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cemap
Centre for **Media Arts & Performance**

The Higher Education Academy
PALATINE
Dance, Drama
and Music

Coventry University

Moving Matters

Supporting Disabled Dance Students in Higher Education

Sarah Whatley



Photo courtesy of CandoCo Dance Company, photographer Belinda Lawley

CeMAP
Institute for Creative Enterprise (ICE)
Coventry University Enterprises
Puma Way
Coventry
CV1 2TT

Tel: 024 7615 8350
www.coventry.ac.uk/cemap

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Sarah Whatley, July 2008

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www.palatine.heacademy.ac.uk

Standing Conference on Dance in Higher Education (SCODHE) is the representative body for higher education departments (the term includes schools, subject groups etc.) teaching and researching in Dance in the United Kingdom. www.scodhe.ac.uk

Independent Dance is an artist-led organization providing a responsive framework to support, sustain and stimulate dance artists in their ongoing development as professionals. www.independentdance.co.uk

The CeMAP applied research centre provides a context, focus and structure for the development of research, scholarship and practice within Coventry School of Art and Design. In terms of arts practice and scholarship, it provides the space needed for different art forms to come together, locating arts activities, their context and their relationship to audiences within a coherent centre. In the area of performance, CeMAP gives a focus for interaction and collaboration with professional artists and arts organization, and with relevant funding and umbrella organizations. In the area of media, the Centre provides an environment which encourages interdisciplinary research and practice which, amongst other things, looks at the theory--practice continuum, and which takes a broad and inclusive view of the culture industries.

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Author

Sarah Whatley is Professor in Dance and Director of the Applied Research Centre for Media Arts and Performance at Coventry University. She was Head of the Performing Arts Department for nine years until summer 2007 and has since been focusing on a range of research projects whilst retaining her practice as a performer and choreographer. In addition to her research into inclusive dance practices she is leading a major AHRC-funded project to create a digital archive of Siobhan Davies' work and has a number of publications relating to this work following her doctoral research on Davies at the University of Surrey Roehampton. She is also Editor of the recently launched Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices (published by Intellect).

Editorial Assistant

David Bennett was formerly a project manager in the manufacturing industry for 20 years. In 2006, he graduated from Coventry University with BA (Hons) Dance and Professional Practice and works as a performer, teacher and choreographer. In addition to his dance practice, David has been working at Coventry University supporting academic staff in using the e-learning environment and is currently working as a research assistant on the dance learning objects area of CURVE (the digital resource centre supporting teaching, learning and research in the HE and FE community).

Editor DVD

Jennifer Preece graduated from Coventry University in 2006 with BA (Hons) Communication, Culture and Media. She is currently a Production and Research Assistant for Centre for Media Arts and Performance, Coventry University. Jennifer also works as a freelance filmmaker in a variety of production roles, and has recently completed work as a Production Assistant on a full-length feature film.

Introduction

It is still the case that relatively few students with physical or sensory disabilities participate in courses with a significant dance component at higher education level. There continue to be real and/or perceived barriers to access. Many universities and other higher education institutions will have secure processes for supporting disabled students and most courses will have clearly articulated equal opportunities policies, making clear that reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate students with disabilities. But very real challenges are faced in providing the necessary support for these students, particularly on courses where there is an emphasis on practical (technical and creative) skill development. The kinds of adjustments needed require expertise that is discipline-specific but also require knowledge of the wider issues that disabled students have to deal with. So support needs to be provided on a multi-agency basis; from dance tutors, learning support assistants, curriculum managers, the institution's disability support officers and in some cases, personal carers. Furthermore, few opportunities exist for tutors to share experiences, with many feeling isolated and in need of support themselves when responding to the particular demands of individual students. Whilst research has exposed the need for support and there are a small number of excellent resource materials that will help teachers make general adjustments when teaching dance students with disabilities (the best examples perhaps being Benjamin (2002) and Parkes & Connor (2004)) there are no established guidelines for dance tutors working specifically in higher education.

During 2007, two conferences at Coventry University brought together teachers, practitioners, agency representatives and students to explore some of these issues and particularly the strategies needed to encourage disabled dancers to participate in higher education and the many challenges involved in delivering an inclusive curriculum. As two landmark events in a matter of months, the energy from the first event was able to fuel the next. Both events were documented and with the support of a PALATINE Development Award these materials have been brought together in this publication, interwoven with a range of practical tips and guidance notes to offer the reader an insight into the debates that are taking place, to raise awareness and to provide a chance to reflect on teaching, learning and assessment methods.

“...in terms of teaching methodology, an integrated workshop or class can function perfectly well without the presence of disabled students; it simply doesn't miss a beat when a disabled person joins it.”

(Benjamin, 2002, p 16)

How to use this pack

The pack is intended to be a useful reference for anyone who is involved in teaching and supporting the teaching of dance students in higher education. The pack also provides useful information for individuals, agencies and organizations who are supporting disabled dance practitioners prior to entering higher education or after graduation so it might well be a valuable resource for professional organizations and those in other education sectors, particularly The Conservatoire for Dance and Drama and private dance schools and colleges. Whilst the material has a clear focus on dance and the particular challenges associated with practical dance activities, the pack may also be useful to other educators. It is hoped that the material will inform future policy making and have an impact on those funding the arts and dance in particular.

The pack might well be used by individual tutors or by staff teams within a staff development context. Hopefully the pack will provoke discussion and reflection. It is hoped that the materials will help colleagues to support the learning experiences of a broad student community. Whilst some of the material might be directly transferable and relevant to another context, it is assumed that colleagues will work out strategies which might be prompted by some of the ideas contained here but are relevant to their own particular context.

It is important to make clear that the pack is aiming to open the door to a range of strategies and solutions so this is not a 'how-to' guide; each student presents new challenges and asks more questions of the tutors, other students and those who support the student's learning. The aim is that the pack will provide colleagues with a set of tools that can help to create an environment in which teaching and learning is positive and productive for everyone.

The pack contains a range of materials. Part 1 summarises the work that has taken place so far at Coventry University. There are notes on teaching and learning strategies, information about working with a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) in the studio, suggestions for modifying and adapting curricula and ideas for assessment methods and student support. There are some personal reflections provided by current and recent students, and those who support their learning. The experiences are gathered together to make clear that this is a continual learning process for us all.

Learning Support Assistant is the title used at Coventry University. Note that there are other titles; CandoCo Dance Company use Dance Support Specialist.

“[d]isability might diminish opportunity but not talent.
 (Marc Brew, dancer with CandoCo Dance Company, cited in Scott, 2005, p 7)

Part 2 focuses on the two conferences, beginning with an outline of the days and then transcriptions or reports of the various presentations. Where these have been provided by the speaker, the original format and presentational style has been retained to illustrate the variety of approaches and scope of the subject matter. An accompanying DVD includes footage from the two days. This includes interviews with speakers and students as well as extracts from some of the performances that were presented as part of the conferences. Transcripts have also been included on the DVD of the interviews, plus the example class and panel discussion from the November conference.

To access the transcripts, insert the DVD into a PC/MAC and click My Computer. Select the DVD drive and the transcripts are three pdf files in the root directory of the DVD.

The aim is to provide a broad perspective on this area of work together with some ideas about how the work could be taken forward. It is hoped that the pack might encourage an expanding network of practitioners and more collaborative working across the sector.

The appendices include details of projects, companies and organizations that might well be useful to the reader. The list is not meant to be exhaustive but comprises resources known or passed on to us.

“I’ve been doing this stuff twelve years and it isn’t much further on than it was twelve years ago.”
 (Louise Katerega, Independent Dance Artist)

PART 1: The Coventry Story (Sarah Whatley)

The BA (Hons) Dance and Professional Practice degree has been running for eleven years at Coventry University. The course has always emphasised learning through practice, with a strong vocational focus. It was designed to be inclusive in the sense that there has always been a strong philosophy underpinning the course, which is that everyone has the potential to be a dancer. With good links with Hereward College in Coventry, the national college for students with disabilities, and the considerable experience of some key staff, the students on the course have always had the opportunity to work with mixed ability groups so the philosophy of inclusion has been manifested in a number of ways; in the kinds of projects that the students do, in the learning outcomes that are set out to allow for difference and in the focus on the individual student’s experience throughout the course.

The philosophy was tested when the first wheelchair-user, Lorna Marsh, was recruited onto the course in 2002. It was clear that a steep learning curve was ahead. However much a philosophy may be clear to the faculty, putting it into practice was very challenging. But right from the beginning we were clear with Lorna that teaching would have to be reciprocal; she would have to teach us as much as we would teach her - and that the journey would be one that we would all be on together. We learnt a lot and continue to do so as we welcome more disabled dance students onto the course. So far the students’ disabilities have been physical and sensory. We acknowledge that learning disabled students bring a different set of challenges.

Shortly after our first wheelchair-user joined the course I received some funding from Coventry University to undertake some research into the delivery of dance techniques within the curriculum, and particularly the issues that arise because of the inclusion of students with disabilities on the dance course. The project enabled me to work directly with our own students and to do a survey of participation in HE by disabled students. There was a healthy response to the survey, which focused on the 2004-05 academic year. Disappointingly, although perhaps unsurprisingly, participation in that year was very low. *In courses where dance formed 50% or more of the total study time, only 13 students were registered as having a physical or sensory disability; even fewer of these required learning support in studio-based activity. This represents 0.5% of students on these courses and this was from those who responded. The percentage would probably have decreased if all had responded to the survey.* A subsequent survey has not yet been carried out but given that applications to dance courses are increasing, it would be interesting to find out if the number of applications from disabled students has also risen, or whether the proportion of disabled applicants has dropped further.

The project, *Body Realities: strategies for inclusion in dance in HE*, enabled the staff team at Coventry to give some time to focus on the issues involved in adapting and translating learning material, on assessment and how to support those who work directly with the disabled students, the LSAs. The staff team was able to spend dedicated time working with Louise Katerega who has had a long association with



Photo courtesy of CandoCo Dance Company,
 photographer Rachel Ferriman

Coventry University and has since established herself as a dance artist with an acknowledged wide range of experience of working with disabled dancers. The discoveries we made fed into the annual course review process and provided useful themes for some of the discussions during the two conferences in 2007.

The research led to a shared understanding amongst the staff team of some of the key issues that impact on course delivery. This then led to a set of actions:

- A re-evaluation of the purpose, delivery and assessment of dance technique development within the curriculum
- Guidelines for studio-based class work
- Guidance to support the relationship between the Learning Support Assistant (LSA) and the student.

A re-evaluation of the purpose, delivery and assessment of dance technique development within the curriculum

Working with disabled students calls into questions the purpose and aims of 'dance technique' classes; those activities in the curriculum that focus on skills development and are usually led by a tutor taking students through a series of exercises, taught phrases and movement combinations, and which may have a particular style-focus. This activity is distinct from those sessions that are focused primarily on improvisational practices although technique work might incorporate improvisation. The distinction is useful for the purposes of rethinking the purpose of class and the associated learning outcomes and assessment methods, because a disabled dance student might well have a very different prior experience of dance. S/he may not have the same level of body knowledge, vocabulary, muscle-memory and so on when compared to those who have attended regular classes prior to beginning university. The re-evaluation led to a move away from learning outcomes that focused on particular physical goals (balance, co-ordination and so on) to outcomes that are equally demanding but place the onus on the student's individual response, avoiding replication and prescription in favour of a more holistic approach to developing bodily intelligence. Careful goal setting means that skill levels are developed and sustained.

Example of performance project feedback:

One of the strengths was in how you had transferred your own sense of rhythm and timing to the other dancers to find an individual voice in the work. Similarly, your exploration of space showed a pleasing sensitivity. A similar exploration of vocabulary was less evident but your sure sense of the theatrical in terms of form and presentation meant that this was not a major weakness. But in deciding about the vocabulary, did you question the extent to which codified moments could read the same way yet be modified to suit your physicality better?

Useful tip

Find out from the student, right from the start, the exact nature of the student's disability. This needs to be managed sensitively but it is important in order to know the student's current and potential range of motion as well as any information you need in order to judge whether or not the disability will have an impact on how long a student can work. Modifications may need to be made to the time a student needs to warm-up prior to class, to the length of time s/he can work and any cool down activities. It is also useful for knowing whether or not the student will require additional support (e.g. physiotherapy)

Resource challenges:

Every student is different and class sizes can become quite large. Whilst teaching a large group of non-disabled students is manageable for the experienced tutor the differences between one disabled dancer and the next tend to be much greater; there is less common ground. Feedback tends to need to be more individualised. The disabled student may have experienced dance whilst non-disabled, which is very different from a student who has always been disabled so has a very different sense of embodiment and experience of dance. Whilst all students can learn as much from feedback given to another group member as to themselves, applying generic feedback for the disabled student can be more difficult, which is why the LSA is so important. The need to invest more resources and expertise into adapting learning and teaching methods is a challenging prospect for many tutors who might already be trying to manage increasing class sizes and demands on limited resources. Making space for the needs of disabled students needs careful planning.

“[At universities] I know there's a fear of the unknown, I think when I've gone to other auditions I scared people a little bit thinking 'oh god there's a disabled person in my class' – and because dance is so visual I think it really scares people.”

(Zoe, first year student)



“Because I can’t do what everybody else can do, I find it difficult to get inside my own body and not worry about what anyone else is doing.”

(Stephanie, Coventry graduate)

The student experience:

Avoiding seeing the disabled students and non-disabled students as two distinct groups, in which the individual is subsumed, is important but disabled and non-disabled students might well reveal quite surprising variation in their experience of class activities. Many non-disabled students will have experienced class for many years and regard it as a vital part of their working day and a chance to identify, work on and overcome ‘faults’ that are in some way holding them back from achieving more. They are keen to know how their essentially able body can become stronger, fitter and more flexible. They are familiar with the format of class, the etiquette and the way the group functions. Whilst not always comfortable with all aspects of the class experience, familiarity gives them confidence. By contrast, many disabled students have not had the same formative experiences. Those who do enter HE might well have been drawn to dance because dance has been a liberating experience, something that has taken them away from the daily repetition experienced in their other activities. They might well have been dancing with other disabled dancers or with a smaller group with more mixed abilities. Dance was associated with a freer structure with more emphasis on improvisation and imagery as a stimulus. Being perhaps the only disabled student in a large group of predominantly confident non-disabled students can be daunting, particularly if the student perceives her peers as making more progress more quickly so she feels she is struggling to keep up with the rest of the class. Importantly, the experience of what is comfortable and uncomfortable can have a profound impact on how the student experiences class differently. Non-disabled students often welcome mild discomfort (muscle aches, sweating, breathlessness and so on) as a positive sensation; a good indication of progress and hard work. By contrast, disabled students can associate discomfort with negative experiences, perhaps those associated with interventions by healthcare professionals whose role is to aid rehabilitation or to ‘normalise’ the student’s body usage. Dance might have previously provided a release from these and other uncomfortable daily physical experiences so the student might be unwilling to voluntarily submit themselves to a further ‘work out’. This can present more challenges for the class tutor.

“I was pushed to the back quite a lot, but we did a lot of performances so I got quite a bit of performance experience and did a few exams – I’ve got Grade One in ballet, and Grade Five in tap. Then I had quite a long break from it because having a disability I wouldn’t be able to have a career in dance. Then I did CandoCo’s foundation course last year which was just incredible...actually learnt a lot about my own ability and actually thought ‘yeh...I know I can do this now, it was the right time to apply to university’.”

(Zoe, first year student)

Coaching/feedback:

Whilst feedback from the tutor has to be well-considered, involving students in peer feedback has to be managed carefully. Students value feedback and providing the student believes that the feedback is given honestly and respectfully it is welcomed. Group work to establish appropriate language is useful and is most successful when led by or at least directly involves the disabled students.

Useful tip

Always be rigorous about the aim and the point of the exercise/activity. This will ensure that students avoid simply reproducing the visual picture and explore the anatomical basis for the activity. Depending on the student’s ability/disability, adjustments can be made whilst retaining the point of the exercise. For example, explaining the reasons why a plié exercise is important will enable students to find alternative ways to explore warming up the joints in the legs, turn-out and how to increase elasticity. Ensuring this happens enhances teaching practice for all students.

Class management:

The studio is a treasured space for dancers. Care is taken to protect its special qualities; the floor, the heat, air quality. The space is kept clear of hazards. Disabled students might well require others to assist them in class, learning aids are also needed which might appear to clutter the space and make other students anxious about how that may change the learning environment. A visually impaired student might well have a dog who will need to be accommodated somewhere in the studio, having implications for other students who might have allergies or other concerns about the presence of a dog, as well as clear information about how to relate to or approach the dog.

Useful tip

Modifying activities may mean making changes to how students make use of class time. For example, it may be beneficial for some students to participate in some group sessions and spend the other sessions one-to-one with their LSA, or in smaller coaching sessions. This has resource implications but is particularly useful for some students with disabilities who need more focused support.



“What enhances my work as a dancer and as a lecturer is [that] I celebrate difference, and the more I can work with difference, the more my practice and my art form are inspired [by difference].”

(Cecilia Macfarlane, Associate Senior Lecturer, Coventry University)

The wheelchair and its place in class:

The wheelchair is a powerful signifier of disability (Albright, 1997, p 83) and the presence of wheelchairs in class requires some practical exploration so that everyone feels comfortable with how to work alongside wheelchair-users. Work is necessary so that students know how to avoid collisions and how to work in partnership with others; to give and support weight, to work out the speed, direction and mobility of the wheelchair. Whilst support is needed for the non-wheelchair-users so that they can work comfortably in the same space (accepting and respecting the wheelchair) wheelchair-users also need time to work out how to integrate the wheelchairs into their dancing so it becomes an extension of the body and therefore a positive source for discussion and re-evaluation. Students may need time to move beyond simply *having* a wheelchair to *using* the wheelchair in their dancing. Moreover, students might find that they need to work in different wheelchairs depending on the activity. They may work for some of the time in a manual wheelchair and at other times in a power-assisted wheelchair. Their need for mobility might vary according to the specific activity.

“Through being integrated into an everyday class things were being made aware to me that I didn’t even realise were possible every day for four years so you’ve got to grow from that.”

(Lorna Marsh, Coventry graduate)

Useful tip

Students who don’t use wheelchairs benefit from having the opportunity to experience working in a wheelchair.



“Ballet’s quite a good example – even yesterday we were doing soutenu turns and instead of doing the actual turn which is quite disorientating for me because I can’t spot - I’m still trying to work out a way of turning, we’re still trying to work our way through it - but I was doing the footwork without doing the turn so once I get the technique of the footwork – whatever it is – into my body, then I should be able to put the turn in.”

(Zoe, first year student)

Good practice for all:

What might begin as developing good practice for disabled dance students is often acknowledged as good practice for all students. Adapting and translating becomes a useful process for all students and modifications to teaching methods are most often better methods for all. But in making adaptations for the disabled students, attention needs to be given to the non-disabled students who, whilst likely to be in the majority, have to make adjustments too when working alongside and with disabled students. Some students have expressed surprise to see disabled students in their class, unsure about how a disabled student could possibly achieve any measurable level of technical and creative ability. Some will assume that a disabled student is only participating for therapeutic reasons and many will be unsure about how to work with a disabled student; perhaps anxious that they will physically hurt the disabled student or will be insensitive, ‘saying the wrong thing’. Others will shy away from working with disabled students for fear that they will be somehow disadvantaged by the partnership. Conversely, whilst some students might find working in a mixed group difficult to adjust to, others will find that they form partnerships with their disabled peers. Both disabled and non-disabled students then go on to develop careers working in integrated companies or in therapeutic contexts. Some might volunteer for work as a LSA in their final year and after graduation. Establishing a class culture in which openness, mutual respect and care is the norm is necessary.

“For me that’s why dance is so important it’s just another way of communicating with everybody and putting everyone on an equal playing field.”

(Lorna Marsh, Coventry graduate)

Useful tip

Students with disabilities will have useful ideas about taking dance activity out of the studio. There may be other environments where dance can take place and which are empowering for disabled students and provide all students with new ideas about how to source dance material.

Guidelines for studio-based class work

Coventry students are all provided with guidelines to support their learning in studio practice activities and to help them reflect on their own working practice. The guidelines include a list of the students' responsibilities and a series of questions to help them focus on their own approach to the work and how effective it is. The aim is to remind them of the importance of the ongoing development that is needed in these sessions (something that can be challenging within a modular structure) and to remind them of the ethos of valuing difference and individual learning. The guidelines include the following statements:

'It is also important to realize that everyone in your group will come with different prior experiences of dance and different levels of ability and disability'.

'Most of the time you will probably be working on your own but some activities will require you to work with others to assist your own growth and development. These may include partnering work and 'coaching' where you will be asked to observe and then feedback to another student. It is important therefore that you acknowledge your role as an individual learner in class but it is also expected that you will work respectfully with others when required'.

'The class tutor will help you in your learning by challenging you and encouraging you as an individual by providing information and feedback to the whole group in every session and occasional feedback to you individually about your own progress and what to work on. Your tutor will also support you in helping you to learn 'how to learn'. We all learn in different ways and at different speeds. Some unlearning is inevitable and may feel like you are going backwards from time to time in order to move forwards. You will discover which learning style suits you best as you progress through the course'.

'Remember – not receiving individual feedback in class does not mean that you have not been seen and your work has not been acknowledged. Your growth/change as a dancer does not need to depend on the feedback you receive from the teacher, you are very able to listen to your own feedback and use it positively'.

Guidance to support the relationship between the Learning Support Assistant (LSA) and the student

Many disabled students will need learning support in class. At Coventry, the LSA will not only need to work sensitively with the student to provide the appropriate level of intervention but will be required to show appropriate awareness of the other students in class. Whilst academic support is usually provided by a central unit, support for practical dance activity will likely fall to the faculty to sort out. At Coventry, volunteers have come forward from amongst final year students and recent graduates. Having appropriate dance experience is critical but there are few support mechanisms for those who take on this role. What is provided relies on an open and honest dialogue between the student, the tutor and the LSA.

“So description is a key part ‘cause even if I’m right up close to the tutor seeing what they’re doing is quite tricky but Cathy or Tara will actually do whatever the tutor’s doing and I’ll feel, put my hands on them, to see what they’re doing. That’s a big help as well to see how to move because sometimes it’s really hard to describe it so they need to do it sometimes we’ve found. Sometimes I get it straight away and it’s fine. If it’s really complicated then I need to feel what they’re doing or the tutor will do whatever it is and I’ll feel on them where they want me to be, if the verbal description doesn’t work.”

(Zoe, first year student)

Useful tip

It is helpful if all students have the chance at the start of the course to state their needs and concerns so that the students with disabilities have the chance to speak about their disability in a situation that is equal for all.

“So it’s kind of been a ‘learning through doing it’ kind of process since it’s different for every individual that comes, so it’s literally let’s see how it goes and go with it and learn together...because what I’ve come to realise it that they’re learning just as much as I’m learning and as long as we’re both giving and communicating then it’s a together thing. We’re both equally going there together it’s not you do this or I do that but we meet in the middle.”

(Tara, LSA)

One of the outcomes of the first phase of research was the development of a more comprehensive set of guidelines to support the LSA and her/his relationship with the student. Through discussion with the LSAs, the students and with feedback from external experts, this developed into a document that has been adopted for all students who work with an LSA. Entitled *The LSA & Student Relationship; Notes towards creating a contract of agreement* (see appendix A) the document is in two parts. Part 1 outlines the principles that underpin the relationship together with the roles and responsibilities of all those involved; the Studio Practice link tutor (often the module leader), the class tutors, the LSA and the student. Part 2 provides guidance notes, discussion points and a ‘contract’ of agreement that is completed and signed-off by both the student and LSA, and which is then also signed by the link tutor. This ensures that the process is owned by the student and LSA working in partnership, with support, oversight but in most cases minimal intervention by the tutor. Key to the process is the regular meetings that take place between the student, staff and LSA at the start of the course and regularly throughout to discuss the student’s needs. Feedback suggests that this is providing a useful and transparent resource for all those involved.



Reflections of Tara Rutter, Learning Support Assistant

“After every term we need to reflect and look back on what needs changing, what didn’t work, or let’s try this now, so it keeps evolving.”

“If one class particularly was not flowing very well, or not working very well, we’ll sit down and talk about it afterwards and see what didn’t work.”

“Then with the tutors who lead particular studio sessions, it’s mainly at the beginning of term with the new exercises, or new phrases, where, say, this is focussing on the pelvis, or skull... then I’ll absorb that and try and translate it. But towards the end of term we know the exercises so well we’ll be tweaking bits of technique and extending the student, saying this is what this phrase is about quality-wise.”

“Communication is the key thing.”

“...as for the students it’s like we’re friends, we’re work colleagues - it’s a very strange mixture but it kind of works to enable the level of trust required. It’s so important to get that in studio time because there’s a feeling with the [disabled] student sometimes that they’re in the spotlight working with someone separate, and sometimes in the class it will be separate so that we can get them [the disabled student] to think about this one element, to get them to feel it’s OK, this is your training, it’s fine. It’s quite an intense sort of relationship – it’s supportive as well as facilitating, it has to be caring and understanding.”

“There have been tensions and upsets, as with any student in class. So it’s about being sensitive to the student’s needs on any particular day. It’s about discovering it together, sometimes a student will say, ‘gosh, if you hadn’t had said that, or done that, I don’t think that would have clicked for me’. And other times it just doesn’t happen, it’s hard to explain.”

“The LSA status is neither staff nor student, it’s an in-between role, so things like staff cards to access rooms, if the student wants to meet in the library, or for me and Cathy to meet up privately or to chat over coffee etc. can be a problem.”

“It’s different for each individual student so we have to assess the material, assess what the phrase or exercise is trying to achieve. Then assess how the student is feeling that day and trying to bring it all together and just try and see what works.”

“...is in a wheelchair and has cerebral palsy so her muscles will weaken very easily but if she’s feeling really strong that day she’ll be like ‘OK, let’s get out of the chair, let’s get on the floor’ and for a whole exercise which was about core stability we’d roll from side to side using the core in the way that she wanted to that day, to her body. So it might mean completely getting rid of the exercise because maybe imitating an arm or leg doesn’t do what the exercise is aiming for, so we’ll completely make something else up together.”

“I find when I’m observing, that she’s worried that she’s not in time with everyone or that she’s doing something completely different and then she’ll whiz through things and miss out what is supposed to be happening. So...let’s just take it right back, don’t think about anyone else, think about yourself, think where your feet are...when does it speed up...that’s when she loses her balance, loses her placing, and her confidence gets knocked, because balancing is a very sensitive thing, she finds it very difficult, so it upsets her to be off-balance.”

“I know it sounds like small things but when we’re working with first years, we’re working with placement and feeling secure...in second/third year, we’re working with performance.”

“...now we’re working with shoulder to shoulder running next to each other so she knows I’m there, and we’re now so in-tune with each other she can almost sense that I’m with her so she stays with me...she’s got the direction of me...knowing where to go.”

“The job has inspired me...and inspired projects like Coventry Moves, a community dance group, an integrated and intergenerational group, so the skills we’re learning from this job we are feeding into the company and it’s inspiring us all the time.”

“Also, going over techniques repeatedly is making you really know it in your own body, so it’s interesting to notice your own movement, so it is feeding my own practice...I couldn’t have done Community Moves without what I’ve done these past two years, meeting the people I’ve met.”

“What’s helped me this last year is really slowing down and opening up to what the possibilities are, and thinking ‘outside the box’ as to how we can solve the puzzles, because there’s puzzles all the time. Not rushing and not thinking it’s complicated. It’s actually really simple, or it’s one word or one image that can unfold so much in the student. You only get that with slowing down and thinking what would really help this student right now, what will help him/her with their dance...but keeping it true to themselves, not trying to force anything onto them.”

“I remember in Lorna’s second year apologising to her, I said, ‘I’m sorry, Lorna, I’m using you as a guinea pig again’, because I was on a steep learning curve, and she said, ‘I’ve been a guinea pig all my life, and I’ll probably be so for ever.’”

(Cecilia Macfarlane, Associate Senior Lecturer)

The actions outlined above have taken some time to properly embed them within the course and are under constant review and revision. Together they have brought about the following enhancements:

- more transparent support for individual students and their learning through a range of mechanisms (role models, buddies, mentors and self-directed study, LSAs, entry to exit support through induction, career preparation and transition to work)
- a more coherent curriculum (philosophy, pedagogy and assessment)
- enhanced links between studio practice and other areas of the curriculum to debate issues around the politics of difference, to promote questioning and open dialogue
- more confident students and staff.

“After four years here I’ve learnt to look at myself more clearly and now, yes, I am a dancer, and I can do what I want to do.”

(Stephanie, Coventry graduate)

“I’m registered blind but I still call myself partially sighted ‘cause that’s how I’ve always called myself [laugh] – the PC stuff is always changing what you call yourself...I’m hoping I’ve surprised a lot of people while I’ve been here how much my learning curve has progressed this year, not to blow my own trumpet, but I’ve done so much better than I’d thought I’d do in my first year, but that’s thanks to my hard work, the support of the tutors and the LSAs...”

“It’s very much about an open communication, it’s either a mix of verbal communication of whatever the tutor’s doing at the front and hands-on work – so positioning me, both detailed description of how and where I need to be in the space, teaching me maybe at the side the phrases, looking quite closely at my technique and getting me to think, which I am doing now, to think like a dancer and to think about how the body moves, not just doing something - lifting an arm for the sake of it, but why it moves and how it moves which I’ve never had before because they really concentrate on that as it’s quite an important thing because you need to know how your body moves before you can move it really...”

“...don’t be frightened of anyone with a disability because if they’ve got the passion, the motivation like their other dance students then that’s half the battle ‘cause it’s a tough course. Sometimes I feel I’ve worked a little bit harder than anybody else (sounds awful doesn’t it) - but your disabled students might work harder to get the same results. Don’t know if I should say that really – because the drive is there, the ambition is there and because, I suppose, I’ve felt I’ve had to prove to myself, and to other students and tutors that I deserve to be here. You know, it’s not been like, ‘oh, we feel sorry for her so we’ve let her in because she’s got a disability, you know, to tick the boxes’, I know that I do deserve to be here.”

(Zoe, first year student)

PART 2: The Conferences

Dance & Disability: Strategies for Inclusion in Higher Education and Beyond

The first conference took place in March 2007; *Dance & Disability: Strategies for Inclusion in Higher Education and Beyond* (see appendix C for conference programme). Co-sponsored by the Centre for Media Arts and Performance (CeMAP) at Coventry University, SCODHE and Independent Dance, the conference focused on networking and brought together a large number of disabled dance practitioners, teachers, students, recent graduates and representatives of companies and organizations to debate the issues. A great deal of interest was generated but surprisingly few tutors attended from the HE sector. The day was lively and informative, providing space for delegates to debate some of the issues around disabled students entering HE, effective learning and the move into the profession. It was an excellent opportunity for networking and allowed delegates space to share anxieties and the chance to find out how to get further support and rethink working methods.

The day began with an introduction to set the context for the conference by both Sarah Whatley and Gill Clarke (Co-Director Independent Dance) followed by a keynote presentation by Caroline Bowditch, Performance Artist and Choreographer. Her experiences provided advice and information about the challenges and opportunities available to disabled dance artists.

The next session combined practical activity and discussion, led by Stine Nilsen and Charlotte Darbyshire (both independent artists with considerable experience of inclusive dance practices) and which allowed delegates to find out more about their approaches to delivering dance to integrated groups.

Since 2004, Independent Dance has supported Stine in her investigation into inclusive approaches to teaching, commissioning a paper from Stine and Charlotte. Stine's research into inclusive technique class formed the basis for her MA in Professional Practice (Integrated Dance Practice), Middlesex University, 2005. In 2007, Stine was appointed Co-Artistic Director of CandoCo Dance Company. See also: www.independentdance.co.uk/what/exchanges/inclusive-practice.htm

The morning concluded with a series of break-out groups to debate current issues and questions:

- What are the implications for pedagogical practice?
- What are the challenges: practical, conception, institutional?
- Meeting expectations: tutors, learners, the profession.

The groups were prompted to discuss a particular question or theme although the discussion widened to consider broader issues. Comments and observations from delegates are summarised as follows:

Inclusion – what are the challenges?

Music for deaf or hearing-impaired students

- External music/rhythm can be a problem; means they just copy who's next to them and result is a waste of time in terms of learning process
- Important to also focus on inner rhythm
- Possible to use sub-base unit in performance/class in order to feel vibrations
- Use balloons; some people had already explored this when using film in their project, so trying to communicate a visual medium to a non-visual audience, using the sub base unit as a way of communicating
- Use no music and focus on inner rhythm as a way to go deeper in own dancing
- Music is often the way in to accessing dance, but can also be accessed via breath and attention to the phrasing of the movement sequence
- Rambert Dance Company; in last performance used signer to describe the music.

Training/access to courses

- Audition process; all delegates available as sounding board, to help audition process for institutions
- Inspiration by professional companies drives students to want to train
- Different roles of training; not everyone wants a qualification but all want good quality training at whatever level the student is
- Want to be taught by teachers with disabilities; role models
- Want to try material in chairs for both disabled and non-disabled students
- Studio spaces should vary; use hot water pools to access more physical potential, have more movement aids in space to make use of, for example tables, chairs, soft blocks
- Experiencing motion in the pool will help transfer knowledge from disabled teacher to non-disabled students by 'knowing what it feels like'.

Access to further training after course finished

- What happens after degree course; workshops, creative/choreographic projects, teacher training in order to teach others.

Adaptations

- Consider teaching environment – not always the studio
- Teaching currently happens from a non-disabled perspective; what do disabled people need, how do we need to move, warm up etc?
- Translation; what exactly does that mean? Relates to broad issues of teaching, the student being encouraged to take an active role as translator
- But translation is what we all are doing all the time, can't do any more, responsibility with teacher as well.



Meeting Expectations: tutors, learners, the profession

Tutors

- Are teachers trained for inclusive education – are they sufficiently aware?
- The education system needs to be looked at as well; if more dance is implemented at a younger level we'll see disabled dancers coming through so the steps are being made because of inclusive education at earlier stages
- Should be more dance in schools on an ongoing basis rather than it only being project-basis
- There are many young people who want to learn dance in schools so this should be done by trained dancers/teachers rather than PE teachers or drama teachers
- Need to have a push at the early age, such as in schools to ensure progression from school, to college and to university
- There's almost too much focus on the teachers and so why can't the student adapt it themselves?
- Often teachers adapt instinctively and the best teachers always empower their students
- We need more disabled teachers instead of non-disabled teachers
- Co-teaching in partnership might be the way forward so both disabled and non-disabled teachers working to deliver and feedback each other. We are then creating more role models for the future.

Learners

- Access into professional training is really important
- Often I find there's excuses about not having any disabled students coming into the courses – do we as disabled people fit in?
- Needs to be funding for disabled practitioners to come into schools
- Could we have or develop classes for young disabled people like there are for boys?
- When classes are set up, disabled people don't come
- A lot of young disabled people miss out on opportunities because of lack of knowledge, vision, training
- This might be about a learned defensiveness on the part of the parents (at times) because they want to protect their children. This has been due to the positions of disappointments their children have been put in
- There are a lot of gate-keepers to the decision-makers so parents are not always informed about opportunities.

The Profession

- Some employment environments have changed and we don't see the uniformity as much, take some West End musicals such as 'Lion King' where we see difference
- Compared with the sports industry, dance doesn't have much sponsorship that makes a difference at grassroots level and then feeds back into the industry
- The profession seems short-lived for dancers
- There are now more work opportunities for disabled artists than ever before but there needs to be good career advice and advice for parents
- There's an example of a disabled dancer in Stop Gap who has an amazing technique and has had no formal training.

Over lunch, delegates were able to view some student work in progress and hear about Rachel Bradbear's MA research into inclusive dance practices. Rachel outlined some of the challenges as well as the practical and conceptual issues that she had identified. Her findings offered helpful observations and asked questions that opened up discussion, particularly around the issue of adapting and translating material in the studio.

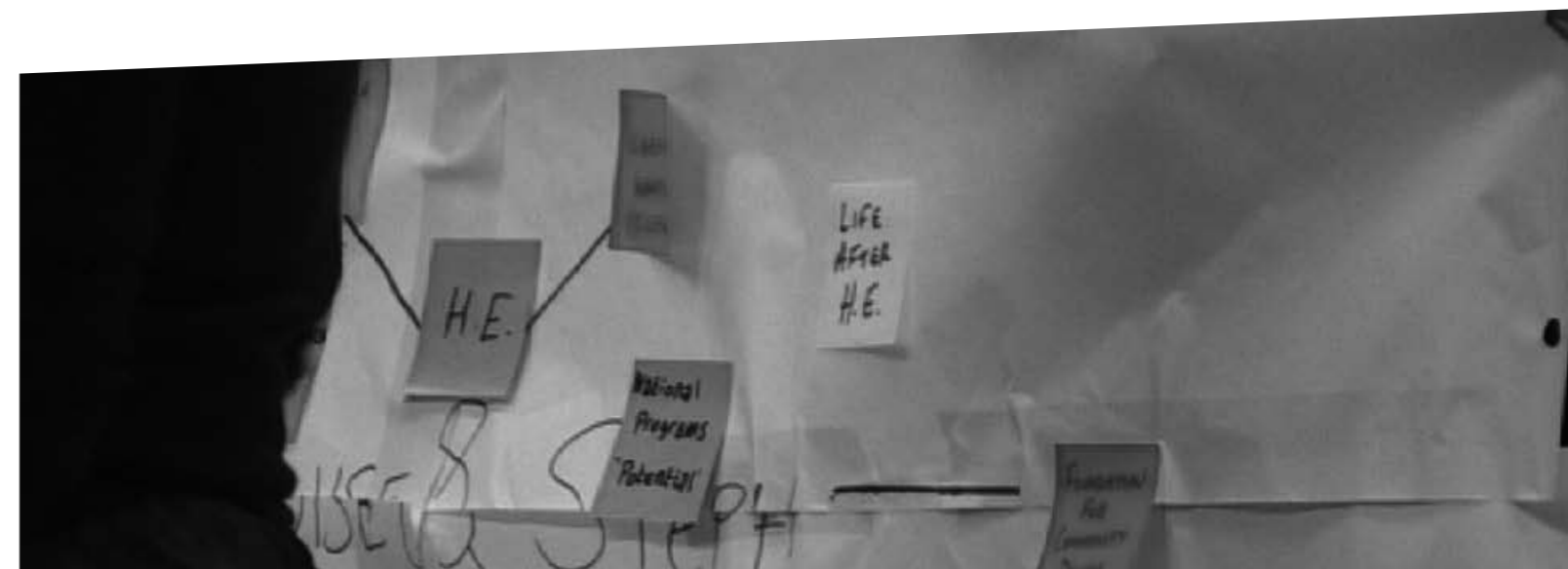
The afternoon began with a performance by students on the CandoCo Foundation Course followed by a discussion with the students and with Kirstie Richardson (Course Tutor: Improvisation and Performance Studies) and Susie Cox (Course Director).

Over tea, Jo Verrent provided an update on the widening participation programme being run by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in relation to the Dance and Drama Awards (DaDA). Jo set out how since 2002, DaDA has undertaken a number of initiatives to strengthen and develop inclusive practice within DaDA providers. Whilst the DaDA scheme is not part of higher education, many students achieve HE qualifications when attending a vocational school.

The last session of the day was led by Louise Katerega who provided a comprehensive overview of the many projects that she has been involved in over recent years as an independent artist. She was joined by artist collaborators and students; Tom Clark, Tom St Louis, Angus McKenzie Davie, Andy Hamer and Stephanie Holt, all of whom shared some of their experiences of working with Louise.

A plenary session brought everyone back together to share reflections on the day and to discuss some of the core issues:

- Opportunities for disabled dancers to access HE are limited by a lack of clarity about what support is available for the student, the course requirements and the support needed for tutors to be able to modify teaching and assessment methods
- Mentoring opportunities for disabled artists are limited
- There are few opportunities for disabled dance artists to work with non-disabled artists in a directorial or choreographic role; the relationship is more usually the other way around - disabled artists can open-up new possibilities for creating work in terms of providing new ways to source and site dance material
- Specialised training opportunities are very limited; integration is challenging when there are so few disabled students entering HE; providing training opportunities as entry to HE would be welcomed.



The Domino Effect

Presented by Caroline Bowditch (Independent Dance Artist)

I am a performing artist and choreographer interested in working in non-traditional dance locations with bodies that don't generally fit the dance mould. If I make work with non-disabled dancers I attempt to provide stimulus that makes their bodies somehow move differently than how they move usually, and puts them in locations which I physically can't get to. I am interested in bringing disabled bodies together and seeing what happens. I want to explore things which haven't been done before e.g. exclusively disabled dancers dancing work created by a disabled choreographer. I want to continue to create quality work that makes people think and feel.

Since arriving in the UK in July 2002, knowing no one but the man I was moving to marry and a few of his friends, my life has involved searching for the beginning of a series of domino snakes. There are three main dominoes that have begun very different journeys that I want to talk about today.

Just to give you some background, I had a successful career going in Australia as a Genetic Counsellor and an Arts Training Coordinator. In my spare time and for my total indulgence I danced. I had studied performing arts at Uni in the early 1990's but dance was never the subject that really fired me up. I was a musician, a singer and had been for years. Oh, I'd always danced – on our dining room table as a child pretending I was Olivia Newton John in Grease and in night clubs as a student pretending I was sober; but I would never have called myself a dancer as such.

I was drawn into dance in 1996 when CandoCo announced they were coming to Australia. Arts Access, a Melbourne based professional arts organisation, decided to bring together a group of disabled people who had performance backgrounds to be part of a 12 week project called **Movable Dance** which aimed to teach us the basics of Contact Improvisation so that we could participate valuably in the Master classes and workshops that CandoCo were going to be running during their tour. About 8 of us turned up consistently throughout the 12 weeks and following the departure of CandoCo we decided we wanted to keep meeting, so we did and Weave Movement Theatre emerged.

Weave met for 1 x 2½ hour session every week. We all pitched in to pay for the hire of the space, performed occasionally at disability related conferences and dreamt of one day being paid for what we were doing. I left Weave just before leaving Australia. After 6 years they had just received \$8000 Aus (about £2750) from AusDance to cover the research, develop and production of 4 performances and pay 8 performers!

On arriving in Newcastle my passion for dance was still very much alive and something I wanted to keep going. I researched what might be available and just as I suspected not much appeared. I had rung the Dance Development agency for the North East, Dance City several times but had regularly been informed that the building wasn't wheelchair accessible and that they didn't really know what was available 'for someone like me'. I realised that dance had become a really important part of my life so I decided to pursue this a little bit further so I met with the **Artistic Director of Dance City, Janet Archer, my first key domino**. Based on my background, Janet advised me to become a member of Dance Connect. Dance Connect provides support and advice to professional dancers, which I felt I was far from being! When

I met with the coordinators of Dance Connect and they asked me what I wanted to achieve within the next two years I said 'I want to dance and if I have to establish an inclusive dance company in the North East to do it I will!' In February 2004 I received a mentorship from Dance Connect which brought 3 dancers from CandoCo to Newcastle to work with me for a week. More importantly it drew other dancers with an interest in inclusive work to me and the FATHoM Project came into being at the end of that week. So there is now an inclusive dance company in the North East. In the last 2 years we have received over £20,000 to develop ourselves as a company and our work. The open workshop day that was held as part of this week also brought me in contact with local choreographer, Fiona Wright. Fiona invited me to do some movement research with her company called girl jonah. This research has led to me performing as part of the company in Glasgow and Newcastle. We received more funding to continue our work together, were performed at British Dance Edition in Leeds in February 2006 and as a different result are going to perform in London this weekend as part of the UK's biggest dance festival Dance Umbrella.

While the Newcastle scene was bubbling away, I got an invitation to facilitate some research and development sessions with Ludus Dance. I spent 2 ½ days with the company dancers and whilst it wasn't my best work and I now wish I could do it all again, what it did lead me to was my **second key domino, Deb Barnard who was their Artistic Director at the time**. Aside from Deb asking me some pertinent questions relevant to my own development, she talked to me about joining the board of the **Foundation for Community Dance (FCD)**. Despite my bias I would have to say that this organisation is one of the jewels in the arts communities crown in this country. The introduction of the Potential Program and its monthly e-bulletin opened doors for me all over the country! Suddenly there was a co-ordinated approach to distributing information and opportunities across the country that I had so wanted when I arrived. I joined the board of FCD in January this year, participated in several of the workshops that they have run and presented at their networking day in Birmingham. Unbeknown to me in that workshop sat the **Artistic Director of East London Dance (ELD), Kiki Gale**. I knew that ELD were gearing up to run a program called Cultural Shift, to develop disabled dancers as choreographers, and I wanted to be one of them. I expressed my strong interest to Kiki that day, sent her my CV when I got home, sent weekly emails just to confirm my on-going interest and eagerly awaited the release of the application form. I auditioned, was selected and completed Cultural Shift. I choreographed my first piece that was premiered at Stratford Circus on 24th November as part of the Xposure Festival. Later that evening, in amongst people saying lots of nice things about the work, I was introduced to the Artistic Director for Greenwich and Docklands Festivals. I thought he was nice enough at the time but when, 6 months later, he commissioned me to make a site specific piece in Trafalgar Square as part of the Liberty Festival I liked him even more. I worked with an artistic team of 5, had 2 other performers, a VJ and a musician who composed the music specifically for the piece. I had a real budget – I even had a costume designer!

It is the biggest project I have done to date with the biggest audience – there were probably about 1000 people there and we were in amongst them. We had incredibly tight timelines but somehow we did it. I have learnt huge amounts from that project and can't wait to do it again.

My third, very important and possibly most challenging, key domino is

Janet Smith, Artistic Director of Scottish Dance Theatre. I was one of 4 disabled dancers that worked with the company members of Scottish Dance Theatre in April this year. The research process was led by Adam Benjamin and pushed the limits of my physicality and my artistic values. I was being asked to do things that I had never done before. I was way out of my comfort zone and the clarity that came for me as an artist about what exactly this dance stuff meant to me and where I wanted to take it emerged. I had a real feeling that I was playing with the 'big boys', I had to shift it up several gears to stay in the picture and had to really search deep to find out if this was what I wanted. The resounding idea that kept swirling in my head was that of quality – I only want to produce quality work and I only want to be part of quality work BUT that implies that I have to bring a certain quality myself and this value is often what I feel is missing from inclusive work. By the end of the week Janet was asking 'Did I want to tour with them in 2007 if they were able to secure funding?' Did I? After some thinking I said yes of course.

Janet also suggested that week that I apply to do the Dancer's Project at The Place in London. It's a polishing process for professional dancers – there's that word again.

Can I have a show of hands of how many people here consider themselves professional artists?

How many people feel that other people consider them professional artists?

O.K.

Anyway, I applied to do the Dancer's Project, I auditioned and I got in – this time I'm the only disabled dancer out of 20. The cynical side of me said the only reason I got in was because of my disability. I think about this experience a bit like selling my soul to the devil. Maybe I only got picked because I was disabled but this week allowed me to find what was unique about my movement quality, explore my own aesthetic, find out what appeals to me when viewing or creating dance. I may have given 19 dancers an experience that they had never had before, I may have sold my soul to the devil but it was a very conscious sale and it was done on my terms.

Well, SDT did get the money and have invited me to tour with them next year so it's on the road I go for 5 months so watch this space we might just turn up in the theatre near you!

The main lessons I've learnt in the last 4 years are:

- Target and select your dominoes as much as you can
 - Be informed and aware
 - Have a strategy or a plan
 - Be persistent but not annoying
 - Be assertive but not aggressive
- Take a risk
 - Sell your soul to the devil on your terms!
 - Be prepared to go outside your comfort zone
- Ask questions of yourself and others!
 - Be clear about what you want and why
 - Know your values and needs as an artist
- From little things big things grow
- Be careful what you wish for...you might just get it!
 - If you can't find it, create it – there are people and ££ out there to help you

And finally, start as many domino snakes as you can because you never know where they may lead you. Be prepared to search and travel to find them because I can guarantee no domino, apart from one that you ring up for, is going to come knocking on your door.

Thanks for listening.



Strategies for inclusion and adapting dance technique programmes for disabled students studying at Middlesex University

Presented by Rachel Bradbear (MA student and tutor: Middlesex University)

This was a one-year experimental case study research project in a university setting.

Reasons for this research

I could see that the world was changing into a more integrated society and I was looking at my own practice as a dance technique teacher and community dance artist. One of my areas of expertise and interest is the work of Doris Humphrey which I teach both technique and reconstruct some of her early choreographic works. Within the technique class the Year 1 undergraduates are able to study phrases from Humphrey's 1938 Passacaglia & Fugue in C Minor. It means students get to sense the connection of the choreographers work and to experience ensemble work. Humphrey's work is valuable and this particular piece was created as a response to the looming World War II. It's a grand architectural piece where the ensemble movements echo the main duets.

Questions kept coming up for me as an inclusive practitioner such as 'how can I successfully reconstruct for dancers with mobility aids such as manual wheelchairs?' 'How can I translate inclusive practise to both a technique class and a piece of repertoire for performers who are wheelchair-users?' 'Will the meaning of a piece of repertoire change?' 'How will it change and will it loose its authenticity and qualities?' I was particularly interested in finding out how to work with dancers who use manual wheelchairs

Aims & objectives

- To research issues related to disability and dance technique through case study research
- To attend conferences on disability arts and any related courses together with a literature review
- To experiment within my practice
- To implement strategic changes in response to the research
- To adapt movement phrases, technique and repertoire material so that a wheelchair-user could fully participate and access 100% of the classes
- To reconstruct sections of Doris Humphrey's Passacaglia
- To create an inclusive environment that meant students could learn at a progressive pace
- To pilot resources to support learning
- To search for information about the health and well being of the wheelchair dancers during training.

Methods

This research involved one male student, who is a full time manual wheelchair-user with 15 years dance experience. His main areas of dance were creative dance classes, improvisation, community dance projects and an HND Performing Arts in the Community course. The case study participant had an acquired spinal cord injury (SCI) fifteen years ago, with the level of lesion below L5.

A focus group was created which included three year 2 Middlesex University students with prior knowledge and experience of the Humphrey year 1 material. Wheelchair skills were taught to the 3 focus group students prior to the first technique class, by the full time wheelchair-user (case study). Wheelchair skills where identified and categorised.

The technique & repertoire research took place in a dance class setting of 3 x one and a half hours Humphrey based technique classes over two semesters joining 24 non-disabled year 1 students. Two 2 hours sessions per semester was organised for the focus group, case study participant and researcher to feedback and discuss issues arising, solutions and reconstruction experimentation.

The researcher had allocated time of between 1.5 and 2 hours in the studio to learn and practice wheelchair skills, adapt movement material and repertoire, prior to each class.

Conferences, courses and reading organised to support the research and the researcher started an MSc Dance Science master's programme during the research period.

Short 15/30mins individual sessions with the case study, and year 1 students with qualitative discussions about the classes that week and ongoing progression.

Results

Adaptation of all technique material taught to year 1 students within this particular class was completed. A short version of Passacaglia was reconstructed and performed with costumes in May 2005.

Communication was changed to include vocabulary relating to everyone's body or use of lower body. Structure of class stayed fundamentally the same, with centre work, centre travelling phrases and diagonal travelling being taught each session. The classes progressed over two semesters. Additional teaching methods were adopted to help support student learning for wheelchair-users, ie through demonstration, differentiation of timing, direction and manoeuvring of the wheelchair for technique phrases and repertoire. Wheelchair skills were further defined and developed for incorporation into the Humphrey principles and material.

Class structure incorporated cluster groups to aid peer learning strategies. Use of flip chart was utilised at points in session to engage preferred learning styles where necessary. Parts of the dance technique class were filmed. These were then edited and developed into a pilot DVD resource.

Discussion

The case study participant found he was able to access equal information about this specific technique and repertoire. By engaging a focus group, the researcher was able to provide a group of 'peers' for the case study to engage work with during class and after classes. Issues that arose were discussed and where possible resolved. During diagonal phrases across the floor for example, the accompanist slowed the pace as the wheelchair-users had to negotiate propulsion, turns, tilts as well and arm gesture and if the music was a different tempo the phrase was more achievable in the first instance. Different tempo was used as the term progressed. Non-disabled counterparts participated in both tempos if they happened to be in the same group as wheelchair dancers. Preparing the adaptations before classes meant that the wheelchair-user did not have to adapt the work himself.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

As a case study research this work is limited to one point of view. This work does provide an in depth account of the phenomenons on which to draw upon for future research and can be generalised to the same population. At the moment this work is being defined against the 'norm' of non-disabled dance technique training. This might develop and change with interest amongst younger disabled population of dancers coming through given that equality of opportunity in the dance education and training profession is progressing.

The health and well being of the disabled dancer is in its infancy with no previous data or papers found relating to the dance population on injury rates, sites and frequency in which to refer to. This is vital if the doors are now opening to professional and vocational training for all talented individuals. What stresses are placed on a dancer with a disability in class, rehearsals and performances? Is it the same or similar as their non-disabled counterparts? More research in this area is welcomed in order to develop healthy dance artists for the future. Far more research has been achieved in sports science and medicine and we may have to look here as a starting point to inform and educate the dance world.



CandoCo Foundation Course in Dance for Disabled Students

Presented by Susie Cox (Foundation Course Director) and Kirstie Richardson (Foundation Course Tutor; Improvisation and Performance Studies)

7 Foundation Course students (current intake)

Opening:

Students performed *On the Move*, a short piece that they had created during the Autumn term with Dance Support Specialist, Christian Form. They then went on to introduce themselves and where they hope to further their studies in dance after graduating from the Foundation Course (FC).

Kirstie:

I would like to start with the application process to higher education courses and give a brief overview of some of the experiences that the FC students have encountered.

1. Prospectus & Application Form Format

The first point to mention is the format in which the application form itself is offered. For students who are blind or partially sighted, although alternatives are available, it is often only mentioned in very small text somewhere in the prospectus.

This was highlighted for us when a visually impaired student had missed the deadline for her application because another student had accidentally told her the post-graduate deadline. Even though she should have perhaps phoned admissions herself, it brings to our attention the minor hurdles which a student with disability has to overcome, and the knock on effect they can have, namely panic, and stress. In light of this, prospectuses should have information clearly identified on an opening page in large font and to also be available in brail and audio formats.

2. Dress Code

Another potential problem that has arisen is that of dress code for auditions. One of our students decided not to go for an audition at one of her universities of choice simply because of the stipulated dress code – a black leotard and tights. More appropriate language such as ‘suitable dance wear’ could have alleviated this dilemma immediately.

3. Last-minute requests

Finally, a student experienced a last-minute request from one university: with just one week's notice she was asked to supply a video of work. Further more, nothing was on the application form to indicate that this would be required, it only transpired during a phone call about something else entirely.

For our students, nothing is last minute. Everything is carefully planned and organized.

Susie:

Even if the procedures that Kirstie outlined were in place, as mentioned, everything is carefully planned: the key thing is to acknowledge the time required:

- Time to arrange for someone to assist in reading, writing or explaining a document
- Time to book an accessible studio to rehearse in for ‘that video’
- Time to co-ordinate getting to/from the studio and booking a PA
- Making sure your dancers have enough time to arrange for a PA and travel in order to get to the rehearsal for the piece you need recorded and in the post tomorrow!

Time is money, people, and when under pressure, stressful for students and increased workload for staff in supporting the needs of the students.

The FC has a very dedicated pool of staff that goes out of their way to ensure that each student is offered the best opportunity they deserve. For example, in the case of the student who did not get her application to a college on time as the closing date was unclear, a member of staff went to the college to explain the situation. We have a good relationship with this particular college, and as a result they looked upon the case generously. As Director of the course, I feel a little uncomfortable with this scenario: would the outcome have been the same if it were another college? Should we be made an ‘exception’? But we are learning, and strategies will be put in place to ensure that it will not occur again.

In light of the points we have raised, what the FC needs to consider – and the institutions to which students apply – is how to best make this application time as stress free and as uncomplicated as possible. Some suggestions may be:

- The FC to timetable more tutorials that focus on completing application forms... but as the course currently exists, there is very little spare time available
- For universities to run application workshops
- For the students to be more pro-active; but the difficulty here is that the course is only a year-long and they have enough on their plate to manage. It should also be highlighted that currently many of the students have very little previous dance experience. Once on the FC, they have a lot of information to grasp over a short period of time, and cannot start choosing and applying for courses when they are not entirely sure what area of dance they want to look into further. In time, as disabled students have greater access to regular dance classes at a pre-vocational level, they will enter the FC with a wider sense of the range of possibilities that are on offer at HE level or in a career in dance.

Reflecting on what we have shared with you, and drawing on your thoughts and experiences, we would like to put two questions forward for group discussion:

1. How much is the onus on the students when applying to a college in having their needs catered for?
2. At what point does the university take on responsibility of the needs of the students – is it at the first enquiry made by the students? Once the application form is sent in? At the audition, or later - the first day of term?

Disability and the Dance and Drama Awards (DaDA)

Presented by Jo Verrent (freelance adviser to the Dance and Drama Awards scheme on disability issues)

Background

DaDA provides scholarships to enable talented students to gain training in dance, drama and stage management at a small number of private schools and colleges in England. Although DaDA sits within the FE sector and not the HE sector, a number of DaDA providers also provide degree level programmes. Since the development of the Dance and Drama Awards in 1999, there has been a need to ensure the scheme is responsive to other key social objectives related to widening participation and raising aspiration.

Initial statistics

The Centre for Education Development Appraisal and Research (CEDAR) at the University of Warwick have been engaged in an extended evaluation of the awards since January 2000. In their initial research it was found that the self reporting statistics on disability were very low (1.5%), and that dyslexia was the only stated impairment of students. In relation to disability, research in 2002/3 found that disabled students with a number of other impairments were present, but hidden, and that inclusive practices varied widely from provider to provider.

First attempts to push for change

Following this research, DfES funded the creation of two bespoke elements – a guidance publication on access and dance and drama training and a disability equality training day for D&DA providers, which was delivered at each school via a team of disabled trainers all of whom have direct performance experience.

An opportunity was also created for disability-specific companies to tender to deliver training opportunities for those students unable to yet study at the schools (primarily due to the inaccessibility of the schools and their teaching methodologies). Only one of the three projects funded as flexible provision options focused on dance: CandoCo's Foundation course (a one year full time dance course for all disabled people).

Of the flexible provision options, the CEDAR final evaluation report commented: "This work is of international significance and represents the commitment of the scheme to creating a more equitable and representative cohort of performers through its investment in the training market."

The results

CEDAR's most recent report includes statistics from providers (2005/6) showing that overall, 7.8% of the current dance students claimed a long-term illness or disability. Compared to the original percentage of disabled students within the DaDA awards (1.5%) this is a significant increase, although compared to the percentage of disabled people within the population as a whole (15-20%), is it less so.

A disability access review of providers, which took place from April – July 2006, looked at where practice has developed within providers since the initial review.

It found that overall; both the attitude towards the concept of the inclusion of disabled people and the practice within the schools has significantly improved although there are still a small number of providers who are less enthusiastic about inclusion. In some areas, improvements have been less pronounced, for example, in marketing; and there is a wide disparity in relation to monitoring and quantifying inclusion with many schools having not developed action plans or other written approaches. Poor physical access remains a barrier at many schools, although some schools have worked hard to improve this.

The reported range of disabled people present within the schools is widening, although a high percentage of this is through improving monitoring systems rather than attracting new disabled people to the scheme. On the whole, those with less visible impairments appear to be able to be easily incorporated into the teaching practices within the schools. Those with more visible impairments, more significant learning needs and greater physical access requirements are still excluded.

What is happening now?

The LSC is clear that its priority has to be developing the providers and their practice, which is understandable given their budgetary constraints. DaDA is a small bespoke scheme and while the LSC is seeking to widen participation to underrepresented groups, it can not solve all the problems of access in the performing arts training. This means there are still a wide range of talented disabled people who could come forward but who would not be able to access training within the schools and so there is a question of ownership around the responsibility for high quality training for disabled people in the performing arts that needs to be asked and answered.

The LSC will therefore move from funding the flexible provision options in their current form, to instead fund a range of provider-led widening participation elements which include joint projects with the 3 flexible provision providers. This will potentially increase the number of disabled people who are able to access the DADA schools.

In 2007/8, as part of their widening participation programme, the LSC are funding dedicated diversity elements at some of their dance providers which include Cambridge Performing Arts at Bodywork, Northern Ballet School, Mountview Academy, Urdang Academy, Bird College and Laine Theatre Arts.

As part of the widening participation programme, the LSC intends to support the DaDA providers and their projects by making available to them support from a specialist disability advisor. And the LSC has also been providing resource, again in the shape of a specialist advisor, to work with the three original flexible provision projects to help them access other funding streams.

In addition, LSC is thinking of introducing the Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) in 2007/08 for all providers. Disability access is not, and should not become, a 'numbers game', therefore the EDIMs measure quality and not only quantity. The EDIMs state minimum criteria for various categories such as marketing, teaching practice and so on, in relation to provider's inclusive practice. Following self assessment (and independent verification), providers can be determined as working at an exemplary, experienced or emerging level in relation to equality and diversity. Individual providers can then be encouraged to aim, within a three-year period, to move into the category above. Those working at an exemplary level could be used to share their practice in this regard with other schools.

JOINING THE JIGSAW: The Notion of the 'Interdependent' Dance Artist

Presented by Louise Katerega (Independent Dance Artist)

Louise Katerega and colleagues re-trace their criss-crossing partnership paths from higher education to professional collaboration – recently culminating in their integrated 2006 Place Prize semi-final work *A State of Becoming* and the ongoing Green Coffee Group (a free, quarterly, low maintenance, high quality, artist-led workshop supported by East London Dance).

They hope their interweaving stories offer some positive solutions and joined up thinking for students, dancers, educators, venues, movers and shakers everywhere: a re-vision of independent working as empowered and empowering, as responsible and as vital as established companies to a UK dance scene poised – but not necessarily guaranteed? – to include more and more disabled people.



Moving Matters: Supporting Disabled Dance Students in HE

A review of the first conference suggested that a second day, with a focus more on participation and practical discovery, would encourage higher participation from tutors in higher education. As a result, another event was organised with a format that would be of interest to more of our colleagues who are devising curricula, teaching students and dealing on a daily basis with some of these questions. In planning the day, it became clear when talking to colleagues at other institutions that there is some anxiety and nervousness about how to adapt teaching for disabled students. Having a chance to look at some of the work in action, ask questions and open up the discussion seemed like a good focus for another conference.

The second conference; *Moving Matters: Supporting Disabled Dance Students in HE*, was supported and funded by PALATINE and took place in November 2007 (see appendix C for conference programme). With PALATINE's reach into the HE community, a large number of delegates attended from the University sector. The aim of the day was to look at how disabled dance students could be provided with a meaningful experience in HE, to share successes, fears and aspirations and to explore what is meant by inclusion and integration. The event was attended by 55 academics, dance practitioners, representatives from national dance agencies, students and LSAs. The day offered a very practical focus on 'how to translate' and teach in the studio, both technical and choreographic work, with the chance to observe and participate. It provided a forum for debate and discussion, a chance for networking, the sharing of good practice and an opportunity to have focussed discussion around key areas, including learning support, teaching methodology and methods of assessment.

The day was developed around six key themes:

- Language and terminology in the delivery of practical classes
- Developing learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- How learning is demonstrated and assessed
- Learning support – how to provide and manage it within small teams
- Entry onto the course and exit into the profession; career guidance and employability issues
- Disabled and non-disabled students working together.

The themes gave rise to a number of questions that presenters and delegates were asked to consider:

- What do we mean by an integrated experience when disabled students are likely to be in a tiny minority?
- Learning is built on trust – how do we develop trust; can we learn as much from the student as they do from us?
- What are the institutional challenges to be aware of?
- How might related care arrangements for disabled students impact on the student's experience?
- What are the real additional resource requirements (including staff time)?
- What are the challenges for the non-disabled student when working alongside the disabled student?
- What is the role of the LSA and who is the LSA; what support needs to be provided?
- How can learning outcomes be written so that they retain their rigour and purpose but are worded in a way that allow for flexibility in learning and assessment methods so that all students have equal opportunity to achieve them?
- What adaptations are the most effective? What are the implications of these adaptations for the teaching of all students?

“the very term ‘dis-ability’ emphasises a lack in relation to others, which in turn informs the kind of experience such an individual is bound to have in a mainstream context.”

(Schwyzer, 2005, p 7)



After an introduction to the day, delegates observed a class in progress delivered by Coventry University staff.

Natalie Garrett introduced this session, involving first year students working with Katye Coe leading the activities and LSAs working with two of the students in an integrated group.

The session was derived from work students currently do in their Studio Practice classes – choreography, free movement and translation, demonstrating the work of LSAs in a HE setting. The session also involved elements of somatic practices, especially, Skinner Releasing and Body Mind Centring.

The next session began with a short performance and was followed by a panel discussion led by Cecilia Macfarlane with the staff and student team at Coventry.

Stephanie Holt, a recent graduate from Coventry University, presented part of her final year forty minute performance project *Beyond Comprehension*. In this performance, Stephanie worked with her former tutor and collaborator and Coventry University graduate Melanie Ahern from Hereward College.

“I’d like to think that our course would be inclusive regardless of whether we have students with any particular needs and that must be where we’re all heading.”

(Cecilia Macfarlane, Associate Senior Lecturer)

In the ensuing discussion, the Coventry team talked about the difficulties and challenges of this work and the ways in which it feeds into their broader practice as dance teachers and dance artists. Challenges included pressures of time and issues around assessment; particularly the requirements to put in place, on an individual basis, a range of support mechanisms for students with disabilities. Asking questions about assessment is part of a broader process of questioning and reflection about teaching, including use of language and some somatic practice. Questions around translation in relation to different dance practices were a key area for debate. The team discussed how they were always learning more, particularly from the students themselves, and how important that was in developing robust teaching methods. One of the key lessons learnt by the team is that adaptations made to class delivery because of the inclusion of students with disabilities turned out to be better methods for all students.

The example class and panel discussion are on the DVD under the November Conference menu button, plus there are transcripts of what was said. To access the transcripts, insert the DVD into a PC/MAC and click My Computer. Select the DVD drive and the transcripts are pdf files in the root directory of the DVD.

“The evolution of language actually improves every student’s experience so the idea of ‘opening your awarenesses (sic)’ is actually a much better delivery than ‘look around you’.”

(Katye Coe, Senior Lecturer, Coventry University)

The aspect of collaborative working with Hereward and dance companies has helped to foster a community of practice, a sense of common purpose. It has also helped staff to look at how their work ties in with professional companies, what is it to be a pre-professional and moving into the profession. The hope for the team is that ‘labels’ would soon disappear; describing a class or a dance company as ‘integrated’ would no longer be necessary.

“Now [as a choreographer and teacher] I see people and their range of movement on a sliding scale rather than disabled person or non-disabled, and it applies to older and younger as well.”

(Louise Katerega, Independent Dance Artist)

After lunch, Adam Benjamin (Dance Artist) shared some of his thoughts about his move into teaching in HE. He began by discussing his work with CandoCo in the 1990s where he often met talented disabled students in workshops but there were few opportunities available for them to obtain dance training. There was Hereward College, the Coventry Centre for the Performing Arts (prior to incorporation with Coventry University) and Bretton Hall and the Laban Centre were becoming interested in this area. Sarah Whatley and Vivien Freakley at Coventry were beginning to develop this area of practice within Higher Education.

Adam felt that the work of CandoCo and other companies had helped to ensure that integrated dance practice had infiltrated the bastions of HE. The event today demonstrates how far things had progressed in a short space of time. Adam highlighted the discussions in the previous session in which teachers had talked about ‘integrated teaching’ and he had a sense that there was now a community of people working together, moving in the same direction.

Adam has recently been appointed to a 0.5 post teaching on a new dance course at Plymouth University allowing him to work with a cohort of students through three years of training, which he has not been able to do in his previous career. Reflecting on this opportunity, Adam then led a discussion on issues he had picked up on from the previous session of the day.

Adam suggested that there had been a change in the audience for ‘integrated’ dance. Audiences now are better informed, less forgiving and more demanding in what they expect from ‘integrated’ work. In the early days of CandoCo there had been more appreciation of effort than artistry; now we talk about professional training in HE and professional companies.

There are certain hidden agendas within integrated work that need to be addressed and HE needs to explore these important issues.

There is also an issue of student numbers and class sizes in HE – is there a point at which we need to limit the number of disabled students per year, in order to meet their needs to the level of their potential and beyond?

These students are also at a disadvantage because they usually don't have the continuity of training from 4-6 years of age that many of their fellow students may have.

There is a particular problem for university outreach to find these talented young disabled people. In the early days of CandoCo, the company ran workshops every couple of weeks; many of the young people from those workshops did go on to work with the company and some of them are represented at today's event. The UK now has a Community Dance Network with amateurs working all over the country – they need to have a central contact point which can pick up on these young people, especially important as family and school pressures are often sending them somewhere else.

We also need to give them some hope in HE that there is employment out there for them. This raises the issue of how do you connect auditioning and assessment in HE with people in the profession who are auditioning for companies? Adam noted, for example, that he uses somatics in his teaching, but this is not necessarily going to get you a job, it needs the cold edge of reality along with it – the notion of discipline and performance.

Adam argued that people in dance companies are still not finding enough trained disabled dancers and that training more individuals to the required standard would, in turn, help to stimulate the demand for work and create jobs for graduates.

“Maybe the conference shouldn't be about assisting students in HE maybe it should be about assisting teachers in HE because if the teachers go down the tube then everything goes down the tube so for me that's really the importance of this conference...I'm deeply concerned about the health and well-being and the thinking of the teachers and that we have to get that right if it's to survive.”

(Adam Benjamin, Dance Artist)

Adam's session was followed by two parallel sessions. In the first, Susie Cox (ADAPT Project Director, CandoCo Dance Company) focused on the role of the Dance Support Specialist (DSS) at CandoCo. Susie explained how the role of the DSS grew enormously over the three-years (2004 – 2007) that CandoCo ran their unique Foundation Course in Dance for Disabled Students; their presence on this one-year specialist course was instrumental to the development and progression of each individual student in a multitude of ways.

Susie's presentation reflected upon the role of the Dance Support Specialist on the Foundation Course by looking at:

- How the role worked in different contexts on the course, specifically how it supported the students in their technique classes;
- The fundamental skills of the Dance Support Specialist that emerged to be key to the role, and how these were guided and shaped by additional skills that the pool of Dance Support Specialists brought to the course.

Now the Foundation Course is no longer running, CandoCo is interested to see how the role of the Dance Support Specialist can develop in the vocational training context. The company has just embarked on a year long project with Urdang Academy, ADAPT (Accessing Dance and Performance Training), and will be monitoring how the role of the Dance Support Specialist will alter in line with the project.

With reference to the development of this project, Susie put forward for discussion the following questions:

- Is the role of the Dance Support Specialist the key to enabling universities and vocational schools (where teachers may not yet have experience of working in integrated settings) to open their doors to aspiring disabled dance students and thus offer a high quality, equal and enriching experience to all?
- If this is so, should there be some formal training for this role and in what form should this take?



The second session was led by Kate Marsh (Freelance Dance Teacher) who focused on learning and assessment for disabled dance students. Kate was one of the students trained by Adam Benjamin at CandoCo. She then worked with the company for a number of years, then as a dancer in different integrated settings, including in HE on a performing arts degree.

Kate led a discussion on assessment in an HE setting, focusing on:

- Assessment criteria, how we interpret them and how they relate to the professional dance world – the criteria need to be as challenging for all students – disabled students need to be ‘pushed’ as much as the others (and there are different levels of artistry in all groups, irrespective of different physicalities)
- The accreditation system dates back to ballet. Ballet casts a long shadow over these, while conceptual classes look at very different things
- Conservatoires aren’t going in this direction – companies are most likely to employ disabled students from places like Coventry and non-disabled students from Conservatoires, so in some ways disabled students on these courses may have more opportunities to perform than others.

The final session of the day was led by Susan Norwood (Artistic Director, Project Volume) who shared her experience of working with learning disabled students. With seventeen years of experience working with young people with special needs, the discussion turned to consider the challenges involved in integrating students with learning disabilities.

Susan began with an interactive session involving delegates in some practical physical movements.

Susan next explained how this type of session is used to break down barriers and fear of dance, focus on what’s possible, rather than what isn’t, how integration and inclusion are facilitated.

Susan then showed filmed examples from a PALATINE supported project at Oxford Brookes University (www.PALATINE.ac.uk/development-awards/743/) featuring integrated groups working with dance as a communication tool, exploring ways of working with each other.

Susan then discussed some of the broader issues for HE that had arisen from her work. She argued that to increase the participation of disabled dancers in HE, we need to look at dance provision from an early age – to enable people to have the required skills to enter HE.

There is also a similar need for dance teachers to gain experience and accreditation for working in this area and to look at contextual and historical studies to ensure that disability is included in those courses too.

The aim of Susan’s company, Project Volume, is to extend and promote professional opportunities to learning disabled dancers, develop a dance curriculum and research models of integrated methods of working.

The day ended with a plenary session led by Sarah Whatley. A lively discussion followed of the issues raised by the workshop and how to take them forward. Topics that were discussed included:

- The range of different perspectives offered by the workshop – tutors, students, LSAs, practitioners and dance artists and many who move between these different roles
- A shared commitment to ensure equal opportunities for disabled dance students to participate in HE, then into careers
- The need for wider provision pre-HE because many disabled dancers with potential are not getting access to HE
- Ways of supporting disabled students through teaching and delivery
- The possibility of developing support networks for those involved in this work
- Plans for a DVD and resource pack for tutors delivering practical dance activity to students with physical or sensory disability.

“The link between training and the professional context for disabled dancers needs examining because whilst disabled dance students continue to have little presence in HE, they have fewer opportunities to perform, which reinforces their position of being ‘other’.”

(Whatley, 2007, p 22)

Practical Session

Presented by Natalie Garrett (Coventry University; Course Director for Dance and Professional Practice)

I am here this morning to introduce and contextualise this opening session which you are invited either to witness or participate in.

Joining myself and colleagues Katye Coe and Amy Voris are the year 1 Dance and Professional Practice students. We also have working with us this morning two Learning Support Assistants (LSA), Tara Rutter and Cathy Heath, both of whom are graduates from the Dance and Professional Practice course.

Katye is going to lead the students through a practical session for around 50mins leaving time for questions and discussion at the end and also to briefly consider some grading criteria. The content of this session is derived from these students' current studio practice classes and includes partner graphics, free moving and set sequences.

Our aim for this session is to offer an example of how the notion of translation and the role of the LSA can support, in this instance, students with visual impairment within a Higher Education setting. Crucially this is done with a sense of curiosity and exploration rather than one that presupposes we have all the answers. It is also approached from the premise that good practice developed to support dance students with disabilities often time becomes a model of good practice for all students. The processes and methods we currently employ are born from a web of activity over a number of years and developed in dialogue with students, LSAs – who have been absolutely integral to the process - supported by the wider research undertaken by Sarah Whatley and expertise of Cecilia Macfarlane. On reflection these ways of working are in part enabled by a commitment to the philosophy and principles of somatics within the dance team, most notably the Alexander Technique, Skinner Releasing Technique (SRT) and Body Mind Centering (BMC). For example as you may experience for yourself while Katye does not teach a Skinner Releasing Class her approach to teaching studio practice is informed by SRT principles.



As will become apparent in the second session we have as a dance team also explored how the notion of translation and the role of the LSA can support dancers who are wheelchair-users and staff, students and LSAs will be happy to speak about that later. However in this session what you will principally witness in operation are the following –

- Minor translations of set material to reduce the challenge of elevation and changes of direction as an interim version of the sequence
- The use of verbal cueing by Katye and the LSAs to communicate movement sequences but also to lead movement explorations
- The use of hands on by Katye and the LSAs to communicate set material and/or particular movement principles
- The use of hands on by Zoe to track body design
- The LSAs taking the role of guide to support Zoe as she moves through and in space
- The notion that witnessing another dancer moving does not have to rely primarily on the sense of sight.

There are other strategies which we might use such as “orientating” whereby the visually impaired student takes a guided walk around and in the space before beginning class to locate exits, entrances and notably landmarks. However this is not necessary in this instance due to the students’ familiarity with the space.

Thought clusters – some further considerations

- The challenge around language; open the senses, be aware of the room, rather than ‘open your eyes’. Vertical release rather than standing release. This clarifies for me what I am asking of the students and allows for wheelchair-users for example to engage with this activity through the sitz bones
- The wider challenges of ensuring all support networks are in place for students, being aware of the wider pastoral issues that exist for student who, for example, are learning to work with a carer for the first time
- The possibility of part time study if the intensity of full time study is in the first instance not sustainable
- Time, thought, energy needed to the creation an environment in which the student feels supported and able to engage with her peers
- The induction period – having LSA support for induction week, ensuring pairings are many and varied within the whole group, inviting the student to speak to her peers about for example the ‘rules’ around the guide dog or their own disability if that feels helpful/appropriate
- To consider how strategies and principles which support students with disabilities can be integrated to teaching planning, delivery and assessment as models of good practice for all students.

The Role of the Dance Support Specialist at CandoCo Dance Company

Presented by Susie Cox (former CandoCo Foundation Course Director)

The following paper is an extended version of an article published in Animated, autumn 2007.

CandoCo Dance Company's Foundation Course in Dance for Disabled People: The Role of the Dance Support Specialist

'Dance not disability, professionalism not therapy'. Celeste Dandeker, Artistic Director of CandoCo Dance Company, has always maintained this as the ethos of the company. When the Foundation Course commenced in 2004, this was the principle that underpinned its framework and helped to inform the teaching strategies necessary to deliver a specialist one year full time training course in dance for disabled students.

The course was designed to offer high quality training to disabled dance students equipping them with the necessary skills to bring them in line with their non-disabled peers and thus offer them the opportunity to move onto further dance training at vocational schools and the conservatoires, and ultimately a career in dance.

The course content, in line with any other Foundation Course, was full and covered a wide range subjects from technique to contextual studies to movement analysis. Students came to us with a broad range of previous experience, but rarely with extensive dance experience.

What then, was the best way in which each individual student could learn, progress and move forward with clarity and confidence of themselves as a dancer, and access the same mainstream vocational training as their peers a year later?

The course required a strategy that would support the teaching, be adaptable for each individual and that could also act as a bridge across all areas of the course to give coherence and unity.

The answer? A new role: the Dance Support Specialist (DSS). This role has proved invaluable to the strategic development of the course and learning of each individual.

At the start of the course each student was allocated a DSS. As the students progressed, a shift would occur which moved from the DSS initiating approaches, to pushing students to move beyond their comfort zone and finally to take a step back and only intervene where required.

Three key skills of the DSS have emerged:

- Knowledge and implementation of dance and other associated movement based techniques
- Ability to act as interface between tutors and students
- Ability to act as peer to the students

This article is my first attempt to define what it is about this new role that has made such a significant impact on the development of the students. I have focused mainly on the first of the key skills.

DSS are trained dancers. The knowledge of dance technique, combined with a curiosity about movement adaptation is essential. Our DSS also had additional skills in physiotherapy, Pilates and yoga. What was it about this combination that had such an impact?

The Foundation Course made technique a core component for the course as the company felt it was an essential area for the students to be competent in order to have a language that they could use and recognise in other dance environments, such as attending an open class or working with other dancers. Yet many of the students who accessed the course had little if any previous technical dance training. How to adapt to 4 or 5 different needs and keep the pace of a class?

A background in dance training was a valuable tool that the DSS would draw upon to assist in the development of each student. Through knowing how a certain step should be executed the DSS could break it down for the student as required; through an internal understanding of the intention behind the movement, they could assist the students in identifying a way to adapt to their needs whilst retaining the core aim of the exercise.

With just one year, we also needed to ensure that students were progressing from week to week. Here the DSS were able to assist the students in making connections across subjects. Coupled with this, the regular presence of the DSS in a range of contexts made learning more streamline.

Working with such a range of abilities on the FC, issues around pace of sessions, common to all class teaching, were magnified and additional time was needed for the students to progress steadily and competently. For some students a seemingly simple movement could become quite complex and take time to adapt. The DSS would draw on their knowledge to be sure that the individual was focusing on the most relevant part of the given material and to pull the focus back to its core aims and intention.

Parallel to a technical understanding, curiosity and a creative approach from both DSS and student were extremely valuable in the search to find a way into movement. How do you tackle a travelling sequence of falls and rolls if in a wheelchair? A pirouette if visually impaired? The DSS encouraged continual dialogue, searching and questioning, that led to students finding their own technical vocabulary that could be used in, for example, a contemporary or ballet class. The DSS helped to create a supportive space that valued experimentation, and through this the student could explore their physical potential.

Having DSS with additional skills - in-depth knowledge in physiotherapy, Pilates and yoga - proved to be enormously valuable in technique classes. The additional understanding of movement and the body acquired through these specialist areas gave the DSS alternative and often more suitable ways in which to approach movement. Taken further in 1-1 sessions, the students, tutor and DSS identified specific areas that needed particular work such as the use of breath, posture or exploring and identifying new ranges of movement. The sessions would focus on these areas in greater detail than was possible in a class situation and strategies were developed to help the students work more independently when back in class.

These sessions were mini investigations between DSS and students, mutually learning what worked, what was possible and what was not. Some astonishing results emerged: one student developed the skills and confidence to transfer from her chair unassisted; another though developing more movement and control of her hips and articulation in her spine, found the confidence to work with one side of her chair removed which gave greater space in which to move; another entered the course walking, and finished it running!

Through the continual presence of the DSS and position to focus on one individual at a time, they had the luxury of seeing minute developments emerge and give immediate positive feedback. The tutor, who was focussing on the whole class or may have only seen the group once a week, may have missed these small milestones. The encouragement and recognition from the DSS gave the students confidence in their own knowledge of their capabilities as a dancer and how to articulate these to others – a tool that was encouraged when working with visiting tutors.

The FC had three core tutors, however, in order to deliver a rich and varied course that would challenge the students and give them the breadth of knowledge, the FC also employed a variety of dance artists who were specialist in specific areas such as anatomy, Skinner, Cunningham. These tutors were employed because of their specialism rather than experience of working with disabled students. Consequently, at times tutors with no or little experience in teaching disabled students initially found it difficult to find a way into transferring their knowledge to such a diverse group. In this scenario the DSS acted as an interface between tutor and student.

To do this effectively less tangible and more subtle skills were required:

- to quickly gauge what the tutor was aiming for and ensure the students were receiving the information in the best way possible for their learning,
- to quickly absorb and translate the information given by the teacher,
- to be articulate in movement and words,
- to be able to know when to step in, and when to step away,
- to be 'invisible' - not to interrupt, but to guide subtly through the use of a word or informative touch

The latter was the most valuable skill. A DSS was not there to get in the way of learning but to tease out the best of the individual. With their quiet but constant presence, teaching would progress smoothly with the needs of each individual being met at every stage.

The role of the DSS does not exist within CandoCo's regular education work; in a workshop of half a day or a week the emphasis is directed towards an artistic experience through inclusive teaching, rather than on training.

However, now that the FC has closed it does not mean that the role of the DSS will disappear! We are now embarking on a year-long project in partnership with Urdang Academy the focus of which is to look at identifying young talented disabled dancers. The skills that have been discussed in this article will develop and change in line with this project. The DSS will continue to quietly and confidently support students and staff in the future training of aspiring young disabled dancers.

In the not too distant future, we hope that more dance courses will be in the position to offer training to disabled students, and with that this invaluable role will become a familiar part of dance training.

Project Volume

Presented by Susan Norwood (co-Artistic Director, has eighteen years of experience working with dance and disability, evolving methods for best teaching practice and approaches to choreography)

Project Volume has a unique transatlantic approach to profiling dance and disability. It brokers partnerships, between disability organizations, dance companies and cultural organizations both here and in New York so disseminating the best of innovative dance and disability practice from two countries.

Project Volume takes an uncompromising approach to dance and disability, insisting that disabled dancers' training is rigorous, mirroring mainstream contemporary dance training. Through this rigour Project Volume aims to ensure learning-disabled dancers have real access and equal opportunity within our professional dance world.

Project Volume recognises that cultural organizations and non-disabled dancers need support and training in successful inclusive professional practice and therefore works with organizations to support continual professional development. Project Volume's objective is that all dancers-disabled and non-disabled contribute - fully to artistic practice and that perceptions of intelligence ad/or ability are continually challenged.

Primary focus of presentation: Integration

The presentation came from an overview of working in dance, education and disability and of the tasks ahead to achieve real and equal integration. The presentation was divided into three sections: the practical, the visual representation through film and the spoken overview. This style of presenting represents a commitment to working towards disseminating information, which is fully inclusive.

Practical Session

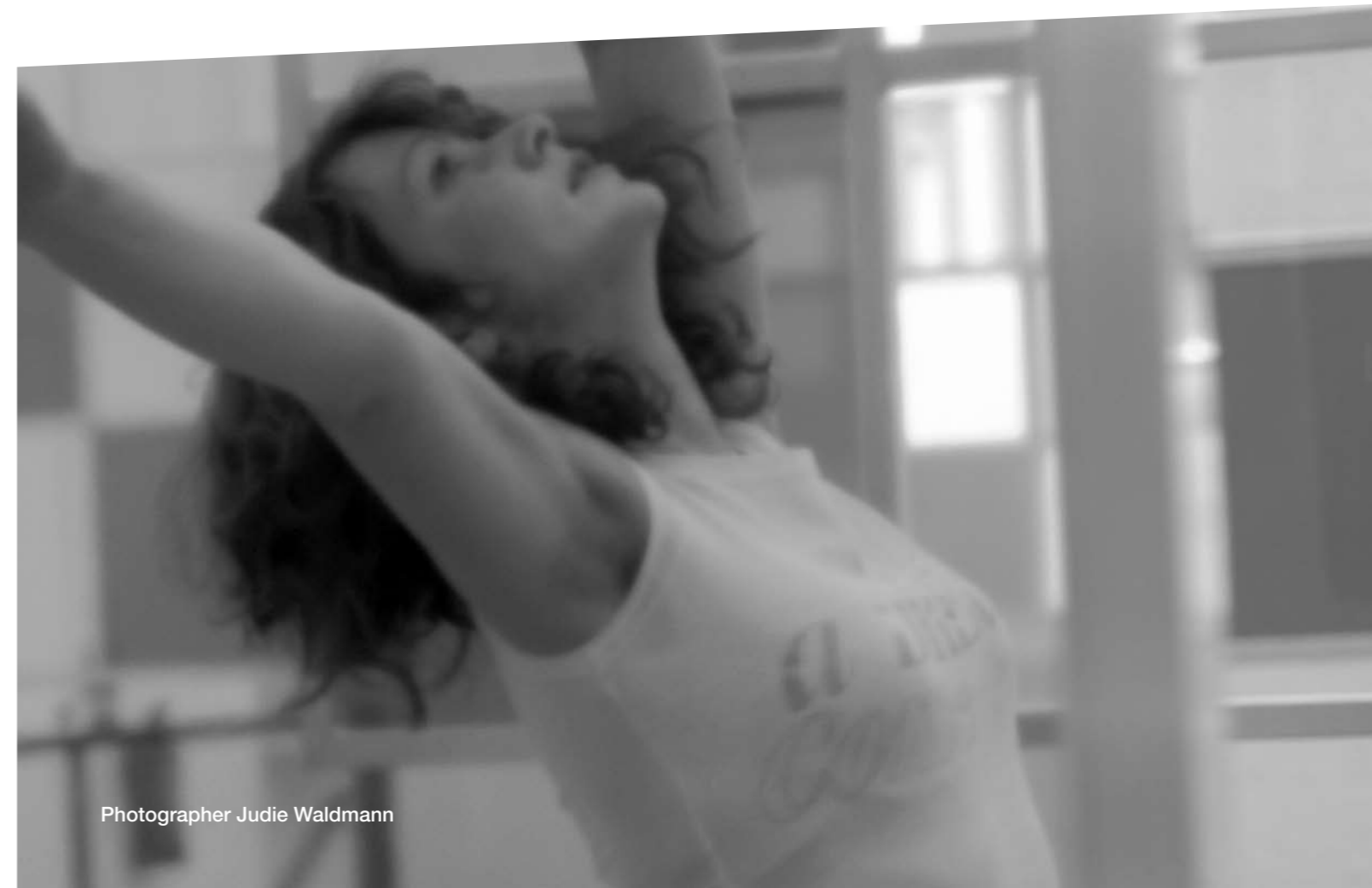
This session used the theme of portraiture to create a movement vocabulary with the conference participants. The participants remained seated and followed straightforward instructions to create a series of movements relating to their individual responses to portraiture. The purpose of this inclusive exercise was to illustrate the development of a 'shared movement vocabulary', which is created from the contribution of all participants and from this vocabulary, how choreography could then be created.

Film

The film showed excerpts from a PALATINE research project 'Assemblage' 2007, at Oxford Brookes University. It looked at the initial processes in exploring the capacity of dance as a means of avoiding the pre-conceptions of learning disability, through using it as the primary communication tool.

“Dance was used to physically read our environment, each other, random stimuli, everyday signs and codes: the forum was translated, in a forum of equal/shared potential. Personal perceptions were thus exchanged within the participant group creating a physical reading or translation- a communication through dance. This deconstruction and rebuilding of “reading” is vital. The process provides a logical, lucid structure- scaffolding- revealing layers of perception and meaning. The process equipped the participants with new skills to communicate with each other. Within this a conventional theatrical structure emerged enabling participants/learners to enter a deeper realm of understanding in terms of communication to/with an audience.”

(John Hole, Senior Lecturer/Field Chair, Performing Arts, Brookes University)



Photographer Judie Waldmann

Spoken Summary

A short bullet point summary outlining the steps we need to take to achieve full integration for disabled dancers into higher education and other routes to professional dance.

1. A joined up approach to high quality dance training which mirrors mainstream contemporary dance training and the national curriculum is needed for disabled dancers from 5 yrs to 19 yrs, to equip them with the same skills and opportunities for development available to non-disabled dancers.
2. There needs to be greater and widespread availability for training in working with dancers with disabilities, in technique and in choreography, for all dancers, choreographers and teachers.
3. A new approach to developing a shared culture and history in the teaching of our dance history within higher education, should include examples of integrated practice, disabled dancers and companies and the influential role disabled dance has had on dance. Examples to include were: the autistic performance role on the work of Robert Wilson, the work of Candoco and the influence of working with learning disabled dancers on the choreographic methods of Yolande Snaith.
4. Using the specific qualities apparent in the evolving hybrid art form of dance in:
 - the use of film
 - visual art
 - performance
 - dance theatre

to support both the artistic development of the individual, the teaching of traditional and contemporary dance technique and the ways in which we learn.



Photographer Jess Shaw

Concluding Thoughts

“I would say to any disabled students don't be afraid to actually go for it...if you want to be in the dance world just go for it...don't let your disability get in the way. It's hard, it does make it harder, but if it's what you really want to do then just go for it.”

(Zoe, first year student)

The two conferences offered a valuable opportunity for dialogue between artists, tutors, students, directors, arts professionals and all those who are committed to ensuring that more disabled dance students have access to higher education and have the necessary support to assist them through their programmes of study. It is clear from the presentations and the many discussions that took place over the two days that there are significant challenges and resource implications in doing so. Nonetheless, there is general agreement that a sharing of good practice will enable more tutors to develop the skills and confidence to modify and adapt teaching methods where necessary to accommodate disabled dance students. In hosting the two days, the team at Coventry University has been able to share some of its own experiences in this work, making clear that we have made many mistakes along the way, we don't have all the solutions, we are still learning, but we have developed some practice in this area that seems to be effective.

The following key issues have emerged:

- There are many young people with disabilities participating in dance but there is work to be done to ensure that they are properly prepared for higher education and have equal access to dance courses
- It is important to remember that each student, whether disabled or non-disabled, is different and will have very different needs
- Disabled students will often need classroom support, which means having specialist dance support in studio-based work
- Dance support staff will need training and support. Finding those to provide this support will often fall to faculty staff
- Providing effective support for disabled students and establishing the right mechanisms means finding additional resources; space, people and time
- Communication is key to supporting disabled dance students. This will frequently be three-way; between student, tutor and Learning Support Assistant
- Having a physical or sensory disability might mean that there is an additional 'unseen' disability, which may emerge whilst the student is studying dance
- Writing learning outcomes needs careful thought to ensure that they are not unintentionally exclusive
- Adapting teaching, learning and assessment methods may be required to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes

“disability does make a big difference and assuming otherwise limits the difference that disability can make in radically refiguring how we look at bodies in the twenty-first century.”

(Albright, 2001, p 60)

- The criteria for measuring achievement need to be worded carefully and applied equally to ensure that all students are assessed fairly
- Feedback to students needs to be honest and based on good knowledge of what the student can and cannot do as well as a robust critical language
- Students and Learning Support Assistants need to be clear as to who has the responsibility for adapting/translating material
- Integrating disabled students into dance activities means rethinking traditional models and delivery methods
- Time has to be given to enable non-disabled students to make necessary adjustments to working in an integrated group
- Disabled students are likely to be in a very small minority within a largely non-disabled group
- Having disabled students participate in dance challenges perceptions of what dance is; it means looking and listening differently
- Despite legislation and considerable advances in ensuring equality of opportunity for people with disabilities, there will still be challenges in terms of perception and prejudice, both within and beyond the institution
- More role models and particularly disabled dance tutors are needed to encourage more disabled students to choose dance for a career.

“Almost in a way it should be in ten years time there shouldn’t be a term called inclusive dance or integrated dance there should be [just] dance.”

(Stine Nilsen, co-Artistic Director, CandoCo)

Recommendations for the future

There is much more work to be done and hopefully this resource pack will stimulate further thought and encourage more disabled dance practitioners to enter the debate, sharing their experiences and offering ideas to take things forward.

Those who attended the conferences agreed that the following actions would bring about positive changes:

- Further debate around the issue of integration and whether or not, given the low numbers of disabled students in HE, it is more appropriate to have a number of identified Universities and Colleges that will specialise in integrated delivery. This may attract larger numbers of disabled students but might reinforce the notion that disabled students should have a different experience.
- A mechanism for disabled dance students to be part of a wider community of dance students with disabilities; to provide networking opportunities and peer support. This could be regional or national.
- A mechanism that would value and support the role of the Learning Support Assistant, to provide training and recognition of the expertise of those in this role as well as to share good practice in a systematic way. A national network of LSAs could help to professionalise the role, offer support, help to disseminate good practice and provide mentoring opportunities for those less experienced.

“Maybe it’s about ability and we lose the word disability completely...it feels like it’s these labels that restrict us most.”

(Cecilia Macfarlane, Associate Senior Lecturer)



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Appendices

- Appendix A:** The LSA & Student Relationship; Notes towards creating a contract of agreement
- Appendix B:** Example assessment sheet to show Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- Appendix C:** Conference programmes
- Appendix D:** Contact list of artists, companies and organizations

APPENDIX A: The LSA & Student Relationship; Notes towards creating a contract of agreement

Introduction

1. The philosophy of the performing arts courses at Coventry University recognises that all students have abilities and disabilities.
2. In celebrating each student's individuality we recognise the importance of the Learning Support Assistant (LSA) and student relationship if the disabled student is to reach their full potential in class.
3. The following document is designed to create a working contract between the LSA and student. It is intended to be read and implemented in conjunction with other support materials provided by the student and/or possibly the Disabilities Office here at the University. Part 1 offers information on the approach to the LSA and student relationship advocated by Coventry University Performing Arts department. Part 2 consists of a series of questions for both the student and LSA designed to inform the writing of the enclosed contract of agreement.

If you have any suggestions on how this document can be developed further please feedback ideas to your Studio Practice link tutor. This is a working document and will be developed in response to user feedback and further research.

Part 1

1.1 Background information and underlying principles

This document has been created in part response to the findings of a recent research project – 'Bodies Realities' led by Professor Sarah Whatley and is also informed by the inclusion of disabled students to performing arts degree programs over the last four years. The outline of roles and responsibilities detailed here are underpinned by the following key ideas:

- a) The working relationship between the LSA and student functions best if supported by a contract of agreement. This contract needs to be created via a dialogue between LSA and student with support from a studio practice link tutor
- b) The working relationship between the LSA and student requires informed support from all tutors.
- c) The student's growth and development as a dancer requires that she grant the LSA permission to share responsibility for her learning thereby 'handing over' the process of deciding what to do and what not to do for much of the class to the LSA. In part this is due to the fact that experts in the field of dance and disability suggest that most disabled dancers limit their range of movement when responding aesthetically rather than to the anatomical function of an exercise.
- d) The support and guidance given to the student by the LSA remains informed by the contract of agreement at all times
- e) All students benefit from focussing on the purpose of the exercise rather than the aesthetic outcome of the exercise, identifying the function rather than the look of the exercise. Therefore translations of class material offered to the student by the LSA should also work from this principle.

1.2. Roles and Responsibilities

Studio Practice link tutor

- a) To support the student and LSA in creating their contract of agreement
- b) To provide copies of the completed contract of agreement to all relevant practice based tutors
- c) To gain knowledge and understanding of the student's range of movement and the effect their impairment has on it (and learning needs) including if appropriate wheelchair manipulation.
- d) To give informed and directed guidance throughout class on the purpose of the exercises and material taught and to offer suggestions of possible translations where appropriate
- e) To work towards setting standard modifications of exercises as the term progresses according to the specific technical goals set between tutor and student
- f) To maintain a regular dialogue with student and LSA in order to reflect upon and discuss arising challenges / progress made in class relaying information as necessary to all relevant practice based tutors
- g) To set goals for the student in dialogue with the student and LSA, to be revised each term and relayed to all relevant practice based tutors.

Practice based tutors

- a) To gain knowledge and understanding of the student's range of movement and the effect their impairment has on it (and learning needs) including if appropriate wheelchair manipulation.
- b) To give informed and directed guidance throughout class on the purpose of the exercises and material taught and to offer suggestions of possible translations where appropriate
- c) To work towards setting standard modifications of exercises as the term progresses
- d) To respond as necessary to information passed on by the Studio Practice link tutor

Student

- a) To offer the LSA and Studio practice link tutor information regarding known range of movement and affect of impairments and learning style/needs including if appropriate wheelchair manipulation.
- b) To participate in discussions with their Studio Practice link tutor and the LSA to set goals to be revised each term
- c) To grant the LSA permission and authority to offer informed, directed and appropriately challenging guidance throughout class on how to interpret and translate material given by all tutors.
- d) To work towards meeting the energy and level of accomplishment of the LSA where ever possible
- e) To partner the LSA and other members of the class as appropriate to the lesson
- f) To meet weekly in order to reflect upon and discuss arising challenges / progress made in class
- g) To inform the LSA and Studio Practice link tutor of any change in circumstances that may require a revision of the contract of agreement.

LSA

- a) To gain knowledge and understanding of the student's range of movement, affect of impairment, learning needs including if appropriate wheelchair manipulation.
- b) To give informed, directed and appropriately challenging guidance throughout class on how to interpret and translate material given by the tutors. When appropriate? One assumes class sometimes generated by disabled students movement
- c) To base directed guidance and translations of the material on the following:
 - Prior knowledge of the student's range of movement, affect of impairment and learning needs.
 - Information given by the tutor regarding the purpose of the exercise rather than the aesthetic outcome of the exercise, focussing on the function rather than the look of the exercise.
 - An embodied understanding of the exercise as set by the tutor
 - The student's goals as set in consultation with their Studio Practice link tutor
 - Information gained from weekly meetings with the student
- d) To encourage the student to meet your energy and level of commitment/ professionalism where ever possible
- e) To support the student in preparing for class as required.
- f) To support the student in reflecting on class including journal writing and mark making as required
- g) To meet weekly with the student in order to reflect upon and discuss arising challenges / progress made in class
- h) To partner the student and other members of the class as appropriate to the lesson

Part 2

2.1. Guidance Notes

With the support of your Studio Practice link tutor take each discussion point one at a time and fill in the corresponding contractual statement as indicated in the brackets.

2.2. Discussion points for the LSA and student partnership

- a) Read the roles and responsibilities outlined in Part 1. Decide whether you wish to add or edit these. [Now fill in contractual point 1 below]
- b) Discuss between you
 - what the student can move on their own, and
 - what they may need support or manipulation with, and
 - to what extent support and manipulation are required,
 - where they can bear weight, how much and in what way.
 - If the student is a wheelchair-user and will be dancing for at least some of the time in the chair then discuss how the chair moves and what is possible in terms of speed, weight and manoeuvrability. Remember that gaining proficiency in wheelchair manipulation (steering, turning etc) needs as much precision and is as challenging for your dancer as whole-body movement is for the able-bodied dancer. [Now fill in Contractual point 2 below] If possible find an opportunity for the LSA to explore moving in a chair.
 - Discuss when you can meet in a studio as a pre class session to explore this a little further practically .[Now fill in Contractual point 3 below]

- c) Discuss what type of preparation activities the student has or may find useful in preparing for class. How long do you both feel you will need to achieve these as a partnership? [Now fill in contractual points 4-5 below]
- d) Discuss how much time you will need for weekly debriefing sessions and when this can happen. [Now fill in contractual point 6 below]
- e) In order to be clear about responsibilities for the LSA discuss whether their role will include providing other care for the student (for example, does it include helping to dress, assisting in comfort breaks?) [Now fill in contractual point 7 below]
- f) In some instances disabled dance students may be beginners at the start of the course in many ways because they have not had the same access to extensive experience of 'class' as other students. Discuss between you whether the student feels this applies to them. Consider for example
 - whether the student feels sufficiently aware of how to prepare for class, how class is organised, class 'rules' or etiquette and their own responsibilities within class.[Now fill in contractual point 8 below]
 - Whether the student feels their muscle memory or ability to physically remember movement material requires particular support or use of particular methods such as imagery, touch or inclusion of objects. [Now fill in contractual point 9 below]
- g) Part of the class experience is the time given to reflection and students are expected to make regular entries in their Artist's Journal, both within and beyond class time. Wherever possible we would encourage students to explore how they may make their own records, marks in journals and so on, as part of this reflective process (we have separate guidelines to help students with journaling, which you may find helpful to read).
Discuss between you whether with the student's disability may mean that some entries may need to be mediated, either with your help or in other ways. [Now fill in contractual point 10 below]
- h) Read and complete contractual points 11 and 12.
- i) Sign the contract where indicated.

2.3 LSA & Student Contract of Agreement

1. We have read and discussed the roles as outlined in Part 1 and agree to adhere to the descriptions outlined above with / without amendments.
(delete as appropriate)
2. In our discussion we have identified the following about :
 - a. What parts of the body the student can move on their own. (please list)
 - b. What they may need support or manipulation with. When and Why.
(please list)
 - c. To what extent support and manipulation are required. (please list)
 - d. Parts of the body which can bear weight, how much and in what way.
(please list)
 - e. How the chair moves and what is possible in terms of speed, weight and manoeuvrability. (please list)
3. We will meet on _____ in order to further develop our shared understanding of the student's range of motion and learning capacity in a studio environment.
4. We will meet ____ minutes before the start of class when possible to prepare
5. Preparation activities will include:

6. Our weekly meeting time to reflect upon and discuss arising challenges / progress made in class will be on _____ at ____am/pm
7. Part of the LSA role will*/ will not include providing other care for the student.
*Please list the specific aspects of care this will include for example, comfort breaks, changing before / after class, assistance to and from studio space.
(Please list if relevant)
8. Part of the LSA role will / will not include providing support and information regarding how to prepare for class, how class is organised, class 'rules' or etiquette and the student's own responsibilities within class.
(Please list if relevant)
9. We have decided to meet / not to meet on a weekly basis in a studio outside of class time to go through class material. This will take place be on _____ at ____am/pm
10. We have decided that the student's disability will / will not mean that some journal entries may need to be mediated. Methods to be used include:
11. We will review the contract on a termly / monthly basis.
12. We are / are not happy for copies of this contract to be circulated to other relevant practice based tutors.

	Printed name	Signature	Date
LSA			
Student			
Studio Practice			
Link Tutor			

Appendix B: Example assessment sheet to show Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

Grading Criteria: Continuous assessment in the acquisition of skill in improvisation and somatic based practices (Year 1)				
Outcomes	70%+	60-69%	50-59%	40-49%
Demonstrate a visible application of kinaesthetic awareness; show the ability to engage with the principles of moving with efficiency, kinaesthetic sensibility and a basic application of specific connections through the body.	Excellent and informed practice is evident. There is consistent and explorative engagement with the principles of efficient movement and specific connections in the moving body. The beginnings of an integrated kinaesthetic awareness is clear and in practice.	Clear awareness of the principles of moving with efficiency. A very good level of understanding and the potential for integrated awareness is clear.	The potential to move with efficiency is visible and at times clear. Connections in the body are understood but not always applied in practice.	Some problems with efficient movement and application of specific connections in the body although some understanding in evidence.
Demonstrate a developing awareness of the mechanics of the body in motion appropriate to the dancers own physique; the ability to apply new practical skills and tools to their wider practice as a dance student (in the studio and rehearsal room).	Excellent level of skill shown when your body is in motion. Movement is deeply informed and developed by new practical skills. You will be able to take informed risks in the studio and will be willing and open to new ways of working. At the higher end you will demonstrate a high degree of understanding, informed by wide research.	Sound evidence of a developing awareness of the body in motion. An ability to work with new practical skills and to apply them to your movement in the studio.	Fair degree of understanding of the body in motion is shown although this may not be consistent. New practices will be acknowledged in your work but not fully understood.	Weaknesses in some aspects of the development of appropriate awareness. Work may lack engagement and research and application will be limited.
				Fail (<40%)
				Inadequate understanding of efficient and sensitive movement and general failure to develop skills. At lower end, there will be lack of evidence of any application of skill or enquiry.
				Little or no progress made in the development of the body in motion. Weak and inconsistent application of skills. At the lower end work will be generally and below 20% indicates that it is not a serious attempt.

Grading Criteria: Continuous assessment in the acquisition of skill in improvisation and somatic based practices (Year 1)				
Outcomes	70%+	60-69%	50-59%	40-49%
Show openness, sensitivity and an ability to respond with physical intelligence to improvised movement exercises, partner graphics and reflection in writing and discussion.	There will be a perceptive, curious and sensitive ability to respond to and translate skills, ideas, awareness, dynamics, imagery or any relevant stimulus that may be explored.	Generally very able to respond and translate appropriately to any given exercise. Some curiosity and sensitivity will also be evident in movement explorations.	Understanding of some principles of physical intelligence and a willingness to try and respond sensitively. However the above will not be consistently available.	A basic understanding of improvisation tasks and movement exploration although there is likely to be a lack of availability to the work.
Apply focus, concentration and apply some knowledge of safe and professional practice in relation to daily class practice and fitness; attend the required number of classes and respond appropriately to peer and tutor feedback thereby demonstrating professionalism in relation to dance training.	Evidence of mature and sophisticated work. There will be a consistently disciplined and committed approach visible in all aspects of training. Attendance is exemplary. You will consistently be able to respond openly and intelligently to peer and tutor feedback.	High level of concentration and regular preparation for practice. Intelligent and mainly open response to feedback. Attendance and application is generally very good.	Mostly concentrated approach to class and good attendance record. There will be some attempt to respond to feedback although this may always be appropriate to the situation.	Some problems with attendance or focus in your training. Evidence that response to tutor feedback is not always secure revealing an inconsistent level of engagement.
				Fail (<40%)
				Weak or inconsistent ability to respond to a given stimulus or idea. A generally vague response with little if any engagement.
				Inadequate, inconsistent attendance and/or problems with concentration in class. At the lower end there will be serious deficiencies in engagement with the work at every level.

Appendix C: Conference programmes

Dance & Disability: Strategies for Inclusion in Higher Education and Beyond

Saturday 24 March 2007
Coventry University, Ellen Terry Building, Jordan Well, Coventry

Programme

- 9.30 Registration and coffee
- 10.00 Welcome, setting the context: Sarah Whatley, Coventry University and Gill Clarke, Independent Dance
- 10.10 **The Domino Effect** Caroline Bowditch Performance artist and Choreographer
- 10.45 **Inclusive Practice in the Professional Field:** Using practical examples, Stine Nilsen and Charlotte Darbyshire will share their research into how dance practitioners can impart their knowledge and skills in a way that is meaningful and relevant to each individual's learning styles and needs. Equally, how both disabled and non-disabled learners can access and benefit from an on-going professional level training.
- 11.45 Coffee/refreshments
- 12.15 **Break-out Groups on current issues and questions**, to cover
 - What are the implications for pedagogical practice?
 - What are the challenges; practical, conceptual, institutional?
 - Meeting expectations; tutors, learners, the profession.
- 1.00 Buffet Lunch and sharing of student work in progress and film showings.
- 2.00 **An Encounter with Students: Performance Workshop with the CandoCo Foundation Course.** This session will feature a performance by students on the CandoCo Foundation course, one of the first dance programmes aimed at students with disabilities. They will perform *On the Move*, a short collaboration between the students and choreographer Christian Form, and will then each describe their aspirations for Higher Education. Kirstie Richardson (course leader of Performance Studies and Improvisation) and Susie Cox (Foundation course director) will facilitate a discussion of the issues arising from the students' comments and more general questions concerning the needs of students with disabilities on HE dance programmes.
- 2.45 Tea/refreshments
- 3.15 Louise Katerega and dancers: **Presentation and film showing: The Green Coffee Group, The Phoenix Arts project and The Place Prize.** The Green Coffee Group is a practical think-tank dedicated to the advancement of dance involving disabled and non-disabled people at the highest professional standard in the UK.
- 4.15 **Reflection and Action Planning: Higher Education and the Profession**
 Forging links and ways forward
- 5.15 Close

Moving Matters: Supporting Disabled Dance Students in HE

Wednesday 21 November 2007
Coventry University, Ellen Terry Building, Jordan Well, Coventry

Programme

- 09.30 – 10.00 Registration and coffee
- 10.00 – 10.30 **Introductions and Welcome**
 (Sarah Whatley, Professor in Dance and Director, Centre for Media, Arts and Performance Coventry School of Art and Design, Coventry University)
- 10.30 – 11.45 **Shared Studio Session – the tools for translation**
 (Coventry University dance staff team: Katye Coe, Natalie Garrett, Cecilia Macfarlane, Polly Hudson, Amy Voris and Learning Support Assistants and Students)
- 11.45 – 12.00 Break - refreshments
- 12.00 – 13.00 Performance sharing followed by panel discussion
 (Coventry University recent graduates and staff team)
- 13.00 – 13.45 Buffet lunch and LSA networking
- 13.45 – 14.15 **New contexts for integrated dance practice; moving into HE**
 (Adam Benjamin, Dance Artist, www.adambenjamin.co.uk)
- 14.15 – 15.00 Parallel Session:
1. **The Role of the Dance Support Specialist at CandoCo Dance Company**
 (Susie Cox, ADAPT Project Director, CandoCo Dance Company, www.candoco.uk)
 2. **Finding the right fit: adapting learning and assessment to meet the needs of the individual**
 (Kate Marsh, Freelance Dance Teacher)
- 15.00 – 15.30 Break - refreshments
- 15.30 - 16.15 **Project Volume**
 (Susan Norwood, Artistic Director, Project Volume)
- 16.15 – 16.45 Plenary
- 16.45 Close

Further information

Delegates can participate or witness. Please bring loose clothing and come prepared to move if participating. Practical sessions may also be filmed. During the lunch break, Learning Support Assistants are invited to meet and discuss with a view to forming a support network.

Appendix D: Contact list of artists, companies and organizations

The lists below are by no means exhaustive - to locate other companies and teachers involved in inclusive practice in your own area approach your local dance agency, browse the web or approach one of the contacts in the list - most of whom will be able to point you in the right direction.

Dance Artists/Companies

Amici Dance Theatre Company

c/o Turtle Key Arts
Ladbroke Hall
79 Barbly Road
LONDON W10 6AZ

Tel: 020 8964 5060
Email: tkas@amicidance.org
Web: www.amicidance.org

Anjali Dance Company

The Mill Arts Centre
Spiceball Park
BANBURY OX16 8QE

Tel: 01295 251909
Email: info@anjali.co.uk
Web: www.anjali.co.uk

Adam Benjamin

Email: info@adambenjamin.co.uk
Web: www.adambenjamin.co.uk

Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company

The Lantern
Meadow Farm Drive
SHREWSBURY SY1 4NG

Tel: 01743 210830
Email: admin@blueeyedsouldance.com
Web: www.blueeyedsouldance.com

Caroline Bowditch

Email:
cbowditch@dundeereptheatre.co.uk

Rachel Bradbear

Email: rlbradbear@yahoo.com
Web: www.innerarts.co.uk

CandoCo Dance Company

2T Leroy House
436 Essex Road
LONDON N1 3QP

Tel: 020 7704 6845
Email: info@candoco.co.uk
Web: www.candoco.co.uk

Common Ground Sign Dance Theatre

32-36 Hanover Street
Gostins Building (4th floor)
LIVERPOOL L1 4LN

Tel: 0151 707 8033
Text phone: 0151 707 8380
Email: info@signdance.com
Web: www.signdance.com

Charlotte Darbyshire

Email: C.Darbyshire@laban.org

Coral Dance Company

Oval House Theatre
52-54 Kennington Oval
London SE11 5SW

Tel: 020 7091 7113
Email: corali@btconnect.com
Web: www.coral.org.uk

FRONTLINEdance

38 Lynn Avenue
Talke
STOKE-ON-TRENT ST7 1PA

Tel: 01782 285754

Email: admin@frontlinedance.org.uk
Web: www.frontlinedance.org.uk

Green Candle Dance Company

Oxford House
Derbyshire Street
Bethnal Green
LONDON E2 6HG

Tel: 020 7739 7722
Text: 020 7729 6786
Email: info@greencandledance.com
Web: www.greencandledance.com

Louise Katerega

Email: louise@footinhand.co.uk

Magpie Dance

The Churchill
High Street
BROMLEY BR1 1HA

Tel: 020 8290 6633
Email: info@maggiedance.org.uk
Web: www.maggiedance.org.uk

Kate Marsh

Email: ktmarshy@talk21.com

Jo Parkes MobileDance

Email: info@mobiledance.org
Web: www.mobiledance.org

Project Volume

Email: theprojectvolume@aol.com

Salamanda Tandem

Email: info@salamanda-tandem.org
Web site: www.salamanda-tandem.org

Signdance Collective

c/o Penn School
Church Road
Penn Village
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HP10 8LZ

Tel: +44 7963 111297 (UK)
Tel: +31 641894508 (NL)
Email: signin@signdancecollective.co.uk
Email: signdancecollective@gmail.com
Web: www.signdancecollective.co.uk

StopGAP Dance Company

Farnham Maltings
Bridge Square
FARNHAM GU9 7QR

Tel: 01252 745443
Email: [via web site](http://www.stopgap.uk.com)
Web: www.stopgap.uk.com

Touchdown Dance

Waterside Arts Centre
SALE M33 7ZF

Tel: 0161 912 5760
Email: info@touchdowndance.co.uk
Web: www.touchdowndance.co.uk

Disability Arts Organizations

arcadea

(formerly Northern Disability Arts Forum)
MEA House
Ellison Place
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8XS

Tel: 0191 222 0708 (voice/fax)
Tel: 0191 261 2238 (minicom)
Email: info@arcadea.org
Web: www.arcadea.org

Aspire National Training Centre

Wood Lane
Stanmore
MIDDLESEX HA7 4AP

Tel: 020 8954 5759
Email: info@aspire.org.uk
Web: www.aspire.org.uk

Dada-South

PO Box 136
Cranbrook,
Kent TN17 9AD

Tel: 01580 714642
Email: use form on the web site
Web: www.dada-south.org.uk

Disability Arts in Shropshire (DASH)

The Lantern
Meadow Farm Drive
SHREWSBURY SY1 4NG

Tel: 01743 210840
Text: 07807 615531
Email: info@dasharts.org
Web: www.dasharts.org

Full Circle Arts

(Disability Arts North West)
7 Schoolhouse
Second Avenue
Trafford Park Village
MANCHESTER M17 1DZ

Tel: 0161 872 0326
Email: use form on the web site
Web: www.full-circle-arts.co.uk

Inter-Action MK

The Old Rectory
Waterside
Peartree Bridge
MILTON KEYNES MK6 3EJ

Tel: 01908 678514 (voice/minicom)
Email: info@interaction.clara.co.uk
Web: www.interactionmk.org.uk

Kaleido

(Disability and Deaf Arts South West)
Bradninch Place
Gandy Street
EXETER EX4 3LS

Tel: 01392 219440
Email: info@kaleidoarts.org
Web: www.kaleidoarts.org

London Disability Arts Forum

20-22 Waterson Street
LONDON E2 8HE UK

Tel: 020 7739 1133
Email: info@ldaf.org
Web: www.ldaf.org

North West Disability Arts Forum

MPAC Building
1-27 Bridport Street
LIVERPOOL L3 5QF

Tel: 0151 707 1733
Minicom: 0151 706 0365
Email: nwdaf@nwdaf.co.uk
Web: www.nwdaf.com

Shape

Deane House Studios
27 Greenwood Place
LONDON NW5 1LB

Tel: 0845 521 3457
Minicom: 020 7424 7330
Email: info@shapearts.org.uk
Web: www.shapearts.org.uk

Support/Training Organizations

Council for Dance Education and Training

Old Brewer's Yard
17-19 Neal Street
Covent Garden
LONDON WC2H 9UY

Tel: 0207 240 5703
Email: info@cdet.org.uk
Web: www.cdet.org.uk

Coventry University

Priory Street
COVENTRY CV1 5FB

Tel: 024 7688 7688
Web: www.coventry.ac.uk

Recruitment and Admission enquiries:
Tel: 024 7615 2222
Email: studentenquiries@coventry.ac.uk

East London Dance

Stratford Circus
Theatre Square
LONDON E15 1BX

Tel: 020 8279 1050
Email: office@eastlondondance.org
Web: www.eastlondondance.org

Foundation for Community Dance

LCB Depot
31 Rutland Street
LEICESTER LE1 1RE

Tel: 0116 253 3453
Email: info@communitydance.org.uk
Web: www.communitydance.org.uk

Potential Email Update: programme of work which focuses on dance and disabled people.

Email:
potential@communitydance.org.uk

Hereward College

Bramston Crescent
Tile Hill
COVENTRY CV4 9SW

Tel: 024 7646 1231 (minicom available)
Email: enquiries@hereward.ac.uk
Web: www.hereward.ac.uk

Independent Dance

Siobhan Davies Studios
85 St George's Road
LONDON SE1 6ER

Tel: 020 7091 9650
Email: use form on the web site
Web: www.independentdance.co.uk



Photo courtesy of CandoCo Dance Company,
photographer Belinda Lawley

JISC TechDis Service

The Higher Education Academy Building
Innovation Way
York Science Park
YORK YO10 5BR

Tel: 01904 717580
Email: helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk
Web: www.techdis.ac.uk

The JISC TechDis Service aims to be the leading educational advisory service, working across the UK, in the fields of accessibility and inclusion.

Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
COVENTRY CV1 2WT

Tel: 0845 019 4170
Email: info@lsc.gov.uk
Web: www.lsc.gov.uk

The LSC administers the Dance and Drama Awards and has up-to-date information on disability information for students.

Web: danceanddrama.lsc.gov.uk

Jo Verrent, freelance adviser to the Dance and Drama Awards scheme on disability issues

Email: joverrent@adainc.org

Newham VI Form College

Prince Regent Lane
LONDON E13 8SG

Tel: 020 7473 4110
Email: schools@newvic.ac.uk
Web: www.newvic.ac.uk

