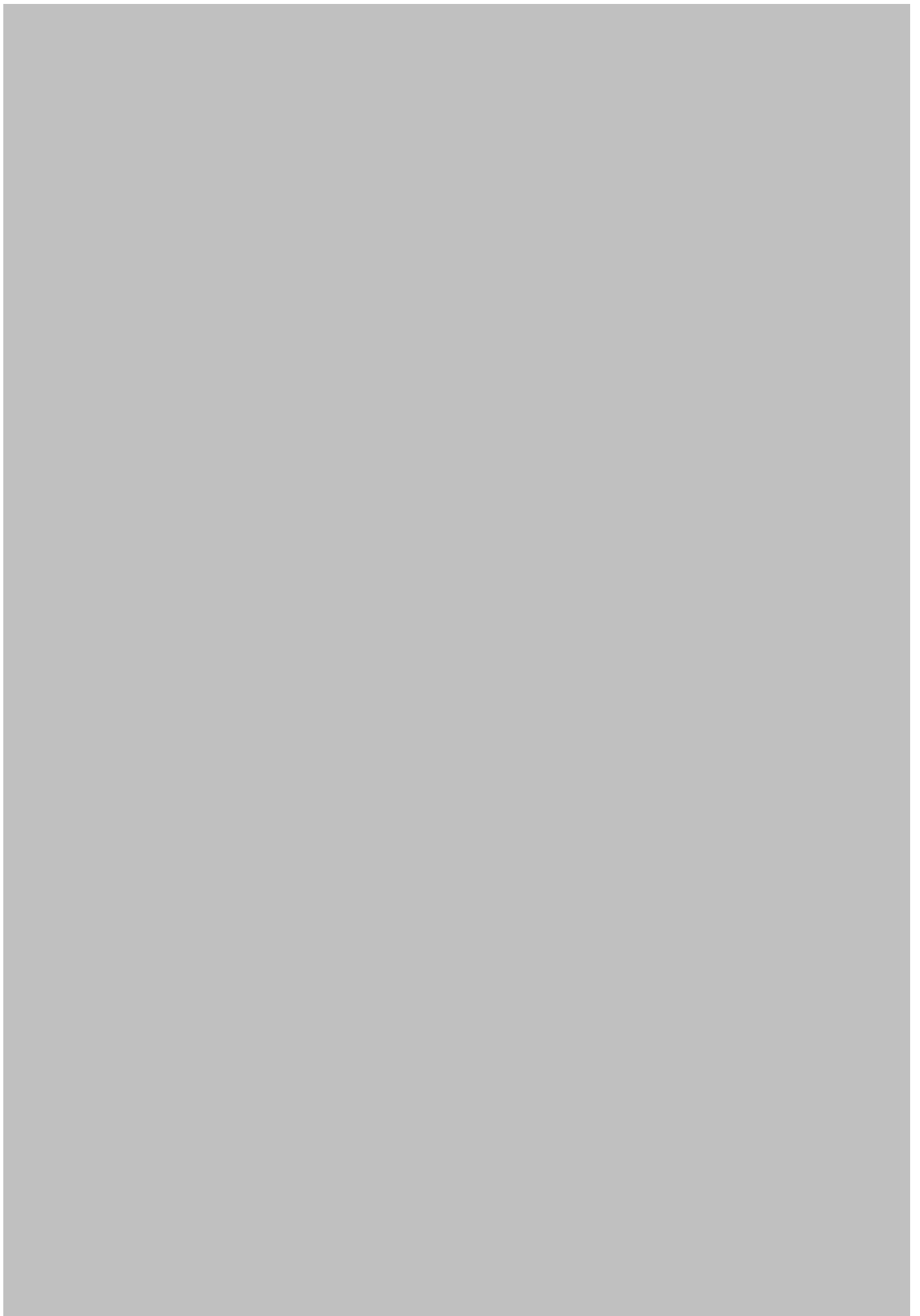
Signature .....

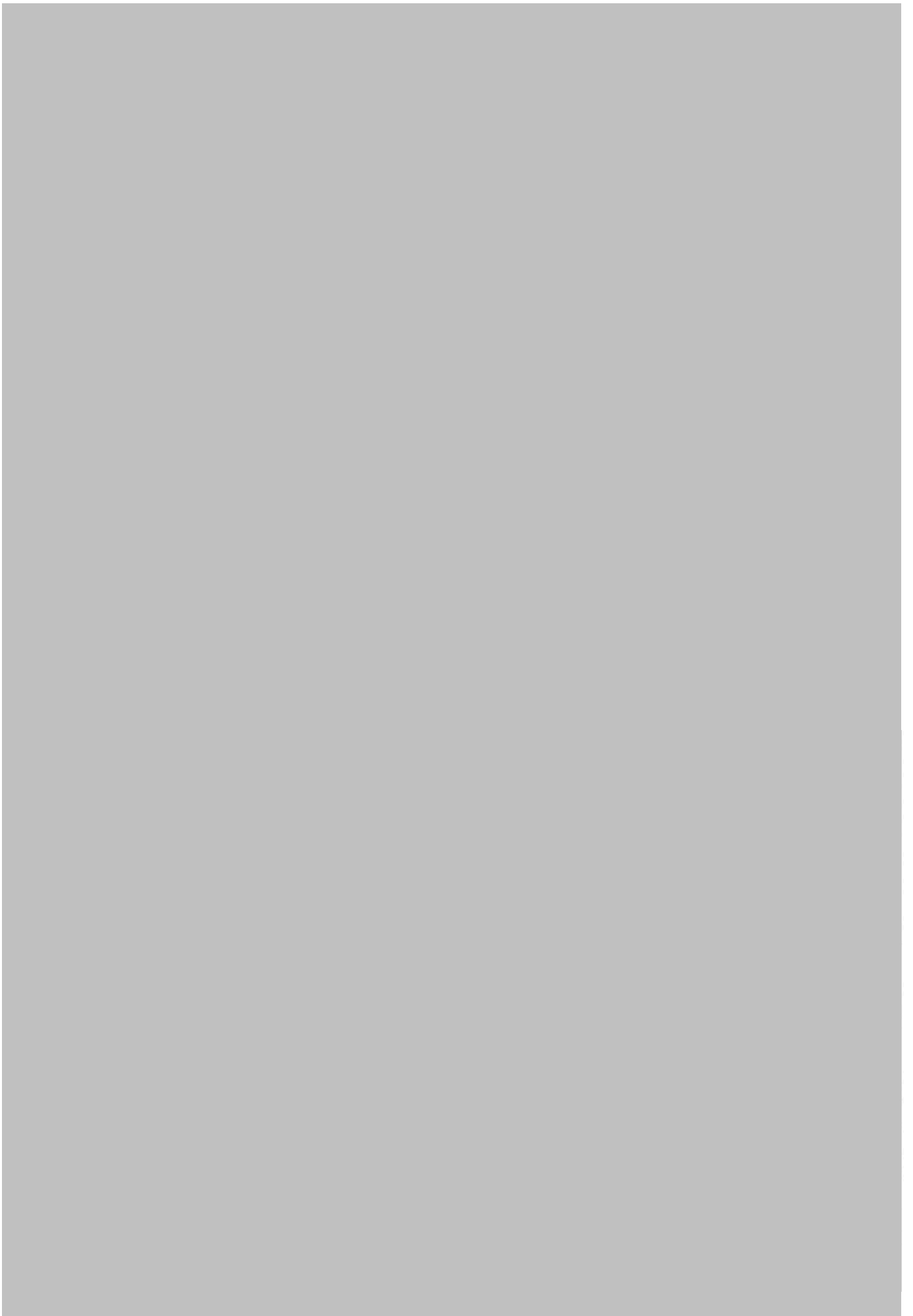
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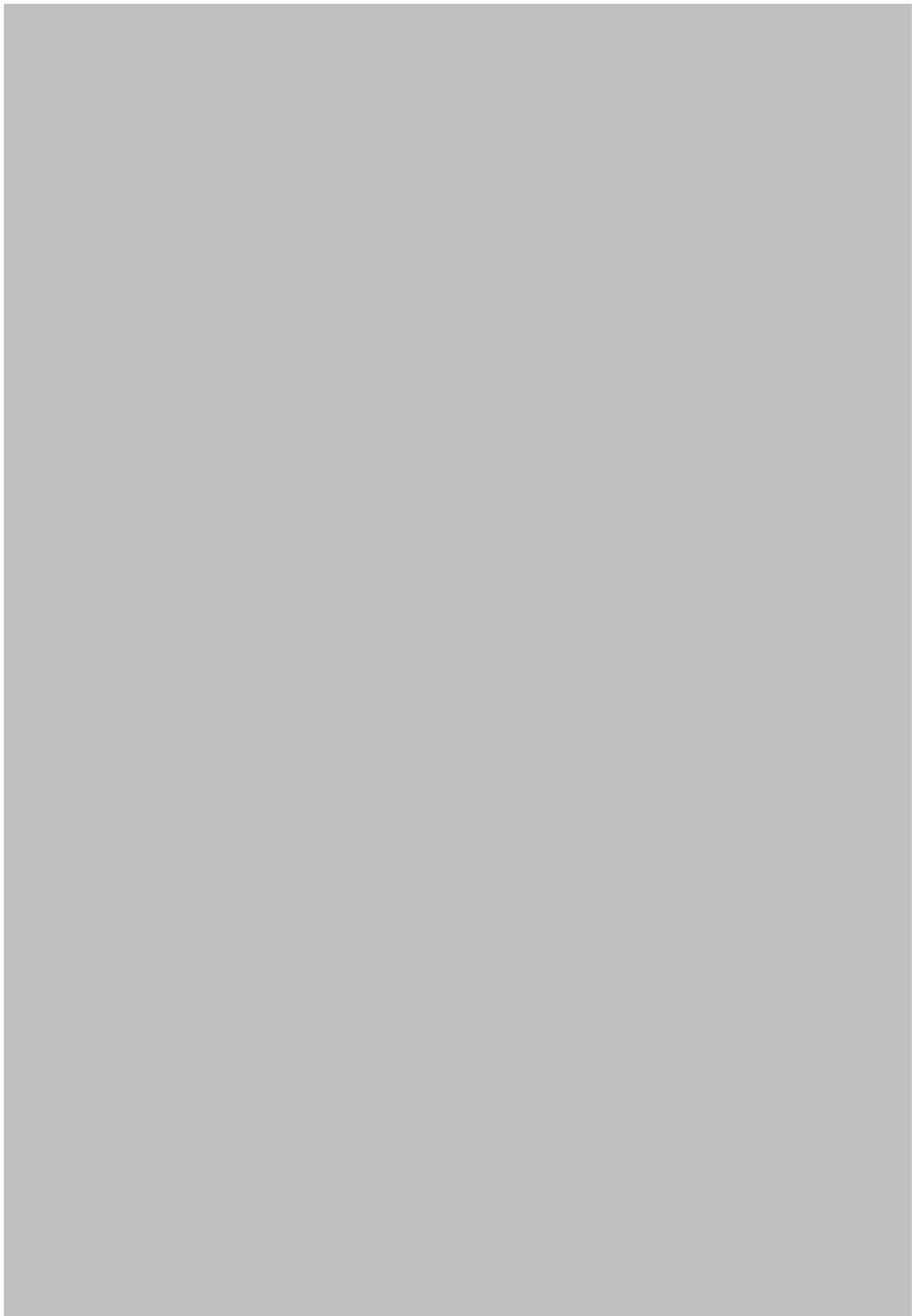
Please hand your completed consent form to Sho Botham or alternately post it using the label provided.

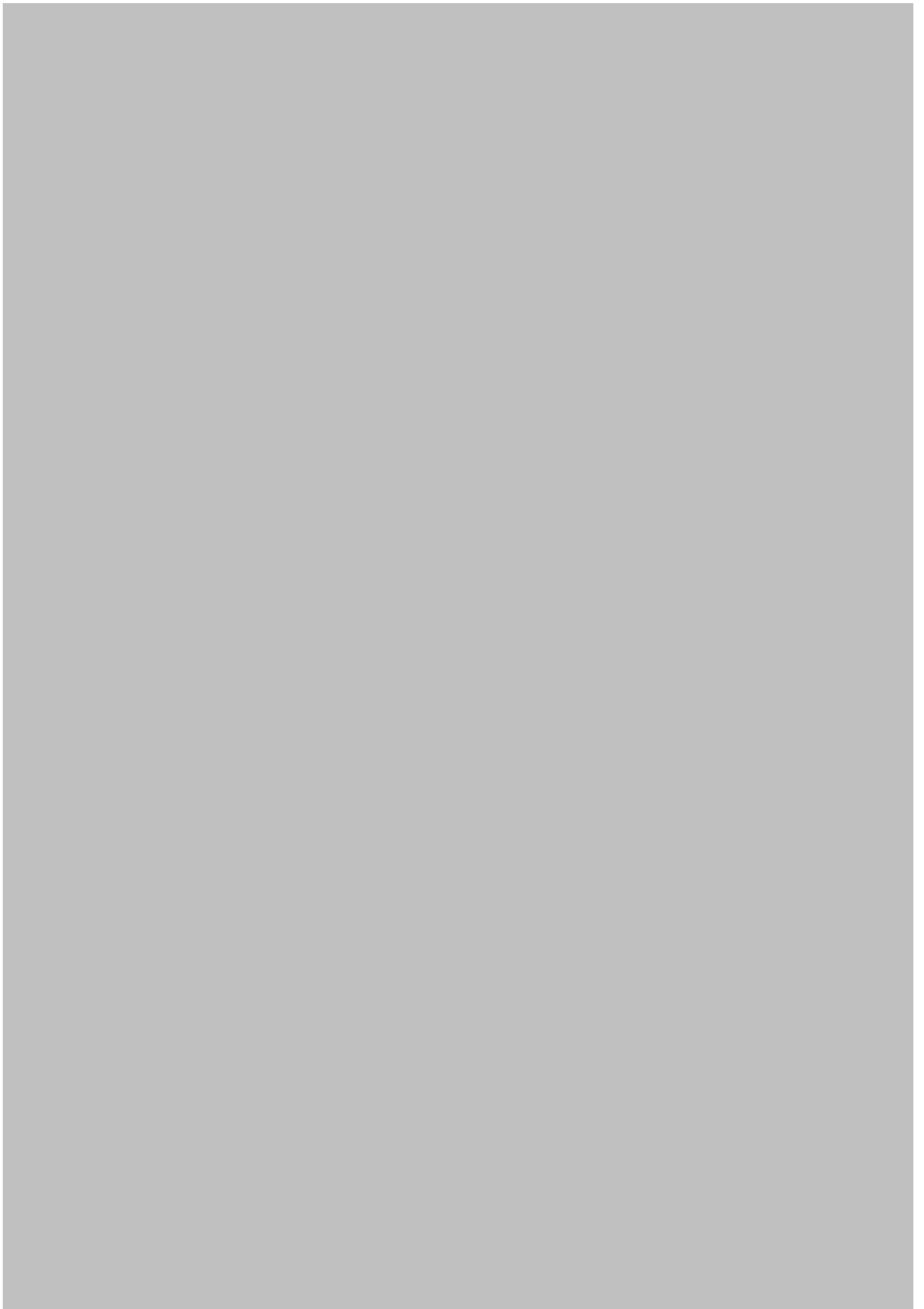
***Appendix B: BBO Diploma in Dance Teaching, Syllabus***



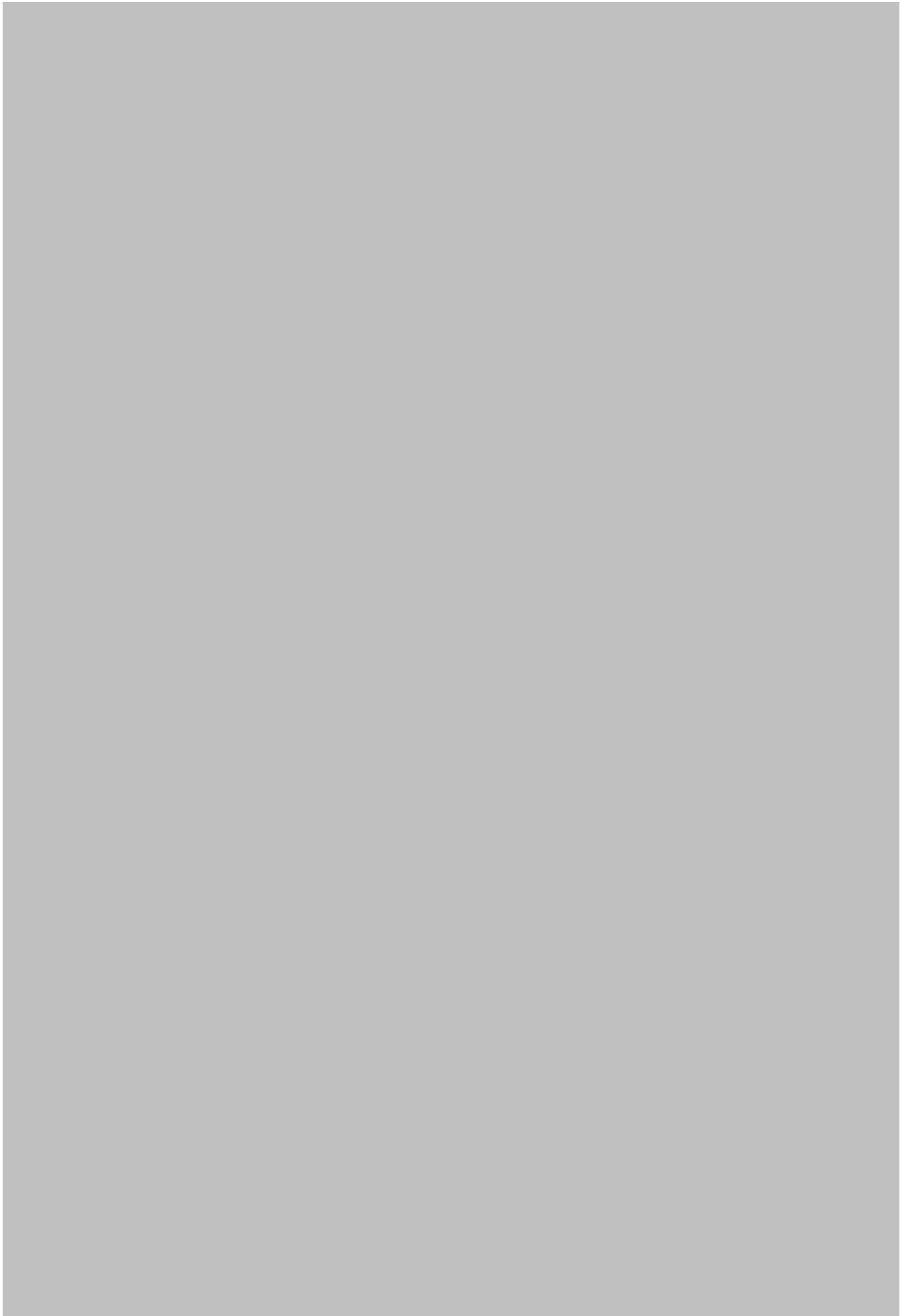










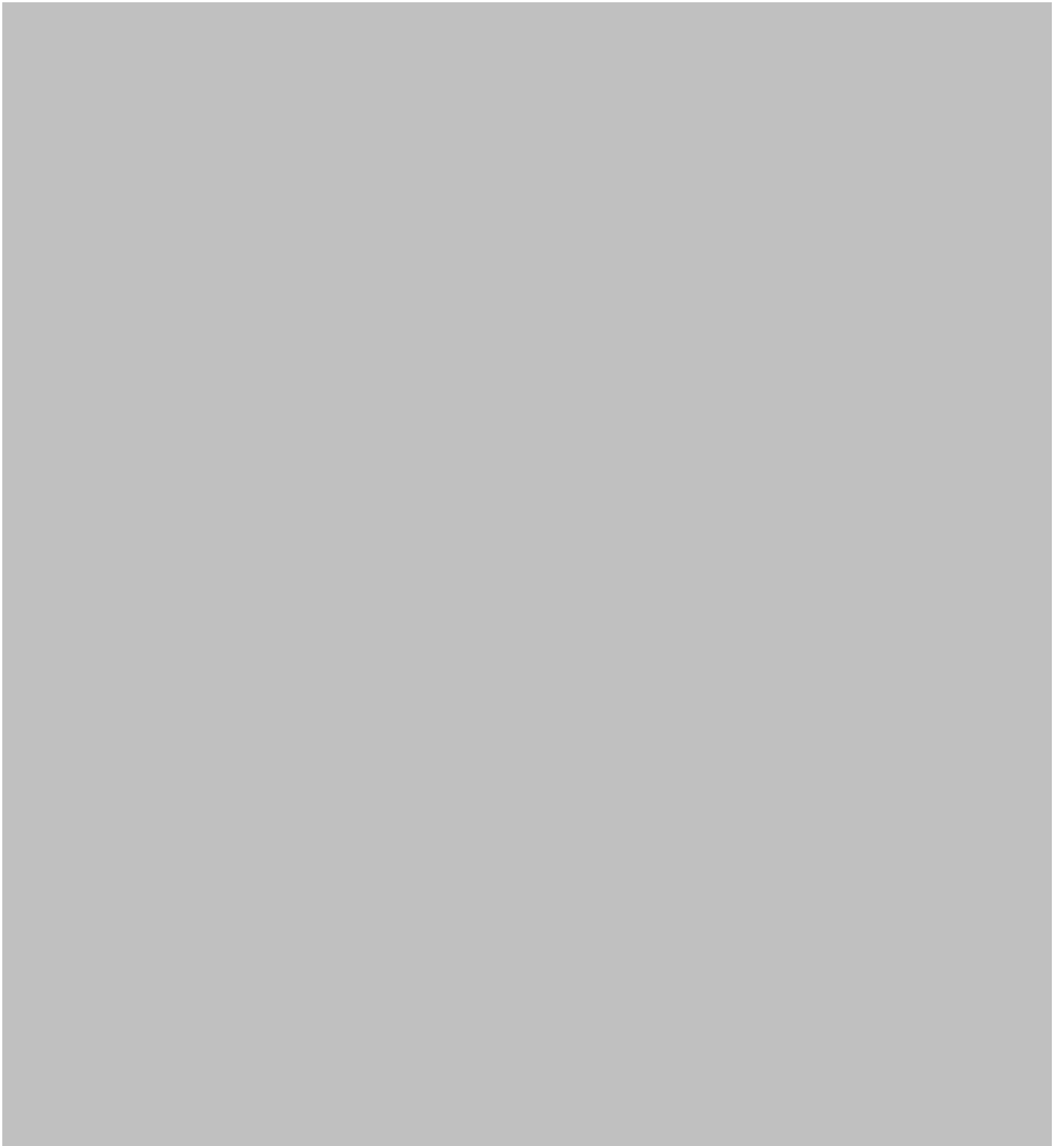


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***Appendix C: Reflective Log pro forma***



***Appendix D: Ethics article from IADMS newsletter***





## ***Appendix E: Conference proceedings paper***

Botham, S. (2005). Do dance teachers have a moral obligation to allow students with anorexia to participate in dance classes? Conference proceedings of 15th Annual Meeting of IADMS, Stockholm, Sweden, IADMS.

## Do Dance Teachers Have a Moral Obligation to Allow Students with Anorexia to Participate in Dance Classes?

Sho Botham MA, Dance & Health Education Consultant,  
The Deco Partnership, Eastbourne, East Sussex UK and University of Brighton, UK

### Introduction

Dance teachers are increasingly expected to be able to deal with a wide range of health, well-being and safety issues, in addition to everything that can be viewed as dance-specific. With these added responsibilities come a growing number of ethical dilemmas that need to be recognised, acknowledged, and debated. One such dilemma concerns the participation of students with anorexia in dance classes. A recently published paper (Giordano 2005) in the *Journal of Medical Ethics* addresses a similar yet fundamentally different dilemma: the ethics of teaching exercise to people with anorexia. Giordano highlights the lack of guidance in ethical codes or legislation. She shows us that there are strong ethical reasons to let anorexics participate in exercise classes. However, she also explains why, despite these apparently convincing reasons, there is no moral obligation for an instructor to allow a person with anorexia to participate in exercise classes. Using Giordano's paper for a comparison, this presentation demonstrates that despite it being possible to present convincing reasons why students with anorexia should be allowed to participate in dance classes, there is no moral obligation for a dance teacher to allow such participation.

### Art or physical activity?

First of all, a key difference exists between the exercise to music (ETM) classes discussed by Giordano and dance classes. It is true that both types of classes involve participants being physically active, but a fundamental difference can be found in the character of the activity and the constraints it imposes. For example, dance classes focus on developing technical ability, choreography, or artistry rather than physical activity and fitness. This does not mean that physical fitness is not desirable for dancers; quite the opposite is true. But in order to improve physical fitness dancers often need to look outside of the dance arena. They may participate in aerobic classes (Glance, 2004) or other fitness-based activities, and for this reason view exercise and fitness as being something quite separate from dance. This is an accurate perception insofar as dance classes focus primarily on dance education, while ETM classes by way of comparison explicitly offer exercise-related health benefits such as improvements to cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, muscular strength and self-esteem. Reducing the risk of major diseases such as coronary heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis are also key selling points for this type of class (Giordano, 2005; Lawrence, 1999), as is weight reduction, and this is particularly appealing to people who have a desire to be thinner.

### Eating disorders and dancers: policies and codes of ethics

There is a variety of information available to teachers and students about eating disorders and dancers. Much of it focuses on recognising and

managing the physical and psychological symptoms (Buckroyd, 2000; Dance UK, 2001; Glance, 2004; Robson, 2002; Robson, 2003). Advice is rightly aimed at the student as well as those involved with her dance education, well-being and care, and highlights the need for teachers to be able to make adaptations in class content to accommodate injury, disability, or other needs (Dance UK, 1998; Dance UK, 2001; IADMS Education Committee, 2000). Furthermore, *Your Body Your Risk* (Dance UK, 2001) reports that vocational dance schools and dance companies are increasingly likely to have a written policy regarding their attitude towards disordered eating. I am not aware, however, of a policy or code of ethics that deals specifically with the ethics of teaching dance to students with anorexia or other eating disorders. It is a similar situation for teachers of exercise and fitness (Giordano, 2005, Register of Exercise Professionals, 2004). Even if there were an ethical code dealing with this particular issue, it would not necessarily be successful in achieving the desired outcome.

McNamee (1995, p. 145) describes the "Got yourself a problem? ... Get yourself a code" attitude, as 'the public relations solution to the 'contemporary' professional moral malaise.' He points out that codes have limitations and should not be viewed as providing the ultimate answer to ethical issues. Codes are like other systems of rules in being unable in principle to cover all cases; difficult cases can simply opt out of following them. Furthermore, in order for codes to be effective they need to be understood by those they seek to control, and there needs to be commitment to them. This agrees with Stinson's (2004) reasons for developing a program to teach ethical thinking to prospective dance educators. This has also been evident in my own work with dance teachers (Botham, 1997; Botham, 2004). That said, codes can provide a useful, general framework when considering issues of good practice (McNamee, 1995).

### Paternalism and autonomy

In the case of the student with anorexia there is a possible conflict for the dance teacher between a desire to act paternalistically to protect the student and avoid harm on the one hand, and to respect the student's autonomy on the other. However, as Giordano (2005) notes, it is possible to argue that the desire to exercise (or in this case, to dance) is a symptom of anorexia. As such, it cannot be autonomous; therefore, the ethical option for the teacher would seem to be to act paternalistically, in the best interest of the student, even though this may be against the student's wishes. By acting in this way, however, the teacher is not allowing the student to take control, thereby increasing the sense of lack of control, which is a recognized trait of anorexia (Giordano, 2005). So this option is not attractive.

The dance teacher of a talented but anorexic ballet student might be motivated to ignore the issue altogether, arguing that if up to 25% of female ballet dancers are dancing with anorexia or bulimia as currently estimated (Glance, 2004), then it must be acceptable. Otherwise all of these dancers would not be attending class and performing. This might be reason enough for some dance teachers to be persuaded in favor of allowing students with anorexia to participate in dance classes.

**Why dance teachers do not have a moral obligation to allow anorexic students to participate in dance classes**

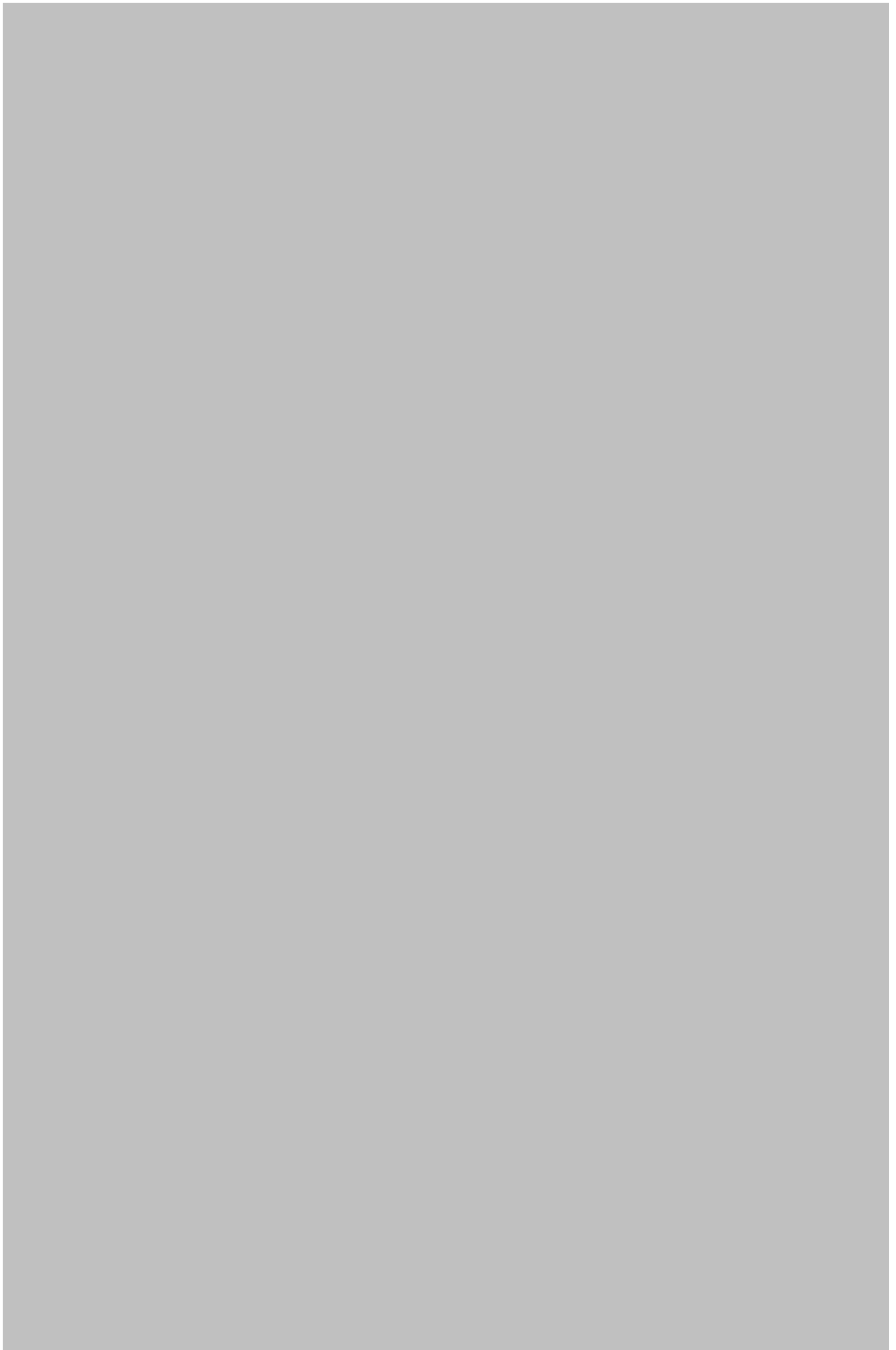
The existence of ethical reasons for allowing anorexic students to participate in dance does not mean that dance teachers are obliged to allow them into their classes. By allowing a student with anorexia into her class the teacher is agreeing to something other than the usual (formal or tacit) learning contract she has with her students. It changes her role from teacher to something else, requiring different knowledge, qualifications and competencies. For these reasons, just as in the case of the fitness trainer (Giordano, 2005) there is no moral obligation for a dance teacher to allow an anorexic student into her classes. This is not to say that dance teachers cannot have ethical reasons for agreeing to teach anorexic students.

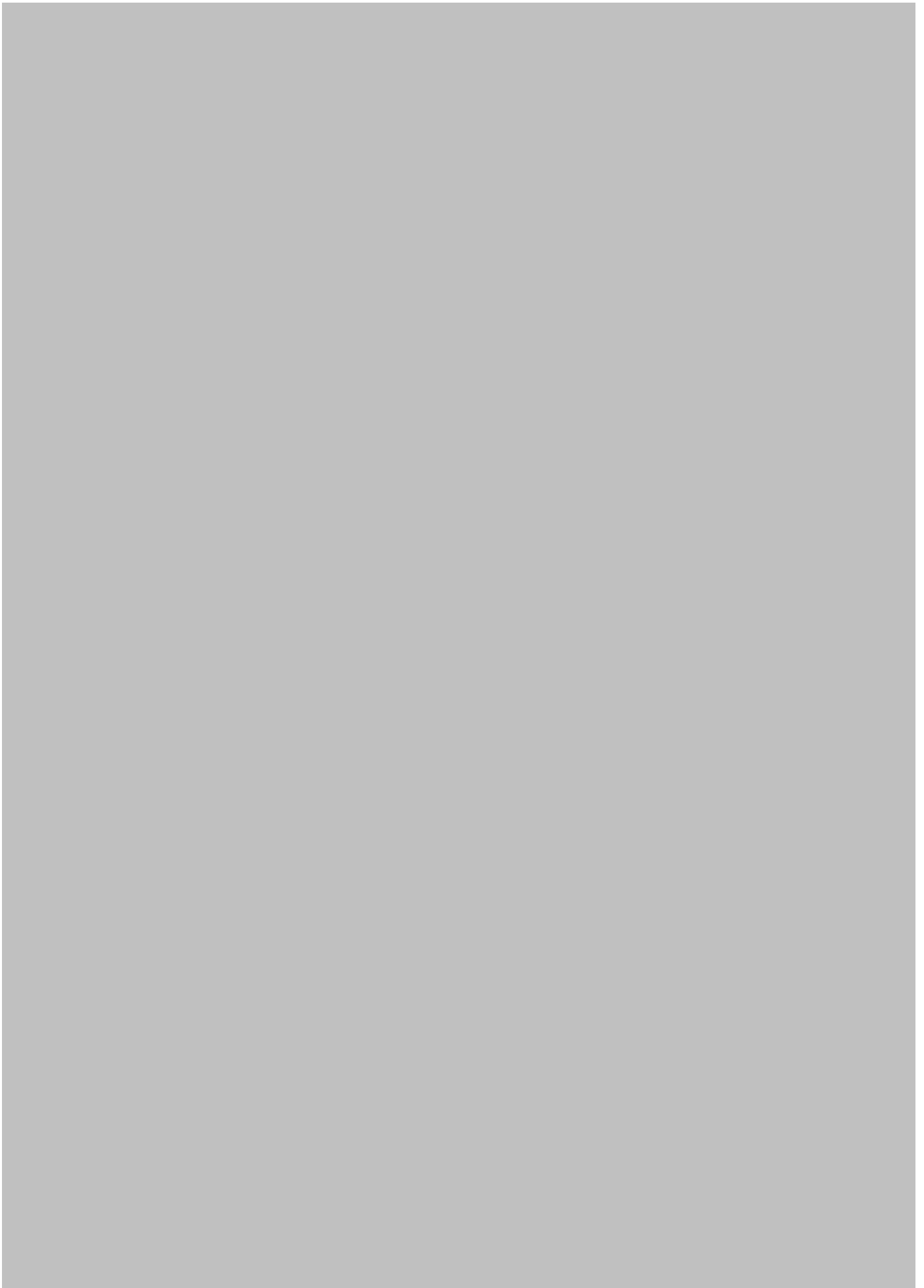
It is acknowledged that this is only a very brief presentation of ethical considerations relating to this important issue, and that further debate is needed.

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***Appendix F: CDET Code of Professional Conduct & Practice***









***Appendix G: Interview Transcript***

Isla's Interview transcript – slightly edited

Sho: Okay if we, if we look at this erm...this, this story that you, you've given me.

Isla: Yes.

Sho: Erm...and what I'd like to start with is, is you, you've talked about the Theatre School in Zurich.

Isla: H-hmm.

Sho: Erm...and what I'd like is if you could describe in a bit more detail your experience erm...at the Theatre School and the sort of learning environment that was.

Isla: Yes. Well the...we had... The Theatre School was two-fold. It was (a) a drama school. It had ballet lessons, it had an acrobatics school and we actually ran a children's circus every year. And the children's circus was run for the benefit of the Pestalozzi villages...

Sho: Oh right.

Isla: ...in the mountains. And it meant that the best numbers from the circus got selected to go into a special

performance for the children in, in the village of erm... where this village was. And that was very exciting because we got to, we all got dished out to various country houses to, to a Japanese House or the China House or what have you. And you're allowed to spend the day with these children and live in their culture which is very exciting.

Sho: Yes.

Isla: Erm...the, the thing that was exciting for me is that, is that I'd finally found something that I was good at. And I got constant erm...appraisal for what I did. I seemed to have a good body to do with whatever they wanted me to do. It allowed my creativity to come out because everything was done to music. Erm...and then I just enjoyed the physical challenge of, of moving and getting my body to do all sorts of things which I didn't think I was capable of doing. And exploring that aspect of how far I could take my body.

Sho: Okay. And what, what was this erm...the style of the teaching erm...can you say something about either the teaching methods, how they choose them?

Isla: Yes. Well I think, I think the...the teaching style from the particular teacher that I...I liked so very much... She just always had this amazing warmth around her and whatever she said was never impossible. Whatever she wanted us to do, we could do. It was just a question of

how we're going to do it safely. The issue of not being able to do something was not an issue whereas in school it was. Everything I tried to do at school I couldn't but here there was no borders so...

Sho: Yes.

Isla: I've lived for those classes. They've kept me sane. I think I'd have gone mad without them (Laughter).

Sho: So, so...thinking because that interested me ...you know this business that you lived for these classes. How...how do you feel that that contributed to erm...your development then...?

Isla: Well I...it let me realise that there are things that I can be good at in life and that not everything I do is a problem. Erm...I found out that I can explain things really well because she often used me to help other children. Erm...she got me involved and it was almost erm...an equal partnership. There was nothing I couldn't ask and there was nothing that she wouldn't have an answer for. I felt completely safe with her. I could move mountains with her (Laughter).

Sho: Oh right.

Isla: And because she was a dancer obviously although we did acrobatics the dance side of it came into it. And it allowed to turn these variations into something that fitted a piece of music and then made the costume to go with it. And the whole thing was incredibly creative.

Sho: Oh okay. That's cool.

Isla: And we actually had a competition each year and we were allowed to put our own work in and then got...got... It was a competition and I won it three years running.

Sho: Oh that's good.

Isla: Which was fantastic for me because school was such a nightmare. It was really good to have something that I was good at (Coughing). That allowed me to excel at it. And she just loved me to bits (Laughter). She was just a totally lovely woman.

Sho: Excellent, excellent. So, so from there ...you said that you moved on erm...and you started studying ballet seriously?

Isla: Yes.

Sho: Erm...and you said after a couple of false starts you found ballet.

Isla: Well...

Sho: So what...what were, the false starts?

Isla: Well there's, there's two false starts. The first one was at the Ballet Academy in Zurich with a lady called .....and she...she was in my eyes being 60 an old lady who walked around on a stick. And she just shouted a lot. And she could never explain anything. And I certainly wasn't put in the beginners class. I was just put into a Company class which means you stand at the barre and you just follow everything.

That didn't work for me. Erm...I'd spend most of my time in the changing room trying to find out from my colleagues what we were supposed to do and what these names are. And I tried to write them down phonetically and tried to figure out why we did them and what they were for. The approach was very different to what I'd been used to. There was no more any explanation it was just "You do, because I said so." (Laughter). And er...just figuring out how to kind of get my body round it. And I found that that kind of learning style really didn't help because I could only do something if I understood why and how, where it came from and where it's going to.

Sho: Right, right.

Isla: And from there I moved to erm...Ecole de Danse. And Ecole de Danse was run by...by... I...I've forgotten his surname but a...a chap from Germany and... And erm...a lady who, who was a dancer with the Swiss National Ballet in Zurich in her youth. But she did more the sort of like roles, you know she didn't do the dramatic Giselle or Swan Lake roles erm... And she is again somebody who just simply delivered a ballet class, a Company class and then just screamed a lot at you. You could hear her from getting off the tram, walking up the corner. You could hear her at the end of the street hollering at somebody something.

Sho: (Laughter)

Isla: And again if you'd ever asked her a question it was "How dare you ask...do." (Laughter), you know and erm... But it's at that point where erm...Pat, who was our jazz teacher and he was always taking the mickey out of me because I couldn't do anything in parallel, my legs were always turned out. And then the rumour got out that he was teaching a ballet class. And in my ignorance I was convinced that this man couldn't possibly teach a ballet class because everything was so turned in with him and...you know he was so sexy and everything was kind of... Non classical if you like.

And so we all sneaked off in our lunch hour and it's been the most fantastic ballet class I've ever been to in my life.

There was a man who was beautifully turned out, he could demonstrate everything to a tee. He could...he wouldn't shout, he would tell you how to do something. He will tell you why he did it and how to get round the problems. And I remember coming home from that session to my parents saying "Look we've got two options I either stop dancing altogether or you break the contract with L'Ecole de Danse and let me move to Pat's school." Which then had just opened.

And my parents were horrified that the fact I...you know that's the second time they've moved me and they'd just signed a three-year contract with this school. And I said "Well there is absolutely no way. I don't know very much but I do know that if I can't study with this man there's no point in continuing." And with that it was agreed that erm...well they came to see Pat teaching, they could see there was a huge difference. Erm...and so it was agreed that I was allowed to go to him.

Then life became very different because we worked on a one to one basis. He insisted that I also took classes at the Opera House School. And with that, I also got into dancing, you know the extra little cameo things with the actual Company. Being reindeers in...in...in erm... 'Nutcracker' and things like that. Extra bits and pieces which was wonderful to have some stage experience. Erm....

And it...really it, it went from there. But, you know a relationship was formed that is still alive today.

Sho:

Yes.

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Isia: It's a very close bond.

Sho: So...this, this style of teaching obviously was very different...

Isia: Yes.

Sho: ...and suited you erm... What, what about like teaching by touch which is something that is...is very current at the moment.

Isia: Like?

Sho: Was...was it a very hands-on type of teaching?

Isia: It was but it was always done with respect. I never have an issue with that. Whereas I have come across other teachers where it has been a huge issue. But he didn't touch for the sake of it and I suppose he just wasn't interested in girls being homosexual so (Laughter) it was not an issue. But the thing is for him it always came from a bio mechanical point of view. He would let you feel how a hip joint actually works, where the rotation comes from. He would allow you to find the range and he would allow you to fiddle with his body not wanted... He'd take it, you know and ask you to hold his leg and

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move it in a position and see where the range of movement is. And I found that incredibly useful erm...

That, that was...you know the...the being uncomfortable with being touched has never been an issue on the grounds that dance and ballet is such a physical thing anyway. Erm...and luckily he was someone that, that had an actual human respect and I think that's what it actually comes down to. It's how you deal with your, with your pupils.

He had also had an amazing sense of humour and we spent half the time just (Laughter) laughing like mad (Laughter) because he'd flip, he'd er...tell everything...a...at the funny side of things.

Sho: Yes.

Isla: So...

Sho: Yes.

Isla: And his class was always tremendous fun erm...very constructive. And you could ask him questions, he actually got really cross if you didn't ask.

Sho: Would you...?

Isla: "If you don't know why don't you ask me? How the hell do I know what...?"

Sho: (Laughter).

Isla: (Laughter).

Sho: Erm...just, just before we leave this issue of touching, if you look back now...

Isla: Hmm.

Sho: ...and if you just look back over all the teachers that you had...

Isla: Hmm.

Sho: Erm...and whether they were hands-on or not, are there any issues that you think were acceptable then that may not be so acceptable now?

Isla: Er...yes obviously erm...I understand from various courses I've been on that would, would seem to be perfectly acceptable is no longer acceptable. And even Pat has accepted that. He will think about it twice before he'll touch someone. For someone who's 60 or 64

means that actually even that generation can make that monumental leap erm... However, he...if he does have to touch someone he will ask permission, he doesn't just climb in. He does...he is totally aware of the fact that that is an issue and for him it's an issue with boys obviously. So...it's not an issue with women because he would never touch a woman in that way but it could be misconstrued from a male point of view.

But his teaching and his way of it... Again his teaching has moved on such a long way from those days because he's somebody that has constantly educated himself. And moved around the world and worked with the best people in the world but he...he's still to this day in a con-, in a, in a...in a situation of learning and re-lo-, looking at how he works and re-evaluate what he does. And every time he comes and gives a guest course we always stand back and think "My god where's that come from?" You know it's this kind of constantly being able to reinvent himself which is what I so admire about this man. And erm...

Sho: So could erm...

Isia: Like, you know the issue of water is another one, you know do we let our dancers drink in class or not? Well Pat actively makes sure people have a drink after the barre (Laughter)...

Sho: Right.

Isia: ...you know. Whereas other teachers say well, you know "What do you do when you're on stage and do Swan Lake?" Well nobody's on stage for three hours you do come off in between. And just because you can do it without it, doesn't mean it's actually very good for you.

Sho: Yes.

Isia: So again he's managed to make that monumental leap of...of moving forwards.

Sho: Yes.

Isia: And making sure his dancers do not work in a dehydrated way.

Sho: So...so obviously you've had erm... You know this inspiration from Pat and...and the, the model you had...

Isia: Yes.

Sho: ...has, has been one who...somebody who is happy to...to constantly be learning and...and everything else.

Isla: Hmm.

Isla: You know having had some very good teachers in my life I've at least got something to compare it with.

Sho: Erm...how does this compare with your experience on your BBO Diploma Course?

Sho: Yes.

Isla: Badly (Laughter). There, in a, in a...in a word I think erm... Hmm it has two ballet teachers. We've had one ballet teacher who I think is incredibly gifted called Jane Coral. And I don't understand why we were not allowed to work with her much more because she is literally the crop at the end of the...the, the thing at the end of the rainbow. What do you call it? The crop of gold?

Isla: Pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. She is somebody that we could all learn such an enormous amount from. And she was just dished out very seldomly. Then there're other people with much more high powered names and what have you but they don't have the love of dance. And to them this is just something else that they do and I think no one should be allowed to teach unless they've actually got the passion for it or some kind of fresh interest at least. I know that must be very odd but that's how I feel (Laughter).

Isla: So would, would you if...if erm...if... Looking, looking after this human being side...

Isla: H-hmm.

Sho: Erm...and again comparing it with your ro-, you know your current experience with having just completed erm... Do you want to get that phone?

Isla: I'll just turn it off, sorry.

Sho: No it's okay.



Isla: Right okay. Now...

Sho: Right we've just been saying about Pat looking after his students as human beings erm... And I was just asking about the BBO whether you feel erm...that on the teaching course erm...was there any, anything about treating people as human beings. And, and...you know how does his doctrine if you ilke compare to, to [cross talking]?

Isla: Well on the ballet side badly I think. Erm...one of the conflicts was that we, we did erm... human issues with you on a regular basis and then immediately get confronted with the exact opposite, with the next class we had to attend. And that causes enormous conflicts.

Erm...just while we've had a break can I go back to something?

Sho: Yes great, yes.

Isla: Just a question I'd like to raise. And that is to do with if you have a teacher that looks after you as a human being and you feel safe with that because...because they are not...not just treating you like a contract. That they teach for the 90 minutes that you allocated them to do, that they take you to Exhibitions, they go to concerts with you. They do this, they do that, they do the other. Would that not also influence the fact that if you...if you're being physically corrected that that would be done

Isla: in the same professional way as everything else has been done?

Sho: And I wonder whether that...in that circumstance is...is it linked with the fact that you feel safe with that person anyway just like you would with an Osteopath? And so therefore the fact that they have to touch you every now and then is neither here nor there. Because it's happening as part of a complete package.

Isla: And I sort of...the more I think about it, you know you feel you come across people and you sort of think to yourself "Oh god please don't touch me. So whatever you do don't touch me." Because they give off the wrong energies or they're so alien to you that you can't possibly. Even if they touched you it wouldn't help because it makes you close up and run away.

Sho: Yes.

Isla: But because of this whole package of the way he looked after his dancers and...made them feel they're worthwhile or the same with the lady who did acrobatics with me when I was a child. It's the same issue that was touch all the time because they're forever helping you and making sure that you don't hurt yourself.

Sho: Well if that's...this kind of safety issue isn't there you can't actually do the sport or whatever it is that you're doing.

Sho: Yes, yes. Yes, no that's good. A very useful, very useful point.

Okay, right erm... Now you mentioned erm...going back to Pat...

Isla: Yes.

Sho: You mentioned in here erm...that when you, you were attending his classes that you did some teaching under his supervision.

Isla: H-hmm.

Sho: Erm...and your comment was that was tough but I did learn a great deal. So could...could you just say a little bit more, you know may be specific things what was useful?

Isla: Yes, right. Well for starters I would teach his class, the class that he taught yesterday. Which meant I (a) had to remember it and during the class I would have to demonstrate that I understood why he did it and what he wanted to teach with it. And then I had to relay that to the people in front of me. And then by the end of it he would want to know why they couldn't do it. And if they couldn't do it, it was my fault because I hadn't said this or I hadn't saw that or I hadn't understood this or not made this connection or that connection. So erm...that's why it

was tough.

But it did give me the opportunity to...to teach something that was safe and acceptable. Someone else had sorted out the safety angle of it if you like...

Sho: H-hmm.

Isla: And it was my job to try and get that information over to whoever was there. And these were ordinary human beings who just came to class once a week. His normal adult erm...you know hobby dancers. But erm...he never treated them any different from us because he believed that if you give the information that somebody can do it and if your pupils can't do it then it's your fault because you didn't explain it properly (Laughter).

Sho: Right so...so... So what erm... So would you say that erm...he was encouraging responsibility?

Isla: Yes, very much so.

Sho: Yes, yes.

Isla: Very much so and also to protect something that's precious. You know the...the ballet is something that is dear to him and he wanted to make sure that it was taught correctly. Because it takes too long if you're

being incorrect with it. So instead of giving 101 corrections, what is the one correction that makes everything else fall into place? That's one of the key issues that I...I got confronted at very, very early on.

You know for instance if somebody erm...is...is...got their tail out and got their head forwards and what have you, well if you actually notice that they've rolled their ankles and if their ankles were back into centre then everything would pull up from the floor. And everything else would fall into place.

So instead of mentioning all the hundred mistakes it's finding the key thing that will make it fall into place. And that's something that he was very good at. He, he, he could look at something and he'd be not just stating the obvious of what's wrong but he could always get to the heart of the matter. So one learnt very quickly with him because there was always a logical reason or a reason...

Sho:  
Right:

Isia:  
...why that is. And if you can prohibit that then everything else will be alright.

Sho:  
So how has...how has that influenced how you teach?

Isia:  
Well I'd like to think...I'd like to think that I'm reasonably good at that erm...with... When you feel passionate

about something or other and you want to share what you know with somebody else the temptation is to give far too much information. And it took me a long time to learn to stem that, wanting to give everything and actually...to actually cut down to what it actually is. And er...it's something I still struggle with and probably always will struggle with.

Because every dancer you meet, every person you work with has a different set of problems physically from the way they're built or the way they are emotionally or whatever. The whole package is different with every human being. And what worked for one human being doesn't necessarily work for another. And so it's being able to establish which way to get into that person to get round to it.

Sho:

Yes. And going back again to your BBO experience erm...how was the development of you as a teacher erm...approached in respect to, you know your past experience? So...so the comparison of erm...how Pat developed you as a teacher and how the course developed you as a teacher?

Isia:

Are we talking about the...the... I think I need to distinguish between the stuff we did with you because that was more the intellectual side of thinking of it. And I, I enjoyed that very much I had no problems with any of that.

Sho:

Right:

think there are certain elements here which have failed bitterly. But then I think they really didn't understand what it meant moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in the first place, in fairness.

Isla: I have a problem with the way things happened practically, actual practical teaching classes.

Sho: Okay so if we, if we... we look at the practical erm...the practical act of...actually getting you to teach. And, and the sort of issues that erm...were focussed on in how to develop the practical teaching skills.

Isla: I, I'm kind of hoping that in years to come BBO will sort that out and I think they need to change the teaching staff for that. Because the...there's...the Faculty that they have got on that subject don't understand the subject so they can't possibly teach it.

Isla: Oh I, I think they miserably failed on that one (Laughter). If I had the chance I would've done it very differently.

Sho: Right.

Sho: Yes, yes okay, yes. Right let's now just move on to.... when you came to London...

Isla: I would...the first thing I would've done is...is try to establish what people already know then built on that knowledge, I think. And built their confidence.

Isla: H-hmm.

Erm...the biggest thing is as a teacher you need to be able to stand in front of a class not with arrogance but with, with a calm kind of confidence that you do know what you're talking about. And that you know how to get someone safely from A to B. Well we didn't do any of that, we really did not do any of that. A lot of it was straightforward humiliation.

Sho: And you trained with Rambert for a while.

Isla: H-hmm.

Sho: And you were going to do...

So...I'm sorry to say erm...that but that's something I really feel very strongly about. And since the course was sold to me 'into bringing teaching into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' I

Isla: The School but it's not the Company.

Erm...now the teacher in question couldn't possibly know that I'd been polishing the floor that morning with one of those heavy machines which you swing from side to side. And so my back was already sore from that plus I'd washed down er...a Victorian stone staircase every morning on my hands and knees (Laughter). So before I got to class I was already physically wrecked.

And to do...to do all erm...er... a... variation on pointe was something I could not do at that point. (a) I hadn't...hadn't mastered it on half pointe let alone on pointe. I got too much speed, I fell very badly. I fell forwards, the leg came over me and it cracked through the...through the lumbar. As it turned out lumbar four and five.

Erm...I remember crawling out of the Studio down to the Medical Centre and the guy there had a look at me and he was pretty convinced that I wouldn't be able to move within 24 hours. Erm...I got put in a taxi, I got sent home. Erm...the nuns were horrified because I was...I was erm...working with nuns in a, in a centre called, well it doesn't matter what it's called but anyway erm... They looked after all the students and I...I was part of the staff that helped looking after the students. I did all the cleaning and of serving of food and whatever and for that I got my board and keep. And that made it possible for me to go to classes in London. So in other words I had to work for it (Laughter).

Yes.

Sho: Yes, yes. Rambert School. And you were going to do the teachers course at the RAD.

Isla: H-hmm.

Sho: Erm...but then you had an accident at Dance Centre.

Isla: H-hmm.

Sho: Erm...do you want to just, you know just describe in your own...

Isla: Briefly what happened?

Sho: Yes just...just what happened and...and how that affected that period of... Or how that, you know influenced what came afterwards?

Isla: Well erm...the accident happened because I was asked to do something which I was physically not capable of doing. And that happened also because the class had something like 50 dancers in it. The classes were massive erm...and you do go into those classes at your own risk.

Sho:

Isla:

But the nuns were horrified when I came back. And one of them in particular insisted that she took me straight to erm... hospital. And they immediately put me in a metal corset erm... I then spent the next three months on my back because my passport had just been sent off to the Home Office for an extension and they've lost it. So I couldn't return to Switzerland without my passport so the nuns looked after me for three months.

I returned to Switzerland just before Christmas erm...I then went into a clinic, a day clinic erm...where they did various therapies on my back erm... But in, in those days 1972/73 they really had no great experience of what to do with this type of injury so it... And the thing was that I would have... It was an injury which caused me to have contact with my legs and then lose it. It was not permanently paralysed but it was a kind of on/off situation.

I had lots of therapy in a pool and lots of physiotherapy and sort of got back on my feet. And then erm...obviously it was obvious that I would never dance. That was definitely the end of that. Erm...but I did choreology and for that I travelled to Basel once a week and I did my first year of training in Basel. And then won a scholarship to come back to England to study choreology and become a choreologist.

Sho:

Right.

Isla:

Erm...in the meantime erm...the Benesh people erm...Rudolph and was it Jane Benesh moved to just

outside Worthing and... And up on the hill they had erm...taken over a country house, to stay in residence. And we...we... They ran the course from up there. Erm...unfortunately it didn't work out terribly well for me and I got very ill again on the course with my back. And I did most of my exam lying flat on my stomach. Erm...but in the end they wouldn't give me the First Year Certificate and I already had the First Year Certificate from Switzerland because I'd already done a year of it in Switzerland.

Sho:

Hmm.

Isla:

And they said that I hadn't done enough hours at the College and they wanted me to repeat the year and there's no way I would do that, my pride won't let me. Erm...I then got also very, very ill and was in and out of hospital a lot. And in the end they actually decided they needed to do a spinal fusion. But that took until 1976 so this is now sort of four years down the line.

Erm...the whole thing, it took altogether before I could walk again with the operation and everything it took seven years, I lost out of my life. Erm...and, and the idea of having an operation was I, that I could do something with my life. At least out of the wheelchair I could have a job, I could you know do something with my life. Whereas it was I could walk one day and not the next, I couldn't keep a job down because I was often in enormous amounts of pain erm...and I was just a waste of space. So they said that if they do the operation I would never walk again and I had to sign a piece of

paper to the effect that I wouldn't attempt to do that (Laughter). So erm...in hindsight of course we all know that doctors don't al- know everything.

I had an operation by a brilliant surgeon and it was done in ..... Hospital. And I was one of the first people to have this operation and there are several who've had the same operation as me and they're still in wheelchairs. So I'm incredibly lucky I got away with it. I got away with it also because the breakage was far enough down, the further the breakage comes up towards the head the less likelihood there is of recovery. But because it was so far down and because I've been classically trained and had actually already gone through the mental experience of learning movement patterns it was easier to re-establish that then somebody who's not in touch with their body.

Sho:

Right.

Isla:

It was easier to re...re-do that. So I had the advantage on people. But of course having to learn to walk again erm...was, was...started off by getting vertigo the first time they sat me up. Because I'd seen the world at a certain level so the first time I stood up I had literally got vertigo. Erm...so the...the goal was to try and walk to the end of the bed and then the goal was to move from the bed to the door. And then...and so it goes on, you know. The first time I managed to walk to the newsagents or to three or four months down the line it felt like I'd walked half way round the world (Laughter). And it was a very useful experience because it...I had to

work out how to put one foot in front of the other.

So of course when I eventually came back to dance I wanted to make sure that what happened to me wouldn't happen to anyone else. And so long before the world started talking about Health & Safety, it was a huge issue (Laughter) because I paid a very heavy price for it. And so I...when I started teaching I had an osteopath on the team with me erm... And I, I started from the very beginning to have medical people round me like physios, osteopaths, dieticians. They're all people that I had an enormous interest with.

And when I came to Brighton I was again looking for a, an osteopath. And this osteopath said to me, "What do you do to your pupils that you need an osteopath?" And I said "Well actually I'd like you to look at them before I do anything to them (Laughter). Because I don't know what they bring with, with them in the first place." And it was the beginning of erm...of my, my team that I have with me still to this day.

So I ended up doing this long before people started thinking in these terms. That's why some of the stuff has been hard to bear on the grounds that to me, how can you possibly not do these things (Laughter)...

Yes.

Sho:

Isla: ...and be a responsible teacher. And have other things like Pilates or whatever, the supportive kind of forms of

exercise. Because you can't solve everything through ballet.

Isla: And then talking out (Laughter). We'd go into every day with we don't think about it than if you've forgotten how to do it through an accident it is very hard to try, try and re-establish. But I've been very lucky. Whatever has happened to me there's always been somebody that's opened another door. And I found a very, very good osteopath who more or less took over. Because the hospital did what they did and then you just get...you get your body back and they say "Right okay that's it. That's as far as we go, you get on with it."

Sho: Right.

Isla: Does that kind of answer your question really does it?

Sho: Yes, yes that's great. Erm...now when you...I mean this, this must have really effected your confidence and everything about your life.

Sho: Yes.

Isla: Yes.

Sho: When you actually realised that you could come back to dancing, you know and...and teach erm...that must have been a huge erm...point in your, you know... A huge sort of milestone in your life?

Isla: Erm...and I've done much more with it than I should've done. So I can never go back to them because I've done things which I shouldn't (Laughter). If they could see me do a ballet class now they'd sort of be horrified but you know I have to. It was either that or die because I... Not being able to move for me meant being like a fish out of water. I cannot live without movement for very long.

Isla: Yes it was. It was an enormous erm...thing to happen. Erm...and it happened because again I had so many people that looked after me and gave me the confidence. Especially my then husband who just wouldn't give up until I was walking again. I often ended up in floods of tears and frustration needless to say because it's just not that easy you know.

Sho: Yes, yes.

Sho: No.

Isla: And so it was, it was either that. That's what driven me to learn to walk again. It's the, the enormous depression that goes with not being able to move when you hear music.



from where they've left off. And the thing is that of course in their head they know what to do but the body doesn't and it's really important to find the right starting point.

H-hmm.

Sho:

Isla: And basically by the time I've seen somebody walk into a room and I can see the way the muscles lie I know how much training they've done and I know how good that training has been. So in a sense by just seeing them and seeing them move gives me some kind of feedback.

Yes.

Sho:

Isla: Erm... I...I think I tend to put, put people in a much lower class than they would like to go. But ultimately those who stick with it make much better progress because they've been taken back to a safe place where they can make a start from. And I, I really do think it's wrong to... You know because the temptation is for instance with some of the dance students that I get, A level dance students who're naturally incredibly gifted is to just stick them in an Intermediate Foundation class without having taken them through Grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. But you find that they, they get... They come unstuck fairly quickly on the grounds that they just don't have the basic knowledge that needs to be there. So however much talent somebody has you really need to make sure that all the input is in there in the first place.

Sho: Yes. Okay erm...now you, you s-, you were talking erm...about er...one, one thing you say when you were talking about teaching is "I worked out the best way for my dancers to understand what they were doing. So what happened to me would never happen to them."

H-hmm.

Isla:

Sho: No erm... Clearly you've, you know worked really hard at being able to analyse what they were doing and...and develop that. So from, from a teaching point of view erm...would you say that... Where, where would you put that in this sort of things that a teacher must do?

Isla: Well the first thing you must make sure is that your pupil is in the right class.

H-hmm.

Sho:

Isla: That to me is the most important thing. And so whenever I talk to someone I need to establish exactly how much they've done and I ask certain questions in order to establish what they know and don't know erm... And then I need to see them in a class because I find with dancers very often or certain people who've danced as a child or whatever and done this, that and the other that they have...they think that they can just carry on

And erm...I think I can safely say I've found this now six or seven times. That I've taken someone at the age of 17 or 18 and put them through two years of...of classes with me and at the end of it they've taken their Intermediate exam and passed with flying colours, not scraped through. But, you know got good marks, good marks because they've worked all the way through the syllabus. They didn't take all the exams but I wouldn't let them move on until they could've taken that exam.

Sho:

Right, right.

Isia:

So they'll... For instance they can do er...the beginners course, Grade 1 and Grade 2 they can do together. And then take possibly Grade 1 or Grade 2 exam, whichever they're ready for. Then they will take Grade 3, 4 and 5 together and possibly take Grade 4. And then do 5, Intermediate, Foundation, Intermediate together and then take Intermediate, Foundation but not five.

Sho:

Right.

Isia:

So they'll...they'll. But then for the dance they come three or four times a week so they've gone through the work and understood the structure of it and know where it's coming from and where it's going to.

Sho:

Yes.

Isia:

And it's...it's enough to get them into places like ... Contemporary in Rambert. Which means again we have actually if people cared to look at it a really very, very good syllabus (Laughter) it's just some people never think it's necessary to look at it in great detail.

Sho:

Right so...

Isia:

It really is important to understand the structure underneath because you can't take someone very far unless the structure is solid.

Sho:

Yes, yes.

Isia:

And that's of course also if they...they know why they do a pli , they know why they do a tendu, why they do this, why they do that. They work very differently with it than if they are just copying it. So, you know you can say but you do plies and tendus in Intermediate Foundation, why do you have to do that in Grade 1? Well you need to perfect it in Grade 1 because you're not worrying about the pattern, you're worrying just about that one issue.

Sho:

Yes. So is there erm...again if you think about your erm...the variety, the diversity of the training that you've had...

Isla: H-hmm. ...and, and things like that. Erm...can you think erm... You know what, what...what are your.... What do you think the strengths are of the teachers that are coming up today and what do you think are the weaknesses of the teachers that are coming up today?

Sho: Erm...that's enabled you to draw from different sources.

Isla: Yes.

Sho: And the fact that you, you work er...you have close links with, like a health team...

Isla: Yes.

Sho: ...and, and things like that. Erm...can you think erm... You know what, what...what are your.... What do you think the strengths are of the teachers that are coming up today and what do you think are the weaknesses of the teachers that are coming up today?

Isla: Yes.

Sho: Erm...you know do you have particular things that think "Yes that, that's, that's a good... That's a, that's a strong...?"

Isla: Yes. I think the human element of it erm...made me feel that, that I wasn't the only one who was thinking that

way. There was lots of other people who think the way I do...

Sho: H-hmm.

Isla: ...in terms of how we treat human beings. Erm...and the way teachers today or the teachers on the course were interested in Health and Safety and in the welfare of their dancers. That, that sort of thing really was impressive. What I...what I fear is lacking is just basic knowledge. And I...I, I still think that the teachers course should be something where if somebody is affiliated to a school for three years and works with a teacher on an every day basis and sees people through exams and what have you. I think the way they did is not [cross talking].

Sho: So like a...like a... Like what they used to call an old fashioned apprentice?

Isla: Yes, absolutely. Because you can't, you can't possibly learn to teach in six months, you know. You can have someone. You can then bullshit about all the different learning techniques of some individual person or that person.... So what? You know if you can't explain the steps it doesn't actually matter which form you deliver it with. You need to understand the subject in depth and I, I feel that we've all been failed on that one.

I would love to learn much more in depth. Because however old you are, however long you've dealt with a

subject you could come across Jane Coral for instance and she'll look at something in a completely different way. And you think "Yes now why didn't I think of...think of that?"

Sho: Yes.

Isla: You know or Mary Emerald teaching syllabus she was fantastic at it. And...and she came at it again from such a different angle. And we really do feel we have the talent there but it's being ignored (Laughter).

Sho: Right, right.

Isla: Just label chasing, you know. Like you have to wear the Gucci handbag or the Gucci glasses or what have you. I don't want the label for teachers with a Gucci brand name on them. I want the teachers who actually can teach.

Sho: Yes.

Isla: And it makes me very sad when there is obviously that talent and yet these people are locked up in a cupboard somewhere.

Sho: Right.

Isla:

And also you know we never found out... E-, everyone kept saying you know "The talent on this course is amazing. We've got so talent, they're so talented these people." And I kept thinking "Well you've actually made no effort anywhere along the line, the course that is, of demonstrating this." This would've helped tremendously, built people's confidence. Why didn't we get the chance to shine in our own field or the thing that we're particularly good at? May be somebody's particularly good with children. May be somebody like me could've been given the chance to actually show that adult ballet classes can be much more than just a drop in class, you know that... That there's a whole lot of story to adult ballet classes. It's not just something you do, you throw everyone into once a week and have a giggle.

Sho: Yes, yes.

Sho:

Isla: You know. And then there're so many different specialities of teaching, i.e., teaching children, teaching adults, teaching teenagers. Erm...teaching specifically grade classes, teaching free classes, doing fulltime training. All those issues we didn't talk about them at all, none of it.

Sho: So what kind of a ballet teacher am I? I still don't know (Laughter).

Sho:

Well on that ..... I think that...I think that...yes. I think we'll stop there don't you?

Isla:

(Laughter).

## ***Appendix H: DVD of video clips***

Due to copyright restrictions the DVD is not available.