

Creativity in primary level dance education: Moving beyond assumption

Introduction

This paper represents the final layer of analysis which was carried out in relation to a doctoral study investigating the conceptions of and approaches to creativity of three expert specialist dance teachers within late primary age dance education in the UK. Paralleling developments within the mainstream creativity in education practice and research communities in the United Kingdom which saw endeavours shift from investigating the nature of creativity and its nurture to problematising creativity, this research journeyed through a number of analytic phases to offer a variety of insights into creativity in dance education at the primary level.

In its early stages, between 2001 and 2003, the research was taking place in the context of the afterglow of the National Advisory Committee on Creativity and Cultural Education Report (NACCCE, 1999), and initiatives which stemmed from it such as Creative Partnerships (www.creative-partnerships.com, ongoing). Of particular relevance to dance education, the report and subsequent initiatives had advocated that school children should have the opportunity to develop creativity in learning via collaborative partnerships making best use of the UK's creative wealth. As part of this 'creative wealth', dance education organisations were identified as key potential partners in the drive for developing creativity.

As Projects Manager within the Laban Education and Community Programme (www.laban.org/labane/education_community.phtml), this directly impacted on my work with dance artists and educators within the programme¹. At this point it is important to acknowledge that the three expert specialist dance teachers involved in the study are of a very particular kind.

¹ This Education and Community Programme is part of Laban, one of the leading conservatoire's for dance artist training in the United Kingdom. It runs classes, workshops, projects and teacher development sessions in dance, in a wide variety of life-long educational and community settings, across London and nationwide in partnership with dance organisations, agencies and professional dance companies. (www.laban.org/labane/education_community.phtml)

Their professional identity can be defined as a hybrid of dance educator and dance artist. They teach on short-term contracts and in visiting capacities both in projects designed and established by dance educators and projects responding to the government agenda. They all have extensive experience as dance educators with some degree of experience, either past or present of creating and/or performing as a dance artist.

Increasingly, as a team, we found ourselves surrounded by claims, assumptions, directives, definitions, funding and project awards focused on creativity. Initially this provoked questions around the nature of creativity in dance education, what it means to be able to teach for creativity within dance, and what this means in relation to the wider current educational agenda.

Responding to these questions of the 'what' and 'how' of creativity for these expert specialist dance teachers in the context of the creativity agenda in the UK, formed the main body of the research.

A secondary analytic focus arising during the study and guided by researchers such as Russell and Munby (1991) and Tillema (2004), involved framing the specialist dance teachers' conceptions and practice in relation to creativity in terms of the pedagogical dilemmas or puzzles that they encountered. Grounded in Schön's (1987) epistemology of practice, these researchers argue that this way of framing can be used to describe an inner debate between action and professional views, providing insight into the link between teachers concepts and their solutions to problems. A focus on dilemmas or puzzles and their situational solutions also provides a way of articulating experts' approaches to teaching for creativity which can be used by other teachers to stimulate flexible and situationally responsive reflective practice, without becoming constrained into rigid 'how to' guides to teaching for creativity.

The emergence of dilemmas as a secondary analytic focus mirrored an increasingly felt need within the mainstream creativity in education practice and research communities to problematise creativity in educational settings as the initial afterglow of the NACCCE Report (1999) faded (e.g.

Craft, 2005; Jeffery, 2005; Murphy, McCormick, Lunn, Davidson and Jones, 2004). Similarly as creativity was increasingly put under the spotlight in the dance education realm, concern was growing regarding the assumption that dance education labelled as 'creative' inherently engenders creativity by default of the activities therein. There was therefore perceived danger for some of choreography becoming formulaic rather than truly encouraging creativity (e.g. Ackroyd, 2001). The risk of formulaic choreographic processes and products being produced within supposedly creative experiences in school dance education has also been highlighted again more recently by Jobbins (2006), and in arts education generally within the recent Ofsted Report of Creative Partnerships which states "sometimes in arts subjects creativity was assumed when it was not necessarily evident" (p. 3, Ofsted, 2006). This secondary analytic focus of the dilemmas that the dance teachers faced and overcame provided an insightful way of moving beyond the assumption of creativity within dance education. Within the situations being studied in this research, the dilemmas provided a way of articulating the issues and tensions which might be endangering meaningful creative experiences for the learner in dance education.

Theoretical Framework

In theoretically contextualising and conceptualising this study, a framework was developed which brought together previous theorising and research from both national and international mainstream creativity in education and dance education literature. Craft's (2000) theory of "little c creativity" (p. 3) and its overlapping lenses of people, process and domain was particularly influential.

The theory was prioritised and given in depth consideration for a number of reasons. Firstly, Craft's (Craft et al, 1997) work is cited within the NACCCE report (1999) and as such this work and developments since (2000, 2002) provide a key part of the research now contributing to the creativity in education agenda in England. It might also be argued that it is the most fully developed 'theory of creativity in education' existing in relation to the English educational context

at the time of this research. Secondly, Craft (2000) incorporates and inter-relates a great deal of the existing strands and debates surrounding creativity in education shortly after the NACCCE Report was published. This includes those aspects of the psychoanalytic, humanist, cognitive, personality and social systems approaches to creativity which might be most fruitfully inter-related and applied into a theory of 'everyday' creativity which is conceptually appropriate to educational settings. For these reasons the work was considered as a key influence on the context and environment within which the specialist dance teachers were and are working.

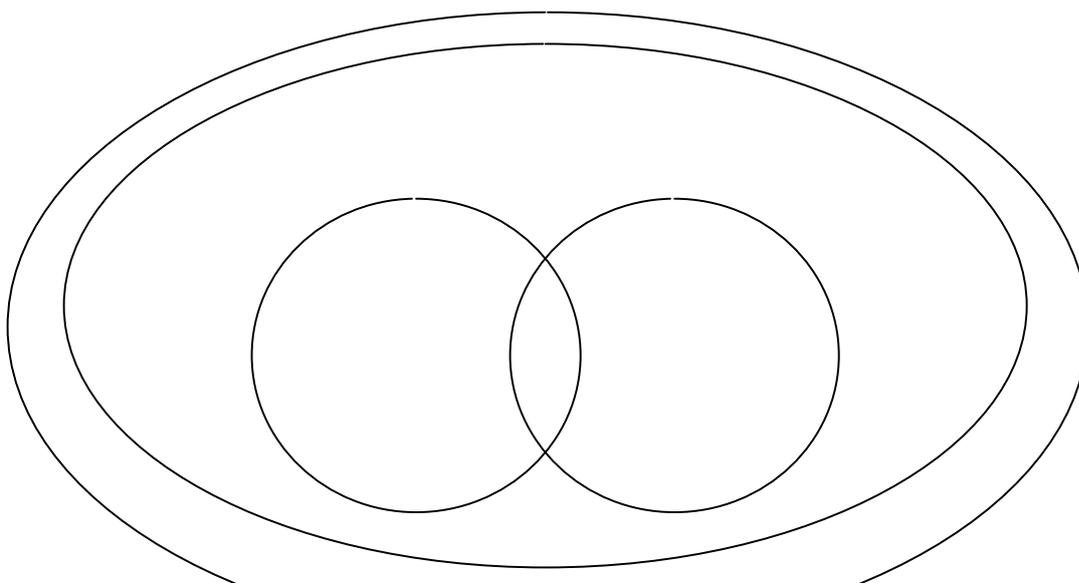
Thirdly, because of the theory's selection and inter-relation of a variety of approaches, as Craft (2000) herself argues, the conceptual strands within the theory stretch beyond the 'imaginative activity' at the heart of the NACCCE Report's (1999) definition of creativity. She therefore acknowledges and incorporates criticisms of the cognitive (e.g. Torrance, 1963) and personality (e.g. Shallcross, 1981) approaches and their attempted resolution within the systems theory approach (e.g. Feldman, Csizsentmihalyi and Gardner, 1994). This is important for this study, because as will be exemplified below, the theory's strands resonate with and articulate aspects of creativity implicit within much of the dance education literature's discussions of creativity.

Craft (2000, 2002) uses two (individual and domain) of the three (individual, field, domain) strands of the framework from the social systems theory approach to creativity, because they emphasise the importance of seeing creativity as coming from the interaction of people and the wider domain in which they are working. It must be noted that Craft extends the notion of the individual and their intelligences within Feldman et al's theory to the notion of 'people' in order to incorporate more of an idea of "personal-as-a-whole" (Craft, 2000, p. 18). Craft also sees Feldman et al's (1994) framework as not satisfactorily acknowledging the role of processes as part of creativity, and introduces this as the third interactional node within her theory.

When compared with the dance education creativity literature, these strands - people, process, domain - resonate with and articulate aspects of creativity implicit within much of that literature.

In particular, connections can be made between Craft's articulation of people and Smith-Autard's (1994) discussions of the individual, and subjectivity incorporated in creativity within the UK Midway Model of Dance Education, also Americans Green (1993), Stinson (1998) and Shapiro's (1998) foci on self and agency at the heart of creativity in dance. Similarly connections are apparent between Craft's discussion of processes and Smith-Autard's (1994) foci on the intertwined processes of creating, performing and appreciating inherent within creative activity, Redfern's (1982) articulation of imagination in dance, American Hanstein's (1990) development of the Artistic Process Skill Model incorporating creativity, and Schwartz (1993), Lynch Fraser (1991) and Lindqvist's (2001) considerations of play as part of creative dance processes. In this way the strands of Craft's (2000) theory catalyse and bring into shape the conceptual framework for this study, within which the dance teachers conceptions of and approaches to creativity were studied.

When visually representing people, process and domain, Craft (Craft et al, 1997) overlaps all three components in a three-dimensional venn diagram. As this study was considering aspects of people and process within a particular domain, the configuration of the three strands, which made the most sense in terms of facilitating this study, prioritised people and process within the wider circle of domain (see Figure 1). For the purposes of this study, environment was also explicitly included within the visual representation of the framework, as it emerged as fundamentally important to investigating teaching for creativity and how the dance teachers' conceptions and approaches are shaped and influenced by experience and situation. Craft includes environment within their discussions but not her diagrammatic representation.



PEOPLE

PROCESSES

DOMAIN

ENVIRONMENT

Figure 1: The inter-acting strands of the conceptual framework

Relation between Theory and Research

It is important to emphasise that framing the study in this way does not represent an attempt to consider every potential aspect of the interaction between people and process within domain and environment. The framework is not an attempt to test or develop a new theory of creativity in dance education. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), drawing on Glaser and Strauss' (1967), make a distinction between 'substantive' and 'formative' theory which is useful in understanding this point. The former is described as being more 'topical', concerned with types of people and situations readily identified in everyday language. The latter is described as being more 'generic' and abstracted, developed more for a formal or conceptual area of sociological enquiry. It is theory building of the substantive kind that was carried out here in response to emergent findings; that is theory building in relation to a particular group of dance teachers, in a particular area of their conceptions and approaches.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) also distinguish between micro and macro levels of analysis; the former referring to local forms of organisation, the latter referring to "large scale systems of social relations linking many different settings to one another through causal relations" (p. 204). This study works in the area of micro level theory building, that is expert specialist dance

teachers' conception of and approaches to teaching for creativity in specific educational contexts, focused on a specific set of relationships.

In building theory of whichever kind, Bassey (1999) argues that it is vital to "relate the argument or story to any relevant research in the literature". He is clear that finding a new piece of the theoretical puzzle is of limited value unless it can be fitted into a growing picture. Merriam (1988) argues that "the process is one of flexible interaction between phenomenon and theory" and that "theory permeates the entire process" (p. 60).

Existing theory was therefore used in this study in the early stages as both Merriam (1988) and Bassey (1999) recommend in order for the researcher to interpret and synthesise what has been published in relation to conceptions of and approaches to creativity in dance education and in mainstream educational research. This literature reviewing process also fed into the honing of the research questions alongside early time in the field (see Chappell, 2006a, section 3.4 for full details of how this theoretical framework encapsulated and related to the subsidiary research questions).

Although analysis was carried out inductively using the grounded theory method (see method section below), as Merriam (1988) makes clear, on occasion, existing theory and deduction can feed in. Merriam (1988) argues that the insights that inform new theory (in this case substantive micro level theory) can come from existing theory as well as one's imagination, personal experience and others' experience. For Glaser and Strauss' (1967) the key to using existing theory in this way "is to line up what one takes as theoretically possible or probable with what one is finding in the field" (p. 253), rather than "merely selecting data for a category that has been established by another theory" (p. 37).

In the final analysis and write up stages, the relationship between theory and research remained interactive, in order to demonstrate the significance of the findings, the 'new piece of the

theoretical puzzle', in relation to the existing theoretical picture synthesised within the literature review. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) have argued that on one level substantive theory building can obviously contribute to substantive theory – in this case theory relating to expert specialist dance teachers' conceptions of and approaches to creativity. They are also clear that, if applied carefully making clear connections, findings from substantive studies can also be applied to other areas of substantive theory and more general categories of relevant formal theory – in this case theory relating to aspects of teaching for creativity in other areas of education. Both of these kinds of contributions are therefore considered later for this study.

Methodology & Methods

The research methodology was firmly grounded within the qualitative interpretive realm, acknowledging reality as socially constructed and investigating meaning within that paradigm (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). This was coupled with Stenhouse's (1985) multi-case educational case study approach, which allowed for the development of understanding of the complexity and particularity of each dance teachers' conceptions of and approaches to creativity in context. Data collection methods used within the study were: stimulated recall semi-structured interviews with dance teachers and children; participant observation in classes; video (particularly useful for later task analysis) and photography; collection of documentation; and reflective diaries. The research was designed to allow the researcher to consecutively spend a period of approximately twelve weeks in the field with each dance teacher, carrying out cycles of data collection and analysis, followed by an extended period of analysis, applying the principles of constant comparative analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) throughout.

Early analysis involved immersion in the data, starting afresh in each site to cyclically work through fieldnotes, video and photographic data, documentation, and interview transcripts, as they were generated to create code labels, and then categories. *Italics* used in the text below indicate category and sub-category labels developed during analysis (the full final category list is

provided in Appendix 1). Double quotation marks indicate the participants' own words. By the beginning of case three, it became apparent that the emerging categories had strong similarities for all three teachers, with the differences lying in the subtle dynamic relationships between sub-categories. Memo and vignette writing, reflective diaries, and diagrammatic manipulation of data, working through iterations with the dance teachers, were invaluable during this process.

In order for detailed analysis to take place, particularly to understand the subtle differences in pedagogy (e.g. see Balancing Personal/Collective Voice and Craft/Compositional Knowledge dilemma below), it was necessary to then develop a task analysis system. Firstly, an interim categorisation system was developed which investigated task dynamics. It included type of task, the dance teachers' delivery style, and aspects of the dance teachers' internal task structure. Secondly, a pro forma and questioning structure was developed to provide a structure within which the researcher could use the interim categorisation system, and develop it into the final version which can be seen in Appendix 1. All analytic activity sought to achieve trustworthiness, quality and rigour through the application of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) principles of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Further information including detailed examples of task analysis can be found within Chappell (2006a, section 4.8).

The generalisations to be made from the findings of this study are of a particular kind. Fortin and Siedentop (1995), drawing on Shulman (1983), are clear that studies of this nature are aiming for generalisations described as 'images of the possible'. Key to this (Schofield, 1993) is the use of contextualising descriptions. This allows the reader to understand the details of the situation from within which the findings were generated, and to compare these with the situation to which they are looking to apply them, in order to judge for applicability.

Research Participants

The selection strategy for the study was based in both reputational selection (Goetz and Lecompte, 1984), participants chosen on the recommendation of key informants, and theoretical representativeness, seeking out participants who can most effectively contribute to the theoretical area under consideration (Patton, 1990). Three specialist dance teachers were selected using the researchers' networks of contacts through the Education and Community Programme at LABAN. It was important that the teachers were interested to take part in the study and to spend time reflecting on their ideas and practice.

Also important were research ethics, which were considered and enacted through a set of protocols based on the code of the City University Senate Ethics Committee (http://www.city.ac.uk/acdev/academic_framework/re/research_ethics.html) including Criminal Record Bureau checking procedures. The emphasis was on working to a code of conduct, informed participant consent (including from parents/carers of all children involved), protecting participants from harm, inclusion of debriefing, monitoring of participants' experiences, the right to withdraw from the research at any time and confidentiality. Regarding the latter, the research aimed for 'untraceability', as the use of photography and video made it difficult to ensure complete confidentiality; this was made clear within consent forms. By not using the participants' names' or the school names it was ensured that the information would be untraceable when published. Following the completion of the research, the dance teachers were asked in their final member check interview if they agreed to their names being used in order to credit their contribution. All three teachers wished to be credited. All other names remain as pseudonyms.

Although all 'expert specialist dance teachers', the three teachers have very different backgrounds. Michael has been working as a dance teacher for over fifteen years. He has a Bachelor of Arts and Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in Drama and English, a Masters in Education, Community Dance Leaders qualifications, and has taught dance and drama at secondary level for seven years. At the time of the research, he had been working as

an Advisory Teacher for Dance, an Associate of a National Dance Agency, and as Director of a Youth Theatre. He also undertakes work as a dance PGCE course lecturer, and choreographs for a variety of theatre companies.

During the research, Michael was teaching two Year Five classes, in a project brokered between the Laban Education and Community Programme and a local Excellence in Cities Action Zone (a Department for Education and Skills targeted programme of support for schools in deprived areas). The Zone had had a professional relationship with the Laban Programme for a number of years with the main aims of: using the arts to raise attainment in key skills and the core curriculum, promoting citizenship and social inclusion, developing expertise and skills in the arts, particularly for talented pupils, and increasing levels of parental participation. The project was taking place in an inner-city multi-ethnic primary school classed as being in a deprived area.

The children had had relatively little dance experience and the project was requested by the school in order to address this and to build self-esteem and confidence, to improve team building and taking on responsibility of being 'the maker', and show appreciation. Michael designed the project in two half term blocks, focused on an African creation story and on Space. Half way through the term Michael also accompanied the children to see a professional dance performance choreographed for children. There was no performance outcome to the project.

Amanda has taught dance in a variety of settings for just over fifteen years, having gained a degree in dance theatre in England and a Masters in Dance in the USA. At the time of the research, she was a freelance dance teacher for the education and community programmes of two prominent Dance Higher Education institutions; and a Lecturer at the same two institutions. Amanda is also Co-Director of a professional dance company, performs professionally for other companies, and teaches professionally in a freelance capacity for National Dance Agencies and dance companies.

During the research, Amanda was teaching a Year Six class in a project also brokered between the Laban Education and Community Programme and the local Excellence in Cities Action Zone. The children were approaching their Year Six SAT's (UK National Curriculum based Statutory Assessment Tests in English, Maths and Science) and their class teacher felt the students needed more overall confidence and risk taking ability to succeed in the tests. The main project aims were therefore agreed to provide opportunities through dance for the children to find ways: of asserting themselves and being pro-active; of pushing themselves beyond their usual safe boundaries; of increasing their confidence in themselves; and of understanding decision making and the consequences of their actions.

Amanda used a film of 'freerunners' (a recent urban sport which involves finding inventive ways of navigating city spaces by running, climbing, jumping around/on urban landscapes) as the starting point. The project culminated in two sharings of process, one to the rest of the school and one to parents from across the school.

Kate has been teaching dance for twenty years, within which time she has also spent eight years full-time raising her three children. She has a Bachelor of Humanities in Art and Dance and a Postgraduate Certificate in Performing Arts, and has worked as an Outreach Dance Worker for a National Dance Agency, as a Community Dance Worker, and a Dance Animateur, and has co-founded two dance in education companies.

At the time of the research, Kate was working as a dance teacher for the Education and Community Programme at Laban, and was lecturing in dance choreography and criticism in a Further Education College. During the research, Kate was teaching ongoing Saturday morning creative dance classes at Laban to ten to eleven year olds. The aims of the classes, as detailed in Laban publicity, were 'to draw on children's natural abilities, encouraging their potential and building confidence as their movement vocabulary develops', and 'through creative dance,

explore and develop dance ideas, choreograph dances and be introduced to basic technical skills'.

The children attending the classes came from the same geographical catchment area covered by the Education Action Zone detailed above. Indeed, two children in the class attended the schools in which Michael and Amanda were teaching. The classes were less multi-ethnic than the school classes however, children attended voluntarily in their spare time, and their parents paid termly for classes (a rate of approximately three pounds per class).

During the research period, Kate and the children were preparing a piece for performance in the three hundred seat professional theatre at Laban to be watched by friends and family. The piece grew out of discussions about 'supportive relationships' between Kate and the children.

As the researcher, I took on the role of interpreter (Stake, 1995) of the actions and reflections of these three expert specialist dance teachers, increasingly with interpretive input from the teachers themselves. By so doing, the aim was that these interpretations would build on existing theory where appropriate, and make developments accessible to others. Throughout, I therefore shifted between "becoming the other" (p. 49, Ely et al, 1991) and bringing critical awareness to bear to encourage reflection from a distance.

I brought my background in psychology (undergraduate degree, Oxford University) and social sciences/education/dance (Masters level study, Laban) including understanding of creativity in education theory. This was integrated with training (London Contemporary Dance School) and professional experience as a freelance dance artist and most recently, as a Projects Manager (Laban Education and Community Programme), a role which involved brokering and managing partnerships between specialist dance teachers and schools/ community providers (including two of the projects studied within the research), and organising dance teacher continuing professional development. This combination of experiences motivated me to initially raise questions with the

dance teachers about the creativity agenda in relation to dance education, and gave me a desire to contribute both to increasing understanding of creativity in dance education in the current climate, and to making that accessible to other dance education professionals.

Findings

Conceptions and Approaches

As detailed above the focus on the dilemmas surrounding creativity faced by the dance teachers was secondary to the question as to the dance teachers' conceptions of and approaches to creativity. Findings generated by questions of the 'what' and 'how' of creativity have been analysed, critiqued and published in considerable detail in Chappell (2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2007, in press) and will only be very briefly summarised here in order to contextualise the dilemmas.

Analysed within the context of the 'people' dimension of the study's theoretical framework, all three dance teachers recognised certain personal attributes and dance-based preparations that they conceived of as being *foundational* to the creative process. They were all "*fuelling*" the children, often with their own passionate engagement, so as to encourage: "motivation", tenacity and an "attitude that valued dance". They were particularly keen to stimulate the children's "curiosity" and their "*openness to the unusual*" (particularly with reference "to what dance might be") and "confidence" to be so. As foundational to creativity, the dance teachers also encouraged understanding of an *embodied way of knowing* which was layered through "*sensing*", "*seeing*" using a "*thinking body-mind*" leading to "*whole self awareness*" (particularly see Chappell, 2006a, section 5.1).

One further aspect of the 'people' dimension, fundamental to facilitating creativity for the dance teachers was the importance of relationship and of conceptualising creativity as *individual, collaborative and communal*. This was grounded in *reciprocity*, the ability to comprehend other people's perceptions, ideas and "ways of doing things", together with the ability to "respond to

them". They encouraged *individual creativity* alongside *collaborative creativity* so that individual creative endeavours informed collaborative creative activities, and vice versa, the outcomes of collaborative interactions fuelled *individual creativity* (being clear that their own creativity as dance educators/artists was authentically expressed within these interactions).

Various dynamics of collaborative creativity were identified with the dance teachers: *controversial collaborations* (experiencing conflicting perspectives or approaches and finding ways of negotiating these); *complementary collaborations* (taking complementary roles within the creative process to achieve the outcome); *integrative collaborations* (using commonalities to take similar roles and perspectives within the creative process); *inclusive leadership* (individuals leading pairs or groups in an inclusive, consultative way). *Communal creativity* was seen as a higher order style of collaborative creativity in which individual and collaborative creative outcomes were wound together leading to the development of a "*group movement identity*" and *interaction with wider circles of community* (particularly see Chappell, 2006a, section 5.2 & Chappell, 2006b).

Analysed within the context of the 'process' dimension of the study's theoretical framework, and interacting with the above aspects of 'people', all three dance teachers identified four crucial activities which constituted *creating the dance* or the creative process. These were: "*immersion in being the dance*" (absorption in being the dance, closely connected to the *embodied way of knowing* articulated above); the *interrelationship of generating possibilities and homing in on possibilities* (with increasingly complex relationships between these two encouraged as children progressed); "*physical and dramatic imagination*" (the former prioritised over the latter in order to prevent 'acting as if'); and "*capture*" (the ability to use intuition combining both feeling and knowledge to judge which ideas to choose and which to discard as part of their decision making process when developing dance ideas and dances) (particularly see Chappell, 2006a, section 5.3).

The Dilemmas and their Solutions

Grounded within this analysis of the specialist dance teachers' conceptions of and approaches to the 'people' and 'process' aspects of creativity, common dilemmas emerged which, whilst acknowledging the positives of creativity in dance and what it has to offer education, brought to light the underlying issues and problems, particularly pedagogically, which were pertinent to these dance teachers.

Readiness & Rarity

Almost immediately apparent in the early stages of the fieldwork with all three teachers were the related dilemmas of "*readiness*" and *rarity*. Working with children less experienced in both dance and in being creative, Michael particularly commented on the tension between developing the children's "*readiness*" for creativity in dance, and proceeding immediately to generative creative tasks which engaged the children in creating their own dances. "*Readiness*" was related to encouraging the most useful personal attributes for creativity in dance and positive attitudes towards it: "valuing", "motivation", tenacity, "curiosity", "*openness to the unusual*" and *reciprocity*.

Rarity was closely linked to "*readiness*", and was a phrase coined by Kate. It referred to the fact that even when children were more experienced and on one level "ready for creativity", that original and authentic creative outcomes were still "special", rare events that would "not necessarily occur in every lesson". The tension lay in creating an expectation that the children were capable of original and authentic dance outcomes, but that this was not to pressure them into feeling they had to be able to produce personally original dances at any given moment.

The dance teachers identified that these dilemmas were, on one level a result of the creativity agenda itself (which to some extent was intensified by the teachers' involvement in this research). They perceived a pressure that children should be seen to be being creative within 'creative' dance classes as 'creative' dance is often identified as a 'creativity provider'. Implicit therein, was the perceived danger that movement activity that was in fact purely generative might be mistakenly accepted in dance classes for original creative dance outcomes.

For both dilemmas, not only does this relate to the aspects of 'people' important to creativity identified above, but it also strongly relates to the identified process aspect of "*capture*" (the ability to use intuition combining both feeling and knowledge to judge which ideas to pin down and which to leave by the wayside). For the dance teachers, generating "unusual" movement was not enough; they were simultaneously encouraging children to use their developing dance knowledge and feelings related to that to selectively create dances which would be original and "meaningful" for them, and in some more advanced cases, in comparison to their peers too.

The dance teachers therefore relied on their previous experience to hold on to the principles of "*readiness*" and *rarity*. Although maintaining high expectations of the children, they did not allow pressures from outside agendas to force them to push children to attempt to be immediately and constantly generative "for its own sake". For example, in Michael's case, he had confidence in his previous experience and judgement to spend time valuing dance and the dance project with the children, sparking their "curiosity" and encouraging them "to be more *open*". He also addressed "motivational" issues and the children's ability to work reciprocally, before engaging them in creative tasks. Also, all three teachers were always clear to distinguish between dance ideas which were "simply interesting" and those which had value and were appropriate in relation to the dance ideas on which the class was working.

Looking across all three teachers' practice, their highlighting these dilemmas connects with recent comment made within the Creative Partnerships Ofsted Report (Ofsted, 2006) that sometimes within creative interventions "pupils starting points were insufficiently identified" (p. 3). The dance teachers' articulation of the dilemmas of "*readiness*" and *rarity* demonstrate the importance of "starting from where the students are" when teaching for creativity, rather than assuming the efficacy of perhaps repeatedly-used generative creative dance tasks. For these dance teachers time spent, where appropriate, on "readying" the children personally for creativity and

emphasising the complexity and effort involved in successful “*capture*” of ideas, is fundamental to engaging students in creating personally inspired and original dances.

Ways of Knowing in Socially Constructed Learning

Underlying the dance teachers’ teaching for creativity was another tension, that between *verbal language-based ways of knowing* and physical, *embodied ways of knowing*. Kate perceived the tension between task setting and feedback delivered verbally and that delivered physically and non-verbally, which she called teacher “overtalking”; Amanda identified the related issue of learners wanting to create by “talking” their dances. For both teachers this led to ill-embodied movement creations where *language-based ways of knowing* had overly dominated. Conversely, in Michael’s particular setting, the tension was working in the opposite direction with children happy to give themselves over to embody their dance ideas, but then unable to see through their creative process using verbalised critical reflections.

Analysis and discussion with the dance teachers showed that these tensions relate to underlying theoretical arguments in education regarding the relationship between thought/learning and language. Particularly within the school settings in which Amanda and Michael were teaching, but also perhaps inherent within the approach to teaching and learning commonly experienced and brought into Kate’s community-based classes by the children, was a strong emphasis on learning as socially constructed. This approach to learning is rooted in the work of theorists such as Vygotsky (1962) who argued for learning as an active and social meaning-making process, rather than as a transmission activity. With an emphasis on the social aspects of teaching and learning, this approach therefore often also favours Vygotsky’s argument that thought development is determined by language. This in turn places a crucial emphasis on the language interactions of learners and teachers, as a means for learning development and articulation.

With this as a backdrop, the source of the dance teachers’ dilemma becomes clearer. For Kate and Amanda the issue stems from children used to articulating their learning verbally, and

therefore perhaps predisposed to go about creating dances, and learning how to create dances in a similar way. Kate and Amanda were therefore both constantly seeking new ways of achieving dances grounded in a strong understanding of what it meant to know in an embodied way.. For example, one of Kate's solutions was to "blow on the children", rather than use image-based language to give them the lightness of feeling that a particular movement required.

For Michael, solving the dilemma worked in the opposite direction. Within his setting there was a clear feeling from the children that dance was a release from the pressures of their curriculum and therefore potentially a time where "hard work" and "critical thinking" would not necessarily be expected of them. Michael therefore responded by encouraging the children to verbalise aspects of their dance creations using such strategies as written tasks, targeted questioning, and detailed modelling of critical appraisal of dances.

Looking across the three teachers' solutions in relation to the articulation of aspects of 'process' above, it might also be suggested that solving this dilemma in different classrooms, is closely related to understanding the relationship between "*immersion in being the dance*" and the ability to "*capture*" (the ability to use intuition combining both feeling and knowledge to judge which ideas to pin down and which to leave by the wayside). It was clear from working with this dilemma that there are times when it is appropriate to be immersed in an *embodied way of knowing* to generate movement ideas, and times when it is more appropriate to be able to use verbal, language-based ways of knowing as part of the process of "*capture*". Working in a responsive way with the children in each of the three different primary-age settings to develop understanding of these two processes and their relationship, was fundamental to the dance teachers being able to ensure that their practice moved beyond assumptions about the children's experience levels of *embodied and language based ways of knowing*, and was able to begin to authentically encourage creativity.

Balancing Personal/Collective Voice and Craft/Compositional Knowledge

Of all the identified dilemmas of teaching for creativity within this study, the most complex and carefully analysed was the tension between *balancing personal/collective voice and craft/compositional knowledge*. Because of this complexity, the full findings regarding this dilemma have been published separately (Chappell, 2007), but a summary will be offered below in order to articulate this dilemma alongside the others.

For the dance teachers, personal/collective voice concerned “what the children had to communicate”, and how they wanted to communicate it, individually and collaboratively. Craft/compositional knowledge was structured within Laban’s movement framework of body/action, relationships, space and dynamics, as well as basic solo and collaborative compositional skills, drawing in the core principles and relevant primary strategies of Smith-Autard’s (1994) Midway Model. In particular the combined balance was about the children understanding aesthetic conventions of how movement form could be used to communicate ideas in order that they could use these to creatively communicate their own ideas.

The dilemma relates to the expression and form debate, which is alive and well within dance education practice and literature – as highlighted in concerns regarding students’ producing formulaic choreography detailed above (Ackroyd, 2001; Jobbins, 2006); and more theoretically focused interrogation (e.g. Lavender and Predock-Linnell, 2001). The question is no longer expressionism (art as products of feelings publicly expressed, capable of evoking the same feelings in others) or formalism (aesthetic experience as the education of the perception of formal, structural and relational qualities which can be discerned through sense perception and in symbolic expressions) (Cooper, 1999), but, how might the two be intertwined and balanced? It is the achievement of this balance with late primary age children which lies at the heart of the dance teachers’ dilemma: balancing personal/collective voice and craft/compositional knowledge to teach for creativity.

Drawing on Best (1985), Smith-Autard (2002) advocates an equal emphasis on creativity, imagination, individuality, subjectivity and feelings, and acquisition/training of the techniques, knowledge and objective criteria of theatre dance. Smith-Autard (2002) and writers such as Gough (1999) clearly articulate teaching for this balance using the three processes of creating, performing and appreciating; with Smith-Autard (2002) particularly advocating the use of open-ended problem solving and directed teaching. In unpacking this dilemma the study delved into this suggestion to attempt to understand what this might mean for the expert specialist dance teachers teaching for creativity at the primary level.

All three teachers worked to balance voice and knowledge, yet their approaches to creativity represented different weightings between personal/collective voice and craft/compositional knowledge. Amanda offered the most equally weighted balance, with Kate weighted more strongly towards the development of personal/collective voice and Michael weighted towards craft/compositional knowledge. Of vital importance was the fact that although each teacher had a preferred weighting, these shifted dependent on situation, focused on the needs of the children within the project objectives.

The findings showed that the teachers were all using tasks and strategies from three core pedagogical spectra when solving this dilemma to teach for creativity. The three dimensions were intricately intertwined within the teachers' practice and were:

- prioritisation of *creative source* – “*inside out*” or *outside in* (whether the task source was prioritised in the children's ideas or the teachers' ideas/dance knowledge). This meant responsive shifting between inside or outside as sources of theme, movement and opinion, and, in so doing, at least to some extent, ensuring that the children experience the creative impulse as their own in order that they authentically gave voice to ideas which were meaningful to them in dance

- degrees of *proximity and intervention* (supporting and challenging creative ideas using *distanced reactivity* or *close-up proactivity*). Proximity was indicative of the amount of freedom the teachers allowed the children per se for creativity
- *spectrum of task structures - purposeful play to tight apprenticeship* (shifting between employing play based task structures characterised by “*risk-taking*”, “*acceptance of failure*”, “*fun, silliness and mess*”; and apprenticeship structures characterised by *tight parameters*, “*safety*” and “*structured stages*”, *progression contingent on “step-by-step success*” and “*hard work*”). Appropriate to the situation, this meant:
 - sharing responsibility for the creative idea gradually, immediately or passing it backwards and forwards to varying degrees
 - allowing differing amounts of keeping control and freedom from having control which
 - allowed for differing amounts of space within tasks for “bursts of creativity” or more sustained creative explorations

Identifying and successfully responding to this dilemma required by far the most complex and subtle pedagogical thinking and action of all the dilemmas detailed here. The articulation of this complexity suggests that we certainly cannot assume creativity when teaching in ‘creative’ dance classes, and that there is a subtlety, and wisdom of experience within teachers like these three expert specialists that is worthy of note, and consideration. In particular, the demonstrations of the spectra in use in response to this, the most complex of the dilemmas detailed here, may offer reflective starting points for other teachers to ask questions of their own solutions to this well-recognised dilemma and to aid further solution finding, evolution of practice, and identification of new dilemmas.

Balancing Individual, Collaborative & Communal Creativity

The pedagogical dilemma which arose regarding the dance teachers’ conception of creativity as *individual, collaborative and communal* (see above) was how to successfully incorporate both

individual and collaborative creative activity. For example, Michael was confronted by the issue of the children in his group having much less experience of collaborative working and the accompanying “social skills”, which therefore entailed the risk of ineffective collaborative creative activities which might disempower certain children. For Michael and Kate in particular there was also the accompanying question of how to successfully incorporate the range of possible collaborative dynamics, in particular *controversial collaborations* (see above), again without disempowering any of the children.

This dilemma relates to an underlying wider theoretical debate within education, that between conceptions of creativity dominantly influenced by individualisation and those grounded within a more collaborative and communal understanding of creativity (for example, that developed by John-Steiner, 2000, which was particularly valuable in developing ideas within this study). In unpacking this tension, Craft (2005), drawing on Jeffrey and Craft (2001), is useful. She argues that the universalisation of creativity is informed by discourse which emphasises creativity as empowering, particularly in relation to work. Craft states that part of this has involved a shift of responsibility for social change from government to individual, a shift reflected in how creativity is now conceptualised and encouraged within the UK education system. In addition, much creativity research is also shifting to focus on understanding cultures and climates within which individuals work, with regard to maximising performance. Craft (2005) argues that this situation represents a marketisation of creativity, grounded in liberal individualism where high value is placed on individuality and being able to think outside of societal norms. When the dilemma that the dance teachers face is considered in the light of this debate, it might be suggested that the root of the issue lies in this tension between the push for individualised creative path finding in mainstream education and the more collaborative and communal approach to creativity inherent within dance (and it might be argued other performing art forms).

Considering the dilemma in relation to this tension, Michael’s group had much lower levels of experience of working collaboratively than he would have expected for a Year Five group,

potentially because of a more individualised approach to creativity within that educational setting. Michael therefore chose to prioritise individual creativity first, before asking the children to contribute to collaborative creative activity. When they did move onto collaborative creative activity, Michael limited them to engaging in *complementary and integrative collaborations*, placing the emphasis on successful collaborations rather than introducing conflict. With a more dance and creatively experienced group, Kate was able to incorporate all four of the identified creative collaborative dynamics including controversial, conflict based collaborations as her group were equipped to deal with the negotiations therein.

The articulation of this dilemma and examples of solutions highlights the importance of paying attention to the relationship between *individual and collaborative creativity* and the range of dynamics inherent within the latter, when teaching for creativity in dance education. In the current UK climate, there is the potential for tensions to emerge because of different emphases in educational settings on individual and the collaborative creativity. Assumptions cannot therefore be made about children's starting points or about the way in which power dynamics in particular are then played out within group creativity tasks. The question is also raised of when and how teachers might approach the role of conflict in creativity. All three teachers' conceptions and Kate's community based practice suggest that, when appropriate, rather than being smoothed away or seen as undesirable, conflict might be engaged in and acknowledged as an active and contributory part of collaborative creative dynamics even for primary age children.

Polished Performance or Risk-taking?

The final pedagogical dilemma was related to the last dilemma and concerned the level of risk that could take place in performance. When performing communally creatively produced dances how much should be "polished" (that is rehearsed for correctness and uniformity) and what role might, for example, improvisation play as part of developing the children's understanding of creativity? This dilemma was mainly found in Kate's site, as she was the only one of the three teachers with a full performance outcome. It is best expressed in Kate's words: "you're expected

to deliver three or four minutes of something that's polished...and you see what happens to the energy and the interest level when you start to go, OK four counts of this – Maybe it should just be a structured improvisation and that's what...we should have the confidence to show”.

Kate's dilemma connects to a similar tension, described by Bannon and Sanderson (2000), within tertiary level dance education and the profession. They argue that there is a “need for a new consensus on the part of the dance education community to accommodate the distinctive features of dance improvisation as a contributory element of dance education...as exploration and/or performance” (p. 17). They suggest that although once considered radical, because of shifts in understanding regarding the scope of art, improvisation, whether as a contributory aspect of a rehearsed piece or as a performance in its own right, should be included and valued within dance education. Kate seems to be making the same point in primary level dance education and yet facing difficulties, for she did not satisfactorily resolve the dilemma for herself. Although the final performance contained improvisation, this was quite safely incorporated and did not push the boundaries as much as she had originally hoped.

Kate's dissatisfaction perhaps suggests that there is room to challenge the assumed status quo in what is acceptable in performance in children's dance. It is important to note, that some of the ten and eleven year olds with whom Kate was working had been attending creative dance classes since they were three, and compared to most children were incredibly experienced in their understanding of the relationship between improvisation, creativity and performance in dance. But perhaps as dance is increasingly incorporated into schools through creative partnership work and initiatives responding to the creativity and creative learning agenda, a growing collection of children will come to have that level of experience. These dance teachers' practice suggests that boundaries might be pushed further here in challenging the balance between “polish” and improvisationally-based “risk-taking” in performance.

Support & Expectation

As the above analysis came close to culmination, a final factor began to emerge which was influential in the way in which the dance teachers solved dilemmas in their practice generally: the “*support*” and “*expectation*” of surrounding professionals. These influences could be seen working in different directions.

For example, for a variety of reasons including an unexpected official government inspection in the school during his project, Michael felt the influence of a lack of in-depth support, and understanding of the “value of the project” from the professionals in the school in which he was working. He also described how he was a “newcomer to the school and the school was a relative newcomer to creative contemporary dance”, both of which contributed towards an atmosphere in which Michael felt like an “outsider”. Michael felt that it was only in situations where he had built up trust, perceiving he had support from surrounding colleagues, that he felt he could “whole-heartedly try things out”, test his approach to creativity to its limits, and respond authentically to dilemmas. Michael indicated that this was closely linked to expectations from surrounding professionals that as an experienced dance teacher and an expert he would show teachers in schools this is how to do it and “how to get it right”. He actually wanted to feel that he could “try things out whole-heartedly and...take risks”.

Conversely, on the project that Amanda was working during the research, she had the full support and attention of the class teacher and head teacher. Amanda described how this influenced her approach to creativity as part of her practice: “my whole approach is becoming more free, because I feel this is one of the few situations where it can be....this has been very liberating”. Amanda could meet the expectation of “risk-taking” within her approach to creativity, and solving dilemmas, without feeling any threat to her professional reputation.

The dance teachers’ working situations therefore particularly tempered or fuelled their risk-taking in relation to their practice and the dilemmas inherent within that. This resonates with findings from Stein’s (2004) study of visiting artists in the USA. Stein found that while all the artists in the

study felt they were able to achieve good work, they all faced challenges to this from areas such as misalignment between artists and teachers. This echoes, for example, the difficulties that Michael experienced related to valuing the dance project. Similar to this study, Stein (2004) found that good work was challenged (in this case, risk-taking was curtailed) because of differences in expectation between the artists and the teachers. This raises awareness of the issues of “*support*” and “*expectation*” as influential factors, capable of fuelling or tempering responses to dilemmas as part of teachers’ approach to creativity, particularly for expert specialist dance teachers working in freelance and visiting capacities.

Moving Forwards

Mapping the Terrain

The findings generated from considering the teachers’ dilemmas in relation to creativity therefore map the terrain for this particular group of dance teachers, highlighting key places in which tensions regarding creativity were faced and overcome. These might be said to demonstrate key areas of pedagogy to which teachers (those teaching dance and those in other domains) can be alerted in order to ward against creativity being assumed but not achieved. The research suggests that attention might be fruitfully paid to: achieving “*readiness*” for creativity and standing firm on the *rarity* of original creative outcomes by focusing on children’s starting points; the tension between *embodied* and *language-based* ways of knowing, and how this can be appropriately applied to create well-embodied, but critically evaluated dances (or creative outcomes in other domains); *balancing personal/collective voice and craft/compositional knowledge* through subtle manipulation of ownership of *creative source*, *teacher intervention* and *task structuring*; incorporating and inter-relating *individual* and *collaborative creativity* considering the role of *controversy* and empowerment; and questioning what is seen as acceptable in performance.

Dilemmas and Solutions as Triggers for Reflective Practice

In mapping out the dilemmas and their solutions in this way with the dance teachers, the research was able to raise the teachers' awareness and contribute to their developing practice, as well as acting as a potential resource for those beyond the study. As the dance teachers became aware of and responded to the dilemmas within their projects they developed their professional practical knowledge in relation to creativity. Their knowledge developed over time either through consolidating and reinforcing previously developed practice or through shifting practice in a new direction by reframing tensions from different perspectives (Russell and Munby, 1991). Evolution of practice was often characterised by consecutive cycles of learning and consolidation.

The teachers discussed how working with a reflective facilitator to articulate dilemmas and their solutions, together with being able to unpack their approaches in relation to two other experienced practitioners had shifted their practice. It had opened them to new possibilities, given them new perspectives on old issues, increased their confidence, provided a broader context for their ongoing work, pushed the edges of their practice and given them insight into the creativity agenda to which their teaching was so often called upon to respond. The articulation of this process and its outcomes emphasises the value of reflective practice, a technique which is increasingly being used in other dance/arts education contexts to develop dance teachers' and other teachers' pedagogy (Butterworth, 2006; Creativity Action Research Awards, 2006: <http://www.capeuk.org/view.php?id=127#>; Rolfe, 2006; Teacher Artist Partnership: <http://www.taprogramme.org/cms/>) within both teacher training and, very importantly if teachers have not received training, within their continuing professional development.

By capturing details of conceptual, pedagogical and practical teacher knowledge, accounts of reflective practice and its outcomes such as this can also offer 'images of the possible' of expert dance teachers' practice which can serve as reflective starting points for other teachers (of dance and other domains) within training and professional development (as recommended by Ethell and McMeniman, 2001). This responds to Bolwell's (1998) call for more reflective dance practice as asserted by Schön (1983), as a "means of coalescing often years of expert and wise practice into

a form that can be shared with the dance education profession” (p. 86). Overall, the research also provides an overarching theoretically and practically derived framework briefly articulated in the introduction to this article and in more detail in Chappell (2006a), which is available as a conceptual structure within which other dance teachers might choose to ground their reflections. Other domain areas may also follow a similar approach to using generic theories of creativity in education such as Craft’s (2000), to act as catalysts for theoretically framing creativity and interrogating it via reflective practice within the discipline.

Networks of Support

Unpacking the influence of the support and expectation of surrounding colleagues provides a useful reminder of how specialist dance teachers working in freelance and visiting capacities can have their dilemma solution and accompanying practice tempered or fuelled by their environment and the behaviour of colleagues. As specialist dance teachers (and other arts practitioners) are being increasingly relied upon to provide creativity in educational settings through partnership and project-based initiatives such as Creative Partnerships, not only might it be useful to provide them with more reflective continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities, but also to give them access to supportive networks. This resonates with Stein (2004) and Jeffery (2005) who both call for greater consideration of the structures and systems for professionalising the work of practitioners at the interface between arts and education.

There is an increasing variety of ways that this kind of opportunity is being offered in England. For example, through National Dance Agencies’ regional networks of dance teacher, and initiatives such as the Creativity Action Research Awards 2 (CARA 2006-7). The latter facilitates networks of teachers and external partners (often arts practitioners) with a designated mentor, in carrying out joint action research into creativity in educational practice. The 2006-7 programme features a network of eight partnerships researching primary level dance and creativity. Although not a national dance agency, LABAN has developed a network for its pool of dance teachers, which meets once a term for CPD and discussion and keeps its members in touch for advice and

support through the management team of the Education and Community Programme. Alongside providing support, this research initiative (stemming from that very pool of teachers and support staff) demonstrates that these networks contain high levels of hybrid professionals' expertise, and are a key structural component in professionalising the work of these dance teachers, alongside the activities of organisations such as the National Dance Teachers Association, National Resource Centre for Dance, CARA and the Foundation for Community Dance.

Future Directions

Alongside all of the above, exciting challenges for research and practice, of course, remain. Future investigations stemming from this research can be grounded in an understanding and articulation of creativity within dance education as fundamentally embodied, carried out 'in relationship' individually, collaboratively and communally. This resonates strongly with Press and Warburton's (2006) recent review of creativity in dance. Drawing on Vygotsky (1978), when considering future investigations into creativity and dance education, they argue for the importance of "distributed development" which "in educational terms...honors individual differences while acknowledging the inherently "person-plus" system in which all humans live, learn and create" (Press and Warburton, 2006). Within their review they found that "the idea of distributed development embraces the variety of perspectives, defining creativity in a physically, socially, and symbolically-distributed world." (Press and Warburton, 2006).

Echoing this and contextualised within the research detailed in this article, future investigations might further interrogate the embodied, collaborative creative process in which teachers and children engage in dance education, and other specific situations. In studies carried out by collaborating teachers, researchers and possibly learners too, consideration might be given to various aspects of dance education practice. For example, investigations might focus on better understanding the collaborative creativity dynamics and the development of accompanying practice. In particular the role of conflict, which can sometimes be dissipated by teachers as potentially destructive, might be further investigated as a useful dynamic. Also, further research

might continue to consider the delicate balance when teaching for creativity between personal/collective voice and domain knowledge; this would be particularly interesting and useful at the secondary and tertiary level where domain knowledge and assessment become more dominant, and where there are current concerns in the UK regarding the production of formulaic choreography within the examination system (Jobbins, 2006). And related to this, another area of interest raised by this research, and also highlighted by Bannon and Sanderson (2000) at the tertiary level, regards investigating and perhaps developing the role of improvisation within teaching for creativity in dance education.

Research teams might also further explore the variety of inter- and intra- person roles and relationships at the interface between dance and education, that are feeding much creative education work now being carried out in partnership, and which are shifting apace in the current climate (building on work by, for example, Jeffery, 2005). Investigations into professionalisation and the networks within which this occurs, including a greater focus on reflective practice would certainly be another valuable direction for future endeavours (contributing to current initiatives in this area from, for example the Foundation for Community Dance, 2006).

Ultimately, this kind of research/practice not only has the potential to contribute to keeping us moving beyond assumption within the dance education contexts detailed here, but also has the potential to offer findings and developments in practice which might be relevant within the wider creativity in education community in the UK and perhaps further afield. Within more mainstream creativity in education literature, Craft (2005) recently highlighted a number of core areas for onward research and development in this field. Of particular relevance here are the spotlights she places on future investigations which might interrogate the balance between individual and collective creativity, and the nature of adult/expert engagement in nurturing creativity. As can be seen above these are two key areas to which this research has already been able to contribute, and to which the future research suggested above might be able to offer further insight from dance education to the wider creativity in education community.

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