

**A critical comparative study of career transition policy,  
practice and experiences for ballet company dancers and  
musical theatre independent dancers**

**Simon Harper**

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**Tutors: Dr. Tansin Benn & Dr. Symeon Dagkas**

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**A critical comparative study of career transition policy, practice and experiences for  
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**ABSTRACT**

The critical, comparative study investigated similarities and differences in dancers' experiences of career transition and dancers', employers' and dancers' support agencies' perceptions of career transition support systems (CTSS). The original study compared dancers' career transitions from two arenas: *company dancers* from England's ballet arena and *independent dancers* from London's 'West End' musical theatre arena. As a former independent dancer, currently employed in a ballet company in an administrative role, I had noticed differences in the dissemination, and take-up, of CTSS between the two groups. Dancers' career transitions are under-researched, particularly independent dancers' narratives (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Carroll et al, 2009, Roncaglia, 2010). By drawing parallels between an adaptation to transition model (Schlossberg, 1981) and a sport career termination model (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994), a conceptual framework was modified and operationalised. Using a critical, interpretative paradigm, a mixed-method approach facilitated the examination of dancers' experiences and gatekeepers' perceptions of CTSS. Open-ended questionnaires were sent to twenty five retired company dancers (seven completed and returned) and twenty five retired independent dancers (nineteen completed and returned). Semi-structured interviews were initiated with three retired company and three retired independent dancers, one company dancers' employer, one independent dancers' employer and two Directors of dancers' support agencies. Triangulated quantitative and qualitative data provided results through content analysis. Results identified eight key themes: *Key timelines throughout dancers' transitions* (for example, age at retirement and time to feel adjusted to a new life post performance) provided similarities and differences in dancers' experiences and indicated how support interaction, at significant stages of dancers' lives, increased confidence levels and resulted in smoother transitions; *'The triad of needs'* (psychological, financial, educational support) highlighted three invaluable areas of support paramount to ease transitions and how some dancers benefited and others missed out; *Main reasons for transition* (involuntary reasons, for example, injury and de-selection and *voluntary* reasons, for example, free-choice and educational opportunities) indicated negative or positive transition experiences; *Pre-transition*

*planning* was key to successful and satisfying transitions, and opportunities offered by employers and support agencies indicated how some dancers planned for transition and others faced transition without preparation; *Aspects of the transition* (most *positive* and most *negative* aspects) revealed how some dancers looked forward to new challenges and others missed performing post transition; *Career Transition Support Systems* (CTSS) identified how, where and when dancers benefited from, or not, Employer's CTSS and Dancers' Support Agency's CTSS, pre, during and post transition; *Dancers' experiences post transition* identified former dancers who were personally and professionally fulfilled post transition and others who believed the transition process was still on-going for them; *Ideas to improve CTSS for retiring dancers* provided information so recommendations could be made to gatekeepers, leading to CTSS opportunities for *all* dancers, irrelevant of the arena they had worked in.

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theatre independent dancers**

## INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to compare the significant life-stage of career transition for professional dancers engaged in two established arenas:

1. Professional ballet dancers who had been engaged in an English ballet company (the pseudonym *Organisation A* was used for this study) were designated as *company dancers*.
2. Professional musical theatre dancers who had been engaged by a 'West End' musical theatre producer (the pseudonym *Organisation B* was used for this study) were designated as *independent dancers*.

Since the dancers' support agency *Dancers' Career Development* (DCD) was established in 1971, the industry has shown a growing interest in the career transitions of its dancer workforce (Levine, 2004, Jeffri, 2005, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Roncaglia, 2010). The current study explored similarities and differences in company and independent dancers' experiences of career transition and dancers', employers' and dancers' support agencies' perceptions of Career Transition Support Systems (CTSS). For the current study, employers and dancers' support agencies, were designated the *gatekeepers*.

The idea for the research developed following my own experience of career transition. I was an independent dancer and freelance dance teacher (1989-2007) and am currently employed in a ballet company in an administrative role (2007-present). The eventual satisfaction of entering a new career was preceded by a ten year period of anxiety and isolation. My transition was self-motivated, self-supported and self-financed. It was from past and current insider positions that I developed an interest in, and questioned, the CTSS available to retiring dancers. My insider position provided unique access and understanding of dancers' lived experiences whilst demanding a level of objectivity that enabled the dancers to 'tell it as it was' (Robson, 2002).

By drawing on retired dancers' experiences and dancers' and gatekeepers' perceptions of support mechanisms, the construction and implementation of the research methods, set out to gain further knowledge of CTSS. Analysis of indicative data, aimed to increase understanding of how company and independent dancers experienced career transition. To gain further insight into the current situation of CTSS the study involved the exploration of two research questions:

- 1. *What are the similarities and differences in career transition experiences for retired company and independent dancers?***
- 2. *What are the similarities and differences of dancers', employers' and dancers' support agencies' perceptions of CTSS in company and independent dance contexts?***

Past research findings highlighted the ways in which dancers prepared, lived and coped through career transitions and how differences in social, political and cultural settings had affected the next move towards and beyond transition (Levine, 2004, Jeffri, 2005, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Roncaglia, 2010, Tait, 2010). They indicated support should intervene throughout dancers' lives and not wait until close to the retirement, and were unanimous that prepared transitions were eased transitions (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Hamilton, 1998, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006).

A critical, comparative study was chosen as the dancer groups share similarities in lifestyles, for example, intense early years training, immense competition and an early retirement age. There are differences in the cultures and professional worlds of dancers in the two contexts, not least in care and attention to 'retirement'. Seemingly different amounts of support during transition out of performance work, favour the ballet arena (Buckroyd, 2000, Yates, 2002, Langsdorff, 2006, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Roncaglia, 2010).

Filling a gap in current literature, the study was original and similarities and differences of dancers' experiences and CTSS were examined within an interpretative paradigm (Robson, 2002, Grix, 2004).

For the purpose of the current study, a conceptual framework was developed with reference to a transition model (Schlossberg, 1981) that defined a transition as ‘an event or non-event which resulted in a change of assumptions about oneself and the world and thus required a corresponding change in one’s behaviour and relationships’ (Schlossberg, 1981, p.5). A sports career termination framework (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) was also utilised as similarities in the lives and characteristics between dancers and athletes are numerous, for example, perseverance, commitment to training and short-lived careers shape the lives of dancers and athletes (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Roncaglia, 2010).

A mixed-method approach was implemented. Open-ended questionnaires were distributed to fifty retired dancers (twenty five company and twenty five independent). Twenty six retired dancers (28% of company and 76% of independent) completed and returned questionnaires for further analysis. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were initiated with six retired dancers (three company and three independent), two employers (one company dancers’ employer and one independent dancers’ employer) and two support agencies’ Directors.

The study aimed to discover if retired dancers received psychological, financial and educational support during their transition, if company and independent dancers experienced transitions in different ways, if some missed performing whilst others looked forward to a new identity and if some experienced gatekeepers’ intervention, whilst others missed out (Levine, 2004, Jeffri and Throsby, 2006).

The structure of the thesis is as follows. Chapter One synthesises the literature and focuses on the retired dancers and their contribution to the cultural industries and why CTSS matters. Similarities and differences of the dance contexts and current CTSS policy and practice are discussed. With reference to two well-documented frameworks, previous studies on career transition focusing on psychological, financial and educational issues are explored (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby 2006).

Chapter Two focuses on the relevance, and utilisation, of a transition model (Schlossberg, 1981) and a sports career termination framework (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) to underline the theoretical and methodological approach in the development of the conceptual model for the

current study. Reasons for a critical, comparative study in an interpretative paradigm are explored further alongside ethical considerations due to my insider approach. The chapter discusses the role of content analysis to deduct relevant data to answer the research questions.

Following the implementation of open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, Chapter Three presents the results by synthesising data obtained from the retired dancers and gatekeepers. Discussion of results, following content analysis, attempts to gain a better understanding of CTSS granted to retired dancers and ways in which the retired dancers and gatekeepers perceived support (Hantrais, 1999).

Finally, a Conclusion summarises the current study, discusses strengths and weaknesses of the research, suggests recommendations to improve CTSS for company and independent dancers and provides ideas for further research (Harvey, 1990).

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **CONTEXTUAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND DOCUMENTATION**

## CONTEXTUAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND DOCUMENTATION

This chapter underpins the rationale and significance of the ensuing study on dancers' career transitions by synthesising the literature and focusing on:

- 1. Professional dancers' contributions to the cultural industries and why interception of CTSS at transition stage matters**
- 2. Similarities and differences of the dance contexts**
- 3. Current Career Transition Support Systems (CTSS) policy and practice**
  - a. Current Career Professional Development opportunities to complement CTSS*
- 4. Previous studies on career transition focusing on the need for psychological, financial and educational support** (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006)
- 5. The relevance of the utilisation of two, well-documented models in the creation of a conceptual framework for the current study: *A model for analysing human adaptation to transition* (Schlossberg, 1981, see Appendix 1A) and *A conceptual model of adaptation to retirement among athletes* (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, see Appendix 1B).**

On average, dancers' performing careers terminate at thirty-five years of age (The Telegraph, 29 June 2009, Hemley, 2011). *Involuntary* career-terminating factors such as age, de-selection and injury, or *voluntary* factors, such as a desire to enter Higher Education (HE), start the transition process, and in turn, the need to implement CTSS (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Buckroyd, 2000, Sugarman, 2001, Yates, 2002, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006).



## **1. Professional dancers' contributions to the cultural industries and why CTSS matters**

Recent years have witnessed a growth in the number of dancer students, more professional dancers seeking employment and consequently more dancers needing support at transition (Dance UK, 2011, Brenchley, 2011, Duda & Quested, 2011). In 2009, Arts Council England (ACE) reported 'the number of students in HE dance programmes had increased by 97 per cent over the past five years...the major focus on these courses is performance...a total of 10,000 are in training in any one year' with '6,237 of these in further education and accredited vocational dance/musical theatre training' (Burns & Harrison, 2009, p.15). In 2012, ballet companies in England and Scotland employed 262 professional company dancers and *West End* musicals employed 450 professional independent dancers (Dance UK, 2012).

Significant literature proved the social, cultural and political popularity of dance and therefore the eventual need to support the workforce post performance (Thomas, 1995, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Burns & Harrison, 2009, Dance UK, 2010). Dance witnessed a growth in public interest and audience attendance following the release of feature films that highlighted dance, for example, *Billy Elliot* and *Black Swan* (Angelini & Jays, 2011). Television programmes, for example, BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing* achieved viewing figures of 11.6 million viewers in December 2010 (BBC, 2011). ACE recognises the political, economic, social and cultural benefits on society: 'in education, health, social cohesion and regeneration' or 'people dance for fun, recreation, social reasons and for health. As a social activity, dance is as popular as ever and participation is increasing' (Burns & Harrison, 2009, p. 19). 'Dance is one of many careers within the creative industries that contribute £24.8 billion gross value added (GVA) to the UK economy each year' (Room, 2011, p. 13). All this has elevated the dance profile, the number of dancers, and subsequently the number of dancers who face career transitions.

The current research concentrated on lives post performance and to understand the possible crisis around transition, it was necessary to learn more about the company and independent dancers' lives, before and during dance performance. I delved deeper into the dance contexts

under discussion and similarities and differences in the dissemination, implementation and take-up of CTSS for company and independent dancers unfolded.

## **2. Similarities and differences of the dance contexts**

Classical ballet, has been a prominent part of history, society and culture, since ceremonial dances were performed in Italian and French courts of the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries and subsequently in the seventeenth century French courts of King Louis VIII, and later his son King Louis VIX, as a ‘symbol and requirement of aristocratic identity’ ... ‘to display royal opulence and power’ (Homans, 2010, p. 12). Ballet’s social standing continued through subsequent centuries as elaborate performances entertained the social elite in the world’s most magnificent theatres and opera houses.

The cultural and social standing of the ballet arena, makes it an appealing genre for talented dance students to consider training for, and subsequently, dancing in (Buckroyd, 2000, Langsdorff, 2006). Often described as living in a ‘ballet-bubble’, young company dance students are guided through intense training years, often in an educational boarding environment from Year 7 – 12, with an additional three years of training until graduation (Langsdorff, 2006). When employed, company dancers are instructed, directed and choreographed daily in what has been described as ‘the ballet master/choreographers and dancers relationship...similar to a parent/child relationship’ (Langsdorff, 2006, p. 26). Langsdorff continues:

*‘Quite a few dancers act like obedient children: they do as they are told, don’t take a wrong step, want to do everything correctly and be praised. They are self-critical, needing harmony, averse to conflict, willing to sacrifice, and they tend not to question authority’* (Langsdorff, 2006. p. 26).

Independent dancers may also be self-critical and tend not to question authority, but in comparison may have lived independently of an educational boarding environment during training years, before self-employed status has granted them ‘freedom, control and direction’ (O’Meara, 2011, p.9).

The retired independent dancers performed in London's West End musical theatre productions with its origins in early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Paris, a form of opera called *opéra comique*, utilised the work of great composers, for example, François Boieldieu, Daniel Auber and Ferdinand Herold (Lerner, 1986). Their music was adapted and a series of musical sketches, of a satirical nature, was included to entertain the middle classes, searching for light relief following the impact of the French Revolution (Lerner, 1986). Today, independent dancers remain part of a growing industry with overall audience figures in London's *West End* reaching 14,152,230 and box office revenues reaching £512,331,808 in 2010 (Smith, 2011, p.11). There was a considerable difference in revenue and audience attendance between the two arenas. This highlighted the success of the musical theatre industry which continues to employ independent dancers (see Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1: London's West End 2010 - Audience Figures and Box Office revenue (Smith, 2011, p.11)**

|   | <b>Audience figures</b> | <b>Box Office revenue</b> |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b><i>Musicals</i></b>  | 8,423,430               | £324,357,255              |
| <b><i>Other</i></b> (including Dance, Opera, Performance pieces entertainments) | 2,026,769               | £80,875,218               |

Although independent dancers appeared to remain poorly represented in terms of career transition discussions, these statistics proved independent dancers contributed to a successful industry (Yates, 2002, Levine, 2004, Carpi et al, 2009).

### **3. Current Career Transition Support Systems (CTSS) policy and practice**

Past research provided evidence stating the implementation of CTSS was paramount to help ease dancers' career transitions (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby). This input in the company arena appeared established and widespread as literature reported many success stories of company dancers compared to few accounts of independent dancers' positive narratives

(Schlossberg, 1981, Buckroyd, 2000, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Langsdorff, 2006, Dani et al, 2010, Roncaglia, 2010, DCD, 2011).

Ballet's 'cultural and institutional dominance' (Novack, 1993, p. 39) has brought about publicly-funded, government support. ACE lists premiere ballet companies amongst its *Regularly Funded Organisations* (RFOs) and as part of the funding criteria it supports and protects the sector, and insists its RFOs grant company dancers, personal and professional development opportunities (Dani et al, 2010, Room, 2011). This allows inside expertise and knowledge to filter back to the wider dance community (Burns, 2010).

Four English ballet companies, *Birmingham Royal Ballet*, *English National Ballet*, *Northern Ballet Theatre* and *The Royal Ballet* provide career transition support through close links with *Dancers' Career Development* (DCD). The four companies are corporate members of *Dance UK* (Dance UK, 2009, p. 28, DCD, 2011). *Dance UK* is the 'national voice' for the dance industry and aims to improve the conditions in which dance is created, performed and experienced (Dance UK, 2010). Close links with *The Royal Academy of Dance* (RAD) in the company arena also witnessed support through its teacher training programmes for retiring dancers (RAD, 2012). In comparison, the main West End producers, for example, Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Really Useful Group*, *Cameron Mackintosh Limited* and *David Ian Productions*, employed independent dancers but remained absent from Dance UK's corporate list and were poorly represented on the DCD Board (Dance UK, 2011, Long, 2011).

*Equity* is the UK trade union for performers and includes company and independent dancers amongst its members. It supports the work of DCD and Dance UK highlighted through representation on the DCD board. *The Equity Charitable Trust*, founded in 1989, was set up to support union members who faced hardship post performance. In 2009-10, £167,463 supported members to retrain by contributing funds to institutions that provided training (Equity, 2010). To discover who benefited and who missed out, a published breakdown of how this fund was split would greatly benefit the current study. Unfortunately this information was not available.

*The Royal Academy of Dance* (RAD) is a prominent dance examination board and offers ground-breaking professional development opportunities to retiring dancers, including the *Professional Dancers Teaching Diploma*. The programme 'is specifically designed to meet the needs of professional dancers wishing to gain the skills and experience to teach and extend career and employment opportunities' (RAD, 2012). Places were limited in 2011 with twenty-two dancers enrolled on the intensive summer course. The course, offered to company and independent dancers, was delivered by professional teachers, many of whom had made the transition from dancer to teacher (RAD, 2012).

Dancers' career transitions were also highlighted in the development of the Foundation for Community Dance's (FCD) *Making a Move, A strategy for the development of a professional framework for community dance* project in 2006-2008. The framework highlighted the importance of dance to the wider, local and national communities as well as the protection of dancers as they moved past their performance years (Foundation of Community Dance, 2009).

Established in 2002, *The Clore Leadership Programme* (CLP) supports and trains former dancers to enter senior positions in Arts Management (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006). Successful candidates spend qualitative time with distinguished arts organisations and, through mentoring and research projects, a new generation of industry managers has emerged, improved former dancers' lives and benefited the wider arts community. Literature highlighted company dancers had successfully applied for the programme but no similar evidence existed for independent dancers (Burns, 2010, The Clore Leadership Programme, 2011). The work of DCD and CLP was included in a recent report, *New Directions, A symposium to discuss the career progression of dancers* (Burns, 2010). Case studies of company dancers were highlighted whilst independent dancers' narratives remained absent (Burns, 2010, The Clore Leadership Programme, 2011).

*Dance UK* disseminates dance industry information, including the work of the aforementioned DCD, RAD and the FCD to the wider dance communities. Dance UK highlights organisations who deliver CTSS and facilitates a number of invaluable networks, including *The Independent Dance Artists Network*. The network allows independent dancers

to ‘tap’ into other dancers’ lives to discuss current issues, for example personal and professional development opportunities (Dance UK, 2011). Access to the forum allows independent dancers to feel less isolated at transition stage. The current research aimed to discover if company and independent dancers were aware of, and engaged with, the work of these organisations, and their initiatives, to support their career transitions.

***a. Current Career Professional Development opportunities to complement CTSS***

It was an intention of the current study that deeper exploration of any differences in the delivery of personal and professional development opportunities, and CTSS, would lead to further recommendations in order to give greater equity to company *and* independent dancers.

Some companies, for example, Birmingham Royal Ballet provide personal and career professional development (CPD) opportunities to its company dancers during their first careers, for example, teaching opportunities at the company’s school, the opportunity to apply for a company management role during short tours, and openings to engage in outreach work with the company’s *Learning* department (Birmingham Royal Ballet, 2011, Elmhurst School for Dance, 2011). These development opportunities advantaged company dancers with new skills and exposed them to employment opportunities post performance. The current research aimed to discover if independent dancers benefited from similar CPD opportunities.

With consideration to past research and the utilisation of two well-documented frameworks (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994), a conceptual framework was implemented for the current study and dancers’ experiences and dancers’ and gatekeepers’ perceptions of CTSS unfolded.

**4. Previous studies on career transition focusing on the need for psychological, financial and educational support** (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006)

Significant, past research, highlighted that the majority of retiring dancers are aware of the ‘triad of needs’ (Levine, 2004, p. 34) for example, the psychological, financial and educational issues that affect the transition to a new identity post performance (Hanna, 1988,

Ross, 1999, Buckroyd, 2000, Yates, 2002, Levine, 2004, Jeffri, 2005, Jeffri & Throsby 2006, Langsdorff, 2006). All three issues increased self-doubt, decreased confidence levels and raised concerns about identity as dancers faced transition (Levine, 2004, Jeffri and Throsby 2006, Langsdorff, 2006).

Two past studies conducted surveys across the world and substantiated the need for psychological, financial and educational support for retiring dancers (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006). The studies concentrated predominantly on case studies of company dancers however their findings helped contextualise a framework for the current study that concentrated on *both* company and independent dancers' experiences.

### ***The need for psychological support***

Past studies stated the majority of dancers underestimated the role psychological issues played on transitions (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006). Levine agreed that preparation is key to avoid psychological issues, for example, 'physical problems, loss of status and income, loss of a support network, difficulty deciding what to do next and sense of emptiness' (Levine, 2004, p. 58). Former dancers surveyed in the *Beyond Performance, The Advance Project* (Levine, 2004) indicated 'loss of income' as 'the single greatest problem' followed by 'physical problems', 'deciding what to do next' and 'emotional emptiness' (Levine, 2004, p. 34). Both studies indicated dancers were aware of the issues ahead of them and few prepared for life outside of dance performance (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006). Psychological issues were also heightened by educational and financial issues, particularly as dancers approached the transition.

### ***The need for financial support***

Few dancers leave performance with enough money set aside to finance their transition (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Langsdorff, 2006). There are some differences between company and independent dancers, since the former can have long-term contracts in one place where as the latter often work on short-term contracts (O'Meara, 2011). This is likely to contribute to different anxieties at retirement, for example, company dancers fearing

loss of relationships within a familiar group. Financially, dance engagements can be low paid and sporadic for many independent dancers, and periods of unemployment force them to seek second jobs, such as teaching or office work. Some retiring dancers rely on financial support from parents, partners or employers and support agencies, for example, *Dancers' Career Development* (DCD) (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006).

The four English ballet companies subsidise DCD's *Company Division Fund* by contributing a sum of money annually. I could not obtain contribution details from current literature therefore, I made email contact with DCD, and their Executive Director very kindly provided a response:

*Company contributions were originally provided by Arts Council England to the Revenue funded Dance Companies, although this is no longer the case. Each contributing Company sends a contribution to DCD at the beginning of each financial year. This contribution is the equivalent of 5% of the estimated payroll costs for the contracted number of dancers for that financial year. This estimate is then adjusted according to the final figures at the start of the following financial year. It is important to note that this contribution is **not** taken from the dancers' salaries. It is also worth noting that these contributions are currently under discussion (Yates, by email, 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2011).*

Financial support can be accessed by retiring company dancers if they have danced for a minimum of eight years, five of which have been with a contributing company. DCD workshops, company visits, one-to-one meetings tailored around individual needs, and peer knowledge of past transitions, appear to help ease the path to a new identity in the company arena (Dance UK, 2009, DCD, 2011, Dani et al, 2010).

Independent dancers can also apply for funding through the DCD *Independent Dancer Division* under a similar criteria to company dancers, for example, if they have been working as a dancer for a minimum of eight years and have worked at least five of those in the UK (DCD, 2011). Similar to the support offered to company dancers, DCD provides emotional, psychological, educational and practical support and advice to independent dancers. On its



website, DCD lists four case studies, highlighting the support granted to independent dancers. All four individuals, when asked how they found out about DCD bursaries, did not say through their employer but other sources, for example, industry publication advertisement, a family member, a dancer network site or a friend (DCD, 2011).

Compared to the ways ballet companies are publicly funded through Government subsidy, West End productions remain private, commercial ventures for their producers. They rely on box office revenue to finance productions and producers are not restricted by ACE funding guidelines that insist CPD opportunities are available to their dancer workforce. There was no evidence in past literature that CPD opportunities were available to independent dancers during their performance years (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Dance UK, 2010, DCD, 2011). Once again literature focused predominantly on the financial support of company dancers. This inequity was also prevalent in discussions about the educational needs of retiring dancers (Benn, 2003, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006).

### ***The need for educational support***

Past research acknowledged retraining can be expensive but the benefits outweighed the costs as retrained dancers faced an easier transition compared to dancers who had not retrained (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006). It also highlighted dancers who had entered HE experienced a higher income post transition compared to dancers who had not entered HE programmes. Finally it acknowledged job satisfaction tended to be higher amongst dancers with HE qualifications. Past research agreed some form of retraining benefited the transition (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Langsdorff, 2006, Roncaglia, 2010).

Due to an intense desire to enter dance after graduating at nineteen years of age, the majority of ballet school trained dancers enter the profession without HE qualifications (Buckroyd, 2000, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006). Post training, there are few opportunities to study at HE level whilst actively engaged in a professional company. One company, Birmingham Royal Ballet, offers a tailored, postgraduate degree programme in partnership with the University of Birmingham (Benn, 2003). This rare partnership began in 1997 and allows company dancers to enter education during the performance years. This gives company

dancers a head start ‘by improving dancers’ life chances, through empowerment, post-performing career opportunities and personal development, as well as enhancing the education and arts world in positive ways’ (Benn, 2003, p.8). Similar partnerships do not exist for independent dancers engaged by musical theatre producers. This could be due to short, self-employed contracts resulting in difficulty to commit to lengthy, educational programmes. However, some independent dancers perform in the same production for its entire run, and therefore, may be engaged by one producer for a number of years (The Really Useful Group, 2011). Once productions are settled into their run, independent dancers can often have free time during the day (Ross, 1999, O’Meara, 2011). The current research aimed to discover if this time was advantaged by the implementation of CPD initiatives, including educational opportunities.

Finally, past sport and dance literature focused on two transition models (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) in discussions of elite athletes and professional ballet dancers’ career transitions (Wylleman et al, 2004, Alfermann et al, 2004, Roncaglia, 2010). These models were modified to develop a conceptual framework in the dance context and their relevance to the current study is discussed here.

## **5. The relevance of the utilisation of two, well-documented models in the creation of a conceptual framework for the current study**

### ***A model for analysing human adaptation to transition*** (Schlossberg, 1981)

Schlossberg (1981) acknowledges four major factors affected the human adaptation process to transition. These factors, *self*, *situation*, *support* and *strategies* (see Appendix 1A for original model) were incorporated into the methodology for this research to help discover the similarities and differences in dancers’ career transition experiences. I studied the dancers’ characteristics (*self*), their *situation* (the company or independent dance environments), employer and agency transition *support* and *strategies* and valuable narratives unfolded.

Schlossberg draws upon adult development theories in the transition model and details are explored to understand the wider theories of the adult transition process (Schlossberg, 1981).

Levinson et al (1978) identified the importance of a mentor at the mid-life development stage: 'particular transitions are closely linked to chronological age' for example, 'life structure, the dream, the polarities of young and old' (cited in Schlossberg, 1981, p. 3). Dancers are affected by age during their careers and often dream of the perfect role in a company or musical theatre production. Schlossberg also draws upon Vaillant (1977) who said 'it is the quality of sustained relationships with other people that shapes an individual's future' (cited in Schlossberg, 1981, p. 29). Through sustained relationships and peer knowledge, company dancers have the opportunity to experience external support mechanisms as they witness retiring colleagues successfully moving forward, helped by the employer/support agency relationship (Yates, 2002, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006). The study aimed to discover if similar relationships existed for independent dancers.

Schlossberg also draws upon the work of Danish et al (1980), and pointed out that 'life events play a pivotal role in individual development, whether they are viewed as markers', defined as 'milestones or transition points which give shape and direction to various aspects of a person's life' (cited in Schlossberg, 1981, p.4). Danish et al suggest 'viewing events only as markers underestimates the importance of the context of events. Events do not occur in a vacuum, they occur in a rich life space of the individual, including competing demands from a variety of areas (e.g., work, family life, physical development) and people significant to the individual' (cited in Schlossberg, 1981). With reference to the company and independent dance contexts, areas of employment, social and economic backgrounds and physical development were all discussed further to highlight their effects on the transition process.

Finally, Schlossberg weaved the thoughts of Erikson (1950) into her transition model. Erikson believed the adult development stages involved 'issues of identity versus role diffusion, intimacy versus isolation' and 'ego integrity versus despair' (cited in Schlossberg, 1981, p.4). Further research aimed to identify how dancers from both groups adapted to new identities post-performance, if dancers experienced feelings of isolation during the transition period and, if dancers missed performing post transition.

***A conceptual model of adaptation to retirement among athletes*** (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994)

With reference to Schlossberg's model, Taylor and Ogilvie utilised the same four factors in their sports literature and drew upon the adaptation influences in researching athletes' perceptions of transition: how individual athletes adapted to change (*self*); how athletes' environments influenced adaptation (*situation*); how pre-retirement planning (*support* and *strategies*) affected transitions (see Appendix 1B for original model). In addition to Schlossberg's adaptation factors, Taylor and Ogilvie acknowledged *age*, *de-selection*, *injury* and *free-choice* as influential causes that gave further momentum to elite athletes' transitions (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994).

Taylor and Ogilvie relied on other theorists' works, particularly theoretical perspectives of sport retirement, in the development of their model. They considered a wide range of research that had focused on athletes' retirements and discovered the majority concentrated on the transitions' crises rather than the transitions' developmental courses (Hill & Lowe, 1974, Lerch, 1982, Rosenberg, 1982). Thus, Taylor and Ogilvie conceptualised a model that concentrated on the importance of support interaction. This model was used for the current study as I concentrated on the developmental opportunities that intervened in dancers' transitions, irrelevant of the transition crises.

In addition, Taylor and Ogilvie considered theories of *thanatology* and *social gerontology* (Rosenberg, 1982). The latter includes four perspectives; *disengagement*, *activity*, *continuity* and *social breakdown* theories. Similar to elite athletes, dancers may feel isolated and disengaged from the dance industry once they have left the performing stage. *Thanatology* acknowledges this in sports retirement and Rosenberg suggests it is 'akin to social death' (cited in Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, p.3). The current study aimed to discover if differences existed in the ways retiring company and independent dancers were excluded by colleagues, forcing them to withdraw professionally and socially and thus, disengage from available support strategies. *Social gerontology* concentrates on the aging process and considers 'life satisfaction as being dependent upon characteristics of the sports experience' (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, p.3), for example, disengagement and social breakdown.

Taylor and Ogilvie found these perspectives explained the process of transition as an ‘abrupt event’ rather than a ‘process which involves development through life’ (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, p. 3). They acknowledged these perspectives provided a sound foundation for further, in-depth investigation and utilised the work of these theorists, including Schlossberg (1981), in the development of their conceptual adaptation to transition model for retiring athletes (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994).

Following the contextual review of literature and documentation, and with consideration to the models discussed above (Schlossberg 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994), the following research questions were confirmed for the current study:

- 1. *What are the similarities and differences in career transition experiences for retired company and independent dancers?***
- 2. *What are the similarities and differences of dancers’, employers’ and dancers’ support agency perceptions of CTSS in company and independent dance contexts?***

Chapter Two follows and discusses the development of the conceptual and methodological frameworks, and research methods, utilised for this current study, in order to answer the research questions. Reasons for a critical, comparative study in an interpretative paradigm are explored further alongside ethical considerations due to my insider approach. The chapter discusses the role of content analysis to deduct relevant information from dancers’ and gatekeepers’ narratives for the current study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS AND RESEARCH METHODS**

## **CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS AND RESEARCH METHODS**

This chapter underpins the rationale and significance of the utilisation of two well-documented frameworks (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) in the development and implementation of a conceptual framework for the current study. The methodology and research methods, with careful consideration to the ethical approach, are discussed.

### **Conceptual framework for the current study**

The transition model (Schlossberg, 1981) and conceptual model (Taylor & Ogilvie 1994) have been widely used in the research of athletes' career terminations (Cecić Erpič et al, 2004, Wylleman et al, 2004, Alfermann et al, 2004, Marthinus, 2007, Gilmore, 2008). References to sports literature were utilised for the current study as obvious similarities exist between professional dancers and elite athletes, for example, short-lived careers, intense training schedules, risk of injury and de-selection (Yates, 2002, Cecić Erpič et al, 2004, Wylleman et al, 2004, Alfermann et al, 2004, Langsdorff, 2006, Marthinus, 2007, Pummell et al, 2008).

Similar to the development of DCD for the dance community, the sports community has 'demonstrated a growing interest in conceptualising the sports career termination process' (Cecić Erpič et al, 2004, p. 46, Wylleman et al, 1999). This similarity continued as the sports arena considered adaptations should be 'viewed as a life event that influences former athletes' well-being and development' (Cecić Erpič et al, 2004, p. 46) rather than focusing on difficulties and trauma. One difference between the athlete and dancer groups is 'dancers do not generally have the luxury of training in parallel with intensive additional studies, as is possible in the world of sport' (Yates, 2002, p. 23). The current study aimed to discover if similarities and differences in education opportunities existed between company and independent dancers.

The modification and creation of the conceptual framework to underpin the research design for the current study utilised the ideas behind the two models discussed above (Schlossberg,

1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). The modified, conceptual framework, addressed dancers' retirement *age*, reasons for retirement, for example, *de-selection*, *injury* and *free-choice* (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). These factors were integrated with enquiries that addressed the dancers' *self*, *situation* and experiences of gatekeepers' career transition *support systems* (Schlossberg, 1981). See Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Conceptual Framework: Modification process for the current study**

| Existing Framework                 | Existing Frameworks' Factors                           | Modified Framework to underpin the current study  |   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
|                                    |  | <i>1. What are the similarities and differences in career transition experiences for retired company and independent dancers?</i> | <i>2. What are the similarities and differences of dancers', employers' and dancers' support agencies' perceptions of CTSS in company and independent dance contexts?</i> |
| <b>Schlossberg (1981)</b>          | <i>Self<br/>Situation<br/>Support<br/>Strategies</i>   | <i>Self<br/>Situation<br/>Support<br/>Strategies<br/>Age<br/>Injury<br/>De-Selection<br/>Free-choice</i>                          | <i>Situation<br/>Support<br/>Strategies<br/>Age<br/>Injury<br/>De-Selection<br/>Free-choice</i>   |
| <b>Taylor &amp; Ogilvie (1994)</b> | <i>Age<br/>Injury<br/>De-Selection<br/>Free-choice</i> |   |   |

The modified framework was operationalised through the research design discussed below. This underpinned the structure of the questions used in the open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews and provided a framework for analysis of results, discussion of results, further recommendations and conclusions.



## **Methodology**

An empirical, critical, comparative study was used, as although the two dance arenas' cultural and historical standings differed, their lifestyles and unusual need for early career were unified (Hantrais, 1999, Robson, 2002, Grix 2004). A comparative approach allowed dancers' experiences to unfold, following observations of similarities and differences in the ways CTSS were disseminated and implemented to retiring dancers (Hantrais, 1999, Grix, 2004). A comparative study allowed for systematic data collection and content analysis of dancers' material. This deepened understanding of the inequalities between company and independent dancers as they 'explicitly shared a common reference point' (Hantrais, 1999, p. 99) of career transition. 'Drawing lessons about best practice' (Hantrais, 1999, p.93), with the comparative approach, highlighted where gatekeepers' initiatives supported, or failed, retiring dancers.

A critical study placed the current research in an emancipatory paradigm as data collection tools probed interpretative accounts of dancers' and gatekeepers' narratives (Ernest, 1994, Robson, 2002, Paul & Elder, 2005). The implementation of this approach stemmed from the belief that 'reality is represented through the eyes of the participant' (Robson, 2002, p. 25). The gatekeepers and dancers knew their subject, had lived their subject and had 'ideas about their world and attached meaning to what was going on around them' (Robson, 2002, p. 24). Therefore, clear, well-structured questions (see Appendix 2C, Q.15 & 16) improved risk of misinterpretations and kept the questionnaires relevant through a paradigm applicable to the research topic (Ernest, 1994, Robson, 2002).

### **An insider approach**

The current study was implemented with an insider approach and I was aware of the possible subjectivity of the study due to my personal knowledge of the current situation in both arenas. A non-biased perspective was paramount to avoid my views and experiences influencing data and results (Atkinson, 1998, Coffey, 1999, Robson, 2002, Grix, 2004, Paul & Elder, 2005, Silverman, 2006).

Although I was aware of the possible weaknesses of an insider approach, my close relationship to both dance arenas, proved to have a positive effect on the study (Bell, 1995). Some participants could have found it difficult to speak so openly with me, someone they had formerly, or currently, worked alongside (Bell, 1995). To avoid this, every attempt was made to create a comfortable interview situation (participants were asked to choose their interview space) and questionnaires were sent, accompanied by a letter explaining my background in both dance arenas and the intended outcomes of the study. Bell acknowledged the insider approach could be an opportunity for participants to ‘air problems’ and ‘have their situation analysed by someone who understood the practical day-to-day realities of their task’ (Bell, 1995, p. 56). It was hoped the retired dancers would enjoy the process of reflection, especially once the intended outcome of the research topic had been explained. My insider knowledge improved researcher/participant relationships and in an interview situation allowed in-depth narratives to flow as participants trusted the purpose of the study (Sparkes, 1996, Edwards & Talbot, 1997, Atkinson, 1998, Silverman, 2006).

### **Data collection tools**

In order to gain a cross-section of dancers’ and gatekeepers’ narratives, all of which gave insights to dancers’ transition experiences, and ‘enhanced the rigour of the research’ (Robson, 2002, p. 174) a mixed-method approach was utilised to frame a balanced, retrospective line of enquiry. This increased reliability as data from open-ended questionnaires was triangulated with data from semi-structured interviews (Silverman, 1997, Hantrais, 1999, Robson, 2002, Grix, 2004, Lally, 2007). See Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Data sources utilised in the current study**

| <b>Research Question</b>  | <b>Data sources</b>  |
|---|--|
| <i>1. What are the similarities and differences in career transition experiences for retired company and independent dancers?</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Open-ended questionnaires</b><br/>x25 retired company dancers<br/>x25 retired independent dancers</li> <li>• <b>Semi-structured interviews</b><br/>x3 retired company dancers</li> </ul> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | x3 retired independent dancers<br>x1 company dancers' employer<br>x1 independent dancers' employer<br>x2 dancers' support agencies'<br>Directors  |
| 2. <i>What are the similarities and differences of dancers', employers' and dance support agency perceptions of CTSS in company and independent dance contexts?</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Open-ended questionnaires</b><br/> x25 retired company dancers<br/> x25 retired independent dancers</li> <li>• <b>Semi-structured interviews</b><br/> x3 retired company dancers<br/> x3 retired independent dancers<br/> x1 company dancers' employer<br/> x1 independent dancers' employer<br/> x2 dancers' support agencies'<br/> Directors</li> </ul> |

### ***Open-ended questionnaires***

To address research question one and with reference to sports literature discussed in Chapter One, the *Sports Career Termination Questionnaire II* (SCTQ II, Cecić Erpič, 2000) was utilised for the purpose of the current study. An email request to obtain the original questionnaire from the author failed. I eventually obtained an adapted version of the SCTQ II (Marthinus, 2007, see Appendix 2A). This version had been used in sport research to discover the psychological effects of retirement on elite athletes (Marthinus, 2007).

The adapted version of the SCTQ II (Marthinus, 2007) draws upon four key stages of retirement for professional athletes:

1. *Evaluating the characteristics of active sports career*
2. *Sports career termination*
3. *Transition to post sports life*
4. *Adaptation to post sports life*

With respect to the conceptual framework for the current study (see Table 2.1, p.20), I considered these key stages of retirement to be suitable for the research in the dance context

and developed the *Dance Performance Career Transition Questionnaire* (DPCTQ, see Appendix 2C).

A large number of questions, from the adapted sport questionnaire, specifically aimed at athletes, were omitted in the *dance* version as they were considered irrelevant to the dance arena (see Appendices 2A and 2C for comparison). Fifty-seven questions, from the adapted questionnaire, were reduced to twenty-one questions for the current study to improve chances of participation (Robson, 2002). *Yes/No* questions from the adapted SCTQ II were modified and allowed a majority of qualitative narratives to unfold in the *dance* version. Only one remaining question in the DPCTQ provided *Yes/No* answers and resulted in a clear understanding of dancers' support received (see Appendix 2C, q.19).

Following conversations with key senior management employed with an English ballet company (the pseudonym *Organisation A* was used), I gained permission to pursue the research within the ballet arena. Access to the musical theatre arena was not as straightforward considering my past experience in the field. Two musical theatre producers did not answer my requests to access their dancer workforce. Eventually, one musical theatre production company (the pseudonym *Organisation B* was used) employing independent dancers, agreed to allow access following three attempts to make contact.

Several retired company dancers, known to me, were posted an introductory letter (see Appendix 2B) with the DPCTQ and a stamped-addressed envelope, to improve chances of return (Robson, 2002, Grix, 2004). Retired company and independent dancers were granted the option to complete and return questionnaires electronically. Several retired company dancers agreed to take part in the study and informed past colleagues about the research. They in turn contacted me and engaged in the study. This 'snowballing' method recruited further participants and twenty-five retired ballet dancers received information and the DPCTQ (Hantrais, 1999).

As I had worked in the independent dance arena for almost two decades, twenty-five retired independent dancer participants were already known to me. I acknowledged this could have affected results therefore, careful consideration was made at initial contact stage to ensure all

participants were treated equally (Hantrais, 1999, Robson, 2002, Silverman, 2006). Retired independent dancers were also posted the introductory letter, and the DPCTQ, with the option to complete, and return, electronically. All retired independent dancers had worked for a number of London's West End musical theatre producers and had also been engaged by *Organisation B* who engaged in the current study.

To lower risk of data being affected by participants' misunderstanding of the research, a clear introductory letter (see Appendix 2B) and question guidelines (see Appendix 2C, Q.12 & 14) were provided to improve clarity and subsequent collection of reliable results (Robson, 2002). For further details of questionnaire take-up, completion and return for further analysis see Table 2.3:

**Table 2.3: Questionnaires sent and subsequently completed and returned**

| <b>Participant</b>                | <b>Questionnaires (DPCTQ) sent</b> | <b>Questionnaires completed and returned</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Retired Company Dancer</b>     | 25                                 | 7 (28%)                                      |
| <b>Retired Independent Dancer</b> | 25                                 | 19 (76%)                                     |

I considered the initial company dancers' questionnaire response to be poor and therefore, follow-up letters were sent to potential participants (Grix, 2004). Unfortunately only seven company dancers responded and engaged at questionnaire stage compared to nineteen independent dancers. I considered the response by independent dancers was extremely positive as it highlighted how important it was for them to share their experiences.

To allow further anonymity, particularly during the results section, company dancers who returned completed questionnaires were granted identification codes CD1 to CD7 and independent dancers ID1 to ID19 (Robson, 2002).

Where possible, the dancer sample questioned had completed their transition within the last five years and allowed current and relevant CTSS experiences to unfold (Robson, 2002, Grix,

2004). In reflection, some questionnaire participants' transitions happened more than five years ago. This still provided valuable narratives, for example, dancers' characteristics (*self*), educational and financial information, age at retirement and feelings post transition, all of which had affected the transitions.

Following the implementation of the DPCTQ, semi-structured interviews were implemented to address the research questions and dancers' and gatekeepers' perceptions of CTSS emerged (Robson, 2002, Grix, 2004, Silverman, 2006).

### ***Semi-structured interviews***

Questionnaire participants provided their contact details if they wished to engage further in a face-to-face, semi-structured interview. Only one retired independent dancer expressed no interest to engage further as the reflective questionnaire process had proved too upsetting. For this individual case, and as I knew the retired dancer, further contact was made and a level of support and guidance was discussed. This former independent dancer expressed her feelings with identity struggle as she left dance performance at the height of her career to start a family.

Three retired company dancers (CD2, CD3 and CD7) and three retired independent dancers (ID3, ID6 and ID7) were interviewed due to their quick response and reliability at questionnaire stage (Robson, 2002). Their detailed questionnaires' answers provided insight into dancers' career transitions and provided the research with a cross section of genders, ages, reasons for retirement and levels of support (see Appendix 2G). This was considered important at *Results* and *Discussion of Results* stage as a broad range of responses provided valuable data for analysis.

Retired dancers were interviewed (see Appendix 3D) and data cross-checked against the DPCTQ data (Robson, 2002, Grix, 2004, Silverman, 2006). Dancers' interview questions drew upon an interview schedule used in past research that had discussed the coping mechanisms of retired ballet dancers (Roncaglia, 2010, see Appendix 3C). Roncaglia also drew upon Schlossberg's (1981) and Taylor and Ogilvie's (1994) models in the development

of her interview schedule for ballet dancers. The original schedule was modified for the current study to allow questions to be directed to *both* retired company and independent dancers. Some original questions (see Appendix 3C, Q.6) were omitted in the revised schedule and dancers' views of gatekeepers' interaction with CTSS emerged.

To continue to address research question two, I modified the *Performance Lifestyle Advisors' Interview Guide* that had been utilised in past sport research to delve into the lives of retiring female athletes (Gilmore, 2008, see Appendix 3E). By considering the eight key transitional factors discussed earlier (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994), I modified and developed the employers' and support agency Directors' interview schedules (Appendices 3F & 3G), and their perceptions of CTSS unfolded. One company dancers' employer, one independent dancers' employer and two Directors of dancers' support agencies were interviewed. To grant anonymity, the company dancer employer was coded CDE and the independent dancer employer, IDE. The Directors of the dancers' support agencies were coded DSA1 and DSA2 (Robson, 2002, Grix, 2004). A summary of participants' codes used for the current study is displayed in table 2.4.

**Table 2.4: Participants' codes used for the current study**

| <b>Participant</b>  | <b>Code</b>       |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>Company Dancers</b>  | <b>CD1 - CD7</b>  |
| <b>Independent Dancers</b>  | <b>ID1 - ID19</b> |
| <b>Company Dancers' Employer</b><br>( <i>Organisation A</i> )                     | <b>CDE</b>        |
| <b>Independent Dancers' Employer</b><br>( <i>Organisation B</i> )                 | <b>IDE</b>        |
| <b>Dancer's Support Agency Director</b><br>( <i>Dancers' Career Development</i> ) | <b>DSA1</b>       |
| <b>Dancers' Support Agency Director</b><br>( <i>The Royal Academy of Dance</i> )  | <b>DSA2</b>       |

Interviews were conducted in venues chosen by the retired company and independent dancers. This provided familiarity of space and allowed narratives to unfold in relaxed, equal settings (Robson, 2002, Grix, 2004).

I knew both employers through my past and current employment. The CDE engaged freely in a face-to-face interview, in the comfort of her own office, and answered questions in full without any hesitation. In comparison, interaction with the IDE was limited and following no response from the introductory letter, an email was sent to encourage face-to-face participation. The employer chose to return his response electronically. I had hoped my experience in the independent dance arena would have ‘opened doors’ but, the reluctance to engage highlighted a clear difference in the way the IDE interacted with CTSS compared to the way the CDE interacted.

Directors of two prominent dancers’ support agencies were interviewed. DSA2 Director was interviewed within the familiar setting of her workplace. The DSA1 Director, kindly participated at the last minute and emailed a detailed response to me after his colleague, the initial participant, became ill and cancelled her interview. Both DSA1 and DSA2 engaged fully with the interview schedule and provided invaluable data.

Dancers and gatekeepers’ interviews, apart from the two participants who replied electronically, were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. This provided ‘a permanent record’ and allowed the author ‘to concentrate on the interview’ data at analysis stage (Robson, 2002, p.290). All face-to-face interviews lasted between 20 and 40 minutes.

### ***Validity and Reliability***

By using data triangulation, threats to validity were reduced as one data collection method was cross referenced against another. Flexible methods, in open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, avoided fixed responses and allowed participants’ views to be woven together for analysis (Robson, 2002). To improve validity, an attempt was made to keep interview situations equal, for example, a consistent use of prompts in the interview schedule (see Appendix 3D, Question 2). This avoided unnecessary intervention that could



have impeded the true narrative (Flick, 2002). Robson acknowledges ‘prolonged involvement’ (Robson, 2002, p. 174) in the subject and research field, reduces reactivity and builds a trust between researcher and participant. This benefited the current study as my industry knowledge and personal experiences developed ‘trusting relationships’ (Robson, 2002, p. 174). Reliability was increased with the implementation of pilot questionnaires and interviews. This gave me invaluable interview practice and greatly improved my interview skills during the current study (Robson, 2002, Flick, 2002, Grix, 2004).

### **Ethical consideration**

The current study critically evaluated the CTSS policy and practice formulation with respect to the two dancer groups already known to me, therefore the ethical approach and possible outcomes of the current research were addressed.

I gained access through ‘gatekeepers’ (Oliver, 2003 p.39) and permissions were granted before questionnaires and interviews were initiated (Denscombe, 1998). An ethical approach allowed participants to qualify their answers anonymously, particularly around sensitive issues, for example, experiences of gatekeeper support and financial difficulties (Robson, 2002, Grix, 2004). A stamped-addressed envelope, posted with the questionnaire, allowed retired dancers to return anonymously and at no cost to the participants. Permissions, consent, anonymity, sensitivity and respect played a constant role in the ethical approach to the current study (Grix, 2004). It was made clear to the participants they could withdraw from the study at any time and if, on reflection post-participation, they wished to make any amendments to information, they could freely do so (see Appendix 3B). The purpose of the research was emphasised, pre and during participation, as it was hoped increased understanding of intended outcomes would lead to relaxed and open conversations (See Appendix 3A) (Oliver, 2003).

All participants were granted anonymity with the use of identification codes and at transcribing stage, names of organisations and individuals were hidden or replaced with pseudonyms (for example, see Appendix 3K) (Grix, 2004).

An Application for Ethical Review, University of Birmingham was successfully made in advance of the study. Data protection and University ethics procedures and guidelines referring to data storage were adhered to at all times.

## Data analysis

### *Key emergent themes*

Following the implementation, completion and return of dancers' DPCTQ, *key emergent themes* expressed in the quantitative data were gathered for further analysis (see Appendix 2G) and interpretations displayed in Table 2.5 (Harvey, 1990, Robson, 2002, Grix, 2004, Cohen et al, 2007). This first stage of data reduction, through classification and coding questionnaires, began to address research question one; *what are the similarities and differences in career transition experiences for retired company and independent dancers?*

**Table 2.5: Interpretations of Quantitative data from dancers' questionnaires (DPCTQ)**

| <b>Initial Themes to come to light post implementation of DPCTQ</b>   | <b>Independent Dancers (% of total sample)</b> | <b>Company Dancers (% of total sample)</b> |
|---|--|--|
| <i><b>Time to feel adjusted post transition</b></i>   |  |  |
| On-going  | 47   | 0  |
| Instantly   | 27   | 14   |
| Quickly   | 10.5   | 14   |
| Gradually   | 5.3  | 14   |
| 6 months  | 5.3  | 0  |
| 2 years   | 0  | 14   |
| 3 years   | 0  | 30   |
| 4 years   | 5.3  | 0  |
| 5 years   | 0  | 14   |
| <i><b>Highest Educational achievement</b></i>   |  |  |
| GCSE O  | 37   | 0  |
| GCSE A  | 10.5   | 0  |
| Diploma   | 16   | 0  |
| Under-graduate Degree   | 0  | 14   |
| Post-graduate Degree  | 10.5   | 86   |
| Other   | 5.3  | 0  |
| None  | 16   | 0  |
| <i><b>Support <u>Expected</u> during performance years</b></i> (a number of dancers expressed more than one support system) |  |  |
| None  | 21   | 0  |

|  |      |    |
|--|------|----|
| Family   | 58   | 29 |
| Partner  | 10.5 | 14 |
| Employer   | 10.5 | 29 |
| DCD  | 5.3  | 71 |
| Colleagues   | 0    | 0  |
| Clore Fellowship   | 0    | 0  |
| Friends  | 0    | 0  |
| <b><i>Support Received during performance years</i></b> (a number of dancers expressed more than one support system) |      |    |
| None   | 0    | 0  |
| Family   | 79   | 43 |
| Partner  | 16   | 29 |
| Employer   | 5.3  | 14 |
| DCD  | 5.3  | 57 |
| Colleagues   | 5.3  | 0  |
| Clore Fellowship   | 0    | 14 |
| Friends  | 10.5 | 14 |
| <b><i>Employer support</i></b>   |      |    |
| Yes  | 5.3  | 71 |
| No   | 94.7 | 29 |
| <b><i>Agency support</i></b>   |      |    |
| Yes  | 5.3  | 71 |
| No   | 94.7 | 29 |
| <b><i>Financial support</i></b>  |      |    |
| Self   | 63   | 43 |
| Family   | 10.5 | 0  |
| Partner  | 21   | 0  |
| DCD  | 5.3  | 57 |
| <b><i>Pre-transition planning</i></b>  |      |    |
| Yes  | 16   | 71 |
| No   | 63   | 14 |
| Financial  | 5.3  | 0  |
| Educational (including teaching qualifications)  | 0    | 14 |
| <b><i>Involuntary reasons leading to transition</i></b>  |      |    |
| <b><i>Voluntary reasons leading to transition</i></b>  | 42   | 29 |
|  | 58   | 71 |
| <b><i>Main Reason for Transition</i></b>   |      |    |
| Injury   | 26   | 0  |
| Start Family   | 37   | 14 |
| Health Issues  | 5.3  | 0  |
| Teaching offer   | 5.3  | 0  |
| Security   | 5.3  | 0  |
| New challenges   | 5.3  | 0  |
| New Career   | 10.5 | 29 |
| De-selection   | 0    | 14 |
| Education  | 0    | 14 |
| Tired of Dancer Lifestyle  | 0    | 14 |
| Mental Health  | 0    | 14 |
| <b><i>Aware of the work of Dancers' Career Development</i></b>   |      |    |

|   |      |     |
|---|------|-----|
| Yes   | 5.3  | 100 |
| No  | 79   | 0   |
| A little  | 4    | 0   |
| <b><i>Aware of the work of Dance UK</i></b>       |      |     |
| Yes   | 21   | 86  |
| No  | 58   | 0   |
| A little  | 10.5 | 14  |
| Thought it was a magazine                         | 10.5 | 0   |
| <b><i>Most Positive Aspect of Transition</i></b>  |      |     |
| More confidence                                   | 5.3  | 29  |
| Improved home life                                | 32   | 0   |
| More control                                      | 10.5 | 0   |
| Financial   | 10.5 | 0   |
| New challenges                                    | 5.3  | 57  |
| Less injury                                       | 10.5 | 0   |
| Pass on experience                                | 5.3  | 0   |
| Start family                                      | 5.3  | 0   |
| More respect from others                          | 5.3  | 0   |
| Improved stability                                | 5.3  | 0   |
| Less stress                                       | 5.3  | 0   |
| Learning  | 0    | 14  |
| None  | 5.3  | 0   |
| <b><i>Most Negative Aspect of Transition</i></b>  |      |     |
| Miss performing                                   | 74   | 57  |
| Uncertainty                                       | 5.3  | 0   |
| Dealing with new people                           | 5.3  | 0   |
| No support  | 5.3  | 0   |
| Aging   | 5.3  | 0   |
| Financial instabilities                           | 0    | 14  |
| New identity                                      | 0    | 14  |
| Lack of skills                                    | 0    | 14  |
| <b><i>Dancers' ideas for CTSS improvement</i></b> |      |     |
| All of Q.19 DPCTQ (see App. 2C)                   | 16   | 14  |
| Employer to do more                               | 10.5 | 0   |
| Company Education department to do more           | 0    | 14  |
| Counselling                                       | 10.5 | 0   |
| New Identity                                      | 0    | 14  |
| Education opportunities                           | 5.3  | 14  |
| Peer Knowledge                                    | 5.3  | 0   |
| Transferable skills                               | 16   | 0   |
| Career guidance                                   | 5.3  | 0   |
| Government support                                | 5.3  | 0   |
| Workshops   | 0    | 14  |
| ISTD (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing)    | 5.3  | 0   |
| None  | 0    | 29  |

The next stage of data reduction utilised these themes, and through further use of classification and coding of dancers', employers' and support agencies' interviews (for transcript samples, see Appendices 3K & 3M), data was cross-referenced with questionnaire data and substantiations and/or contradictions described and portrayed. By drawing upon existing ideas of content analysis, qualitative, text-based responses from the questionnaires and interviews were collated and themes and patterns of consensus and contradiction were identified and defined (Edwards & Talbot, 1997, Coffey, 1998, Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, Silverman, 2006, Flick, 2002, Robson, 2002, Birmingham & Wilkinson, 2003, Grix 2004, Cohen et al, 2007).

The process of data reduction (for examples, see Appendices 2F & 3P) continued to address research question one and began to address research question two; *what are the similarities and differences of dancers', employers' and dance support agency perceptions of CTSS in company and independent dance contexts?*

**Table 2.6: Emergent themes and subsequent codes for analysis from cross-referenced Questionnaire and Interview data to answer Research Questions 1 and 2**

| Emergent themes   | Code for analysis | Questionnaire (DPCTQ) and / or Interview (Int.) | To answer Research Question |
|---|-------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>1. Key timelines throughout dancers' transitions</b> | <b>KT</b>         | <b>DPCTQ and Int.</b>                           | <b>1 and 2</b>              |
| a. Age at retirement                                    | <b>AR</b>         | <b>DPCTQ and Int.</b>                           | <b>1 and 2</b>              |
| b. Time in dance performance                            | <b>TP</b>         | <b>DPCTQ and Int.</b>                           | <b>1 and 2</b>              |
| c. Time since retirement                                | <b>TR</b>         | <b>DPCTQ and Int.</b>                           | <b>1 and 2</b>              |
| d. Time to feel adjusted to new life post-performance   | <b>TFA</b>        | <b>DPCTQ and Int.</b>                           | <b>1 and 2</b>              |
| <b>2. Triad of support needs (Levine, 2004)</b>         |                   |   |                             |
| a. Psychological  | <b>Ps</b>         | <b>DPCTQ and Int.</b>                           | <b>1 and 2</b>              |
| b. Financial  | <b>Fi</b>         | <b>DPCTQ and Int.</b>                           | <b>1 and 2</b>              |
| c. Educational  | <b>Ed</b>         | <b>DPCTQ and Int.</b>                           | <b>1 and 2</b>              |
| <b>3. Main Reasons for Transition</b>                   | <b>MRT</b>        | <b>DPCTQ and Int.</b>                           | <b>1 and 2</b>              |

|  |       |                |         |
|--|-------|----------------|---------|
| a. <b><i>Involuntary</i></b> reasons (for example, injury, de-selection or mental health issues)                   | INV   | DPCTQ and Int. | 1 and 2 |
| b. <b><i>Voluntary</i></b> reasons (for example, free-choice, desire to pursue new goals, education opportunities) | VOL   | DPCTQ and Int. | 1 and 2 |
| 4. <b><i>Pre-transition planning</i></b>   | PTP   | DPCTQ and Int. | 1 and 2 |
| 5. <b><i>Aspects of the transition</i></b>   |       |                |         |
| a. <i>Most positive</i>  | MPA   | DPCTQ and Int. | 1 and 2 |
| b. <i>Most negative</i>  | MNA   |                | 1 and 2 |
| 6. <b><i>Career Transition Support Systems</i></b>   | CTSS  | DPCTQ and Int. | 1 and 2 |
| a. <i>CTSS dancers benefited from pre-transition</i>   | SSPre | DPCTQ and Int. | 1 and 2 |
| b. <u><i>Employer CTSS</i></u>   | ES    | DPCTQ and Int. | 1 and 2 |
| c. <u><i>Dancers' Support Agency CTSS</i></u>  | AS    | DPCTQ and Int. | 1 and 2 |
| 7. <b><i>Dancers' experiences post transition</i></b>  | EPT   | DPCTQ and Int. | 1 and 2 |
| 8. <b><i>Ideas to improve CTSS for retiring dancers</i></b>  | IdImp | DPCTQ and Int. | 1 and 2 |

These definitive, emergent themes aimed to answer the research questions and are discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. The chapter presents the results by synthesising data obtained from retired dancers, employers and support agencies' Directors. Discussion of results, following analysis, attempted to gain a better understanding of CTSS granted to both company and independent dancers.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

According to Schlossberg (1981) the human adaptation to transition is affected by four major factors, *self, situation, support* and *strategies*. In addition, Taylor and Ogilvie (1994) acknowledged *age, de-selection, injury* and *free-choice* brought on the career terminations of elite athletes (Taylor and Ogilvie, 1994). By drawing parallels to these models, past literature and key emergent themes, *Results* and *Discussion of Results* are presented in this chapter in an attempt to answer the research questions:

1. *What are the similarities and differences in career transition experiences for retired company and independent dancers?*
2. *What are the similarities and differences of dancers', employers' and dancers' support agencies' perceptions of CTSS in company and independent dance contexts?*

Questionnaire data indicated 'commonalities, differences and similarities' (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 461) between company and independent dancers' transition experiences. Interview data provided in-depth narratives of retired dancers' career transition experiences and dancers' and gatekeepers' perceptions of CTSS. Results indicated industry gatekeepers believed company and independent dancers contributed to the success of the UK dance industry (for example, see App 3M, p.62). Although results indicated *Organisation A* and both support agencies offered transition support to all dancers, further analysis of results highlighted dissemination of CTSS, and eventual take-up was substantially lower for independent dancers (see Table 2.5, p.30). Data indicated why, where, when and how the dissemination of invaluable information succeeded or failed to reach the retiring dancers and, results from the following emergent themes are presented here:

1. *Key timelines throughout dancers' transitions*
  - a. Age at retirement
  - b. Time in dance performance



- c. Time since retirement
  - d. Time to feel adjusted to new life post-performance
- 2. *'The Triad of needs'* (Levine, 2004, p. 33)
  - a. Psychological
  - b. Financial
  - c. Educational
- 3. *Main Reasons for Transition*
  - a. *Involuntary* reasons (for example, injury, de-selection or mental health issues)
  - b. *Voluntary* reasons (for example, free-choice, desire to pursue new goals, education opportunities)
- 4. *Pre-transition planning*
- 5. *Aspects of the transition*
  - a. Most *positive*
  - b. Most *negative*
- 6. *Career Transition Support Systems (CTSS)*
  - a. CTSS dancers benefited from pre-transition
  - b. Employer CTSS
  - c. Dancers' Support Agency CTSS
- 7. *Dancers' experiences post transition*
- 8. *Ideas to improve CTSS for retiring dancers*

## **Emergent themes**

### **1. Key timelines during dancers' transitions**

#### ***a. Age of retirement***

The study attracted questionnaire responses from twenty six retired dancers: seven company dancers from *Organisation A* and nineteen independent dancers from *Organisation B*. The total sample consisted of twelve male and fourteen female retired dancers ranging in age from 29 to 47 years ( $M = 40.23$  years,  $SD = 5.28$  years). In agreement with literature (The

Telegraph, 29 June 2009, Roncaglia, 2010, Hemley, 2011), the twenty six dancers retired on average at age of 33.92 years (SD = 5.31 years).

***b. Time in dance profession***

Time in the active dance performance profession ranged from 4 to 30 years (M = 16.73 years, SD = 6.51 years) and time since retirement ranged from 1 to 14 years (M = 6.23 years, SD = 2.89 years).

***c. Time since retirement from dance performance***

All dancers sampled had terminated their dance performance career and had experienced life post transition. Independent dancers had performed professionally for 9 years to 30 years (M = 18.1 years) and company dancers between 4 years to 18 years (M = 13 years). See Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Average retirement age, time in profession and time since retirement**

| <b>Retired Dancer</b>          | <b>1a. Average retirement age (Yrs.)</b> | <b>1b. Average time in dance performance(Yrs.)</b> | <b>1c.Average time since retirement (Yrs.)</b> |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Company Dancer (CD)</b>     | 30.93                                    | 13   | 5.6  |
| <b>Independent Dancer (ID)</b> | 35.03                                    | 18.1   | 6.4  |
| <b>Female</b>                  | 34.71                                    | 17.9   | 6.8  |
| <b>Male</b>                    | 33                                       | 15.3   | 5.9  |
| <b>CD - Female</b>             | 30.25                                    | 12.5   | 6.8  |
| <b>CD - Male</b>               | 31.2                                     | 13.2   | 5.9  |
| <b>ID - Female</b>             | 35.36                                    | 18.8   | 4.75   |
| <b>ID - Male</b>               | 34.29                                    | 16.9   | 5.9  |

Results showed company dancers retired on average 4.1 years earlier than independent dancers. Results suggested the knowledge of financial support and educational opportunities, granted to company dancers increased confidence levels and started the transition process earlier. One company dancer said in her interview:

*I knew what was going to happen in the future really, so I made sure that I was secure financially on my own to get me through whatever I needed to get through that first couple years and had the DCD Settlement all lined up ready to go way ahead of time (CD2)*

Company dancers' were exposed to role models who had completed their transition. This positively contributed to the adaptation to transition process for retired dancers of *Organisation A* (Schlossberg, 1981). Experience of peer knowledge proved more prevalent in the company arena compared to the experiences of independent dancers in the musical theatre arena. A retired company dancer added in his interview:

*I always knew that fund [DCD] was there because I had heard of other people [former Organisation A dancers' names provided] that had gone on...and I knew they were helped with that (CD7)*

In comparison, one independent dancer considered her transition was still on-going at 47 years of age. She relied on the support of a partner to feel financially comfortable and confident to start her transition and said at questionnaire stage:

*While I was in a long term relationship I believed to end my career would not be difficult but now that I am single and extremely independent it has proved more difficult in terms of choice. I now base a lot of my decisions on what will pay the mortgage and bills rather than on what I would like to be doing (ID1, q.10)*

I considered the earlier retirement age of *Organisation A* company dancers was helped by opportunities to enter a HE programme during the performance years. This improved company dancers' self-confidence and eased the decision to leave dance performance (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). In her interview a retired company dancer substantiated this:

*I think doing the Masters made me a much more confident person because I noticed the more I did that – obviously I was getting older, I was 30, 31, 32, I noticed I was much more confident as a dancer (CD3, App. 3H, p.47)*

However one company dancer did not commit to HE opportunities offered by his employer and expressed his transition fears as he reflected at interview stage:

*I was drawing up CVs and getting ready to apply for different things and I thought, 'God I have got nothing. I have got a few O levels, GCSEs ...*

He added:

*I also felt that with educational opportunities, while they were getting the degree courses up and running, it was usually those who shouted loudest who got to the top of the list and there were limited places. So I was a bit lethargic and apathetic and just let things slip (CD7)*

In accordance with literature, this retired dancer acknowledged his personality traits (*self*) affected his decision to study and subsequently his transition (Schlossberg, 1981).

The opportunity to study, for a large number of independent dancers, was affected by issues of financial affordability (see App. 2G). Results suggested a HE qualification eased the overall transition, but financial dependency and limited opportunities for the majority of dancers were outlined by DSA1:

*Obviously a majority of dancers will not have gone through higher education before dancing, so educational qualifications may well be required for their future employment. Some companies like Birmingham Royal Ballet run excellent schemes to give them university degrees before they leave the Company. But there are, I think, few of these. Even dancers who choose to go into practical jobs, like carpentry, interior design, gardening, will mostly need to take a course, some of which are quite dear (DSA1, App. 3M p.62)*

Financial and educational issues are discussed in more detail later however, to add further strength to DSA1's comment, one independent dancer, also mother to a young child, said of her re-training costs at interview stage:

*I had to pay for all of that [Pilates course]. It was really expensive, for the course and then they say you have got to do 80 hours of further tuition and observing, so I am really pleased I am a bit of a square and did it before ...[daughter's name provided]... arrived (ID3, App. 3J, p. 52)*

Although this independent dancers' *self*, her ability to think ahead, helped during her transition, a large number of independent dancers' transitions remained delayed, due to educational and financial barriers. Psychological issues continued for some dancers as *age* became a retiring factor (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Similarities existed in company and independent dancers' ageing issues, as comments were delivered by both dancer sets during questionnaires and interviews. *De-selection* (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) and becoming 'too old' for the industry eventually brought on the transition process for one male independent dancer who said at interview stage:

*I was never going to get any lead roles and so I decided that I didn't want to be the oldest boy in the chorus, as to say, and I just decided that it was time for me to stop dancing really (ID7)*

A male company dancer agreed and added in his interview:

*By 30 I think I had reached soloist or First Soloist, so I had in my opinion, peaked at where I should have got to and I wasn't left with an ambition to go further (CD7)*

This was substantiated by a former female Principal dancer with *Organisation A* when she said at questionnaire stage:

*...I wanted to leave with confidence and my head held high. Still feeling as though I was a good dancer. Not someone who was now useless and over the hill (CD3, App. 2D. q.13)*

Another similarity, as dancers commented on their retirement age, was expressed by one female company and seven female independent dancers who had made the decision to leave

dance performance to *start a family*. The eight female dancers, of the total sample, retired to start a family on average at 33.1 years of age. One company dancer said in her interview:

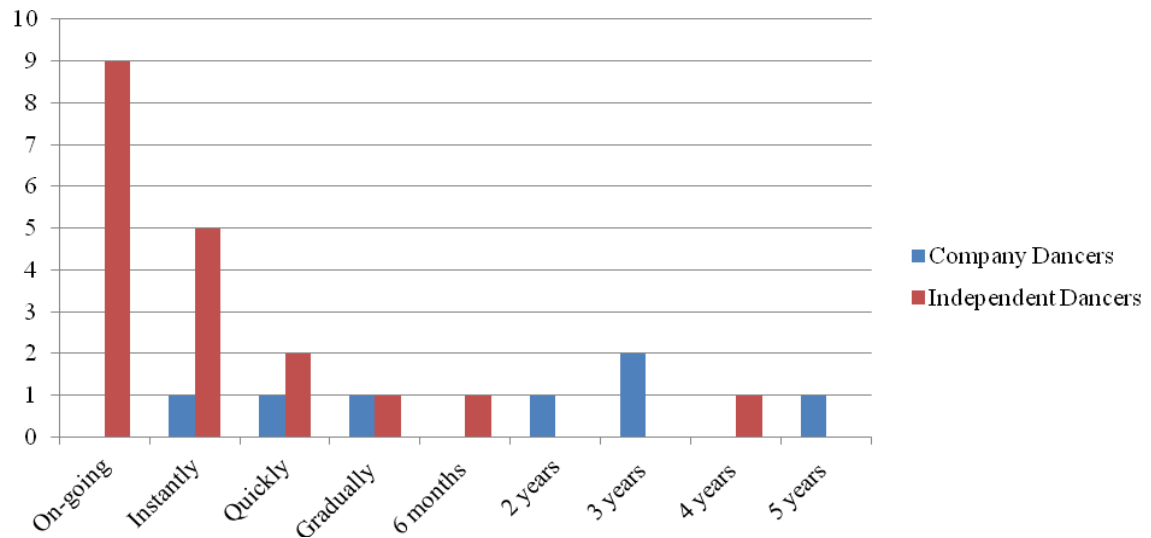
*As I woman I wanted children. I didn't want to do that as a ballet dancer, I wanted to become a mum and not to have to work like that. I wanted to end on a high...I wanted to have children, I wanted to get married, I wanted to do something else...so it was a whole combination. I was ready, really ready (CD3, App. 3H, p.44)*

This particular theme is discussed in more detail in the *Reasons for transition* section.

#### ***d. Time to feel adjusted post transition***

The length of time dancers believed it had taken to adjust to a new life post transition was an important timeline to unfold. 100% of company dancers engaged in this study believed they had moved on to a new identity post performance, either instantly or up to five years from the onset of transition. In comparison, 47% of independent dancers thought the process was still 'on-going' five to ten years post performance. Four of these independent dancers' performing careers had ended due to *injury* (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). This lowered self-esteem and prolonged the path to a new identity due to the reduced preparation time (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). In comparison, those company dancers who were satisfied with their new identity, had retired and *started a new career, started a family* or *entered a HE programme*. However it was not all positive for company dancers as some were *tired of the lifestyle*, had experienced *de-selection* from *Organisation A*, or had *suffered mental health* before they had satisfactorily moved on. See Chart 3.2.

**Chart 3.2: Length of time to feel adjusted to life post transition**



71% of company dancers had benefited from some level of contact with DCD during their transition. An equal amount felt their employer, had supported them towards their new identity. In comparison, 5.3% of independent dancers said they had received support from DCD and 5.3% of independent dancers said their employer had supported their transition. In accordance with literature (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) this lack of support lengthened the time to feel adjusted post performance. One independent dancer believed her transition was still on-going and said in her interview:

*I still don't. It's hard to fit into other social roles...she continued...I miss it. I miss dancing and that feeling you get performing and being part of a company (ID3, App. 2E, q.17&18.2)*

One company dancer, now content in a new career, said at interview stage he regretted delaying his transition:

*I feel foolish that it has taken me until the age of 40 to decide that this is what I want to do but it is very exciting now...I wish I had done it earlier, I wish I could go back and tell the 30 year old to get a move on and not dither and that there are opportunities to be taken (CD7)*

Affecting his transition, and lengthening the time to feel adjusted to a new career, this company dancer suffered 'mental health issues' during retirement from performance, relied on financial support and feared his lack of HE qualifications would hinder his transition. In accordance with literature (Yates, 2002, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby 2006, Langsdorff, 2006) results indicated retiring dancers faced psychological, financial and educational issues as they ceased dance performance. This was further substantiated by the gatekeepers interviewed for the current study (for example, see DSA1, App. 3M, p.62).

## **2. Psychological, financial and educational issues during dancers' career transition**

In accordance with dance and sport literature, results indicated that one, two or a combination of these three issues affected the transition experiences for all dancers engaged in the current study (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Ross, 1999, Buckroyd, 2000, Yates, 2002, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby 2006, Langsdorff, 2006). Insights into dancers' narratives and gatekeepers' interceptions with support were explored further. Results highlighted similarities and differences in dancers' experiences of CTSS in relation to these three issues, and the eventual outcome of a positive, or negative, career transition.

### ***a. Psychological issues***

A significant number of company and independent dancers' transitions were affected by a reduced self-confidence, difficulty in planning for their future due to lack of professional and interpersonal skills, identity crisis post transition, fear and feelings of regret brought on by leaving dance performance prematurely (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). During an interview, one independent dancer discussed her experience of identity crisis:



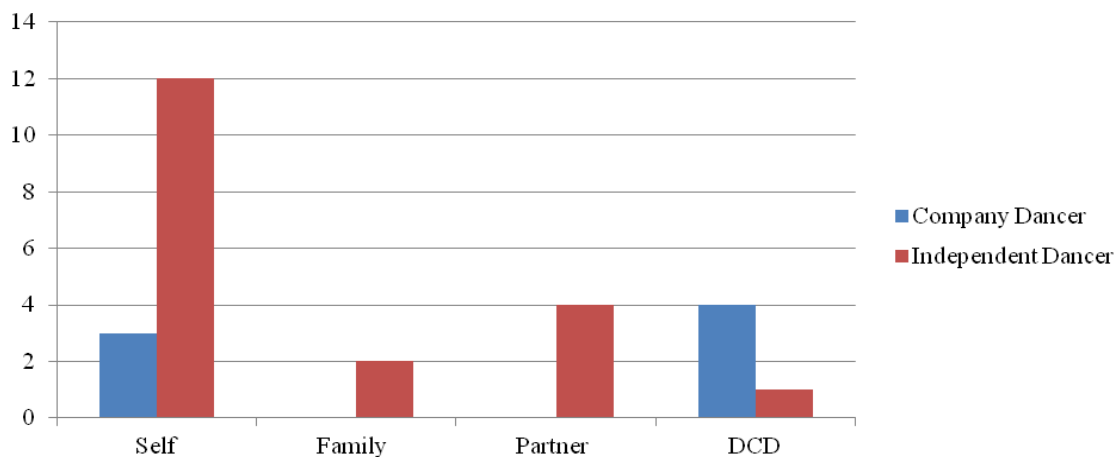
*I felt frightened, I had no confidence whatsoever...very sad and very difficult then to be yourself, because you just don't know who on earth you are any more. It is not really important any more but it still feels so much of you. Yes, so very difficult, very difficult actually (ID3, App. 3J, p.49)*

Psychological issues were inter-linked with feelings of inadequacy, financially and educationally, for a large number of dancers (Yates, 2002, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006). This was more likely to happen to independent dancers as results indicated only one *Organisation B* dancer had received financial help from DCD in order to re-train, and two independent dancers' Higher Education successes, were either self-funded or supported financially by a partner.

### ***b. Financial issues***

A large number of dancers faced financial difficulties at transition stage. Dancers were asked how they had financially supported their transition and questionnaires' results presented in Chart 3.3.

**Chart 3.3: Financial support**



Following the implementation of the DPCTQ, results indicated 53.8% of the total sample had financially supported their own transition. 63.2% of independent dancers and 28.6% of company dancers had supplemented re-training costs and periods of no income by accessing savings, additional employment whilst still performing, or relied on other methods of financial support highlighted. DCD financially supported 19.23% of the total sample (5.3% of independent dancers and 57% of company dancers). 21% of independent dancers relied on a partner for financial help and 10.5% of independent dancers turned to family for financial support.

Questionnaires revealed company dancers' positive responses and included:

*I knew prior to retiring about the DCD financial support which I took advantage of...I received the maximum reward from DCD which amounted to the sum of £20,000 (CD1, q.15 & q.16)*

*Although I had savings the DCD Award was extremely helpful! Otherwise I think my savings would have depleted quickly (CD3, App. 2D, q.8)*

It wasn't all positive for company dancers as one former ballet dancer with *Organisation A* pointed out:

*I didn't qualify for the DCD fund as I was 1 year under the 8 years, even though I danced with the Royal Ballet as a 3<sup>rd</sup> year graduate student for nearly all my time at Royal Ballet Upper School*

She added:

*All my career development I have had to fund myself - two degrees and a teaching course (CD2)*

This was substantiated by a large number of independent dancers. One independent dancer had struggled with her training costs and in her interview she revealed further issues her former colleagues in the ‘West End’ musical theatre arena had faced:

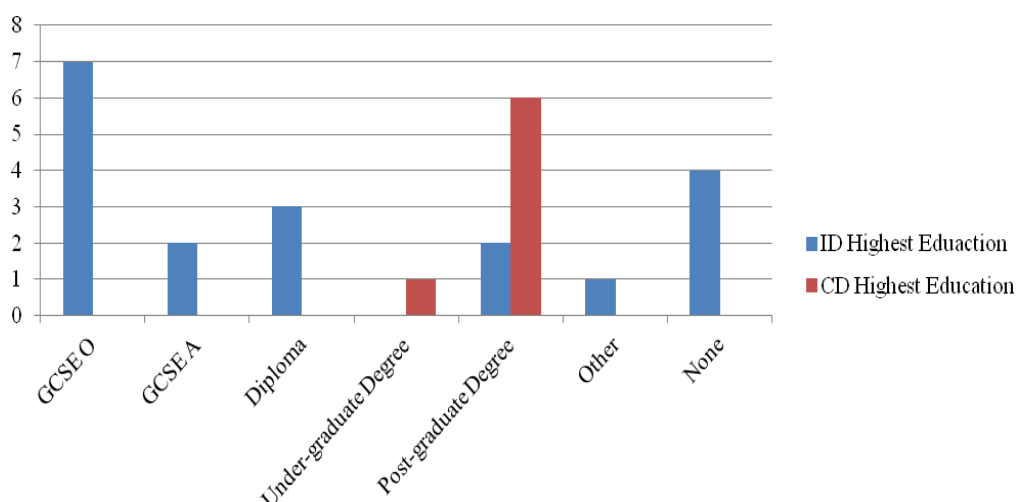
*I have some poor friends who haven't done that [paid for training course before starting a family], have got their child and now need to pay for childcare as well, so I am pleased I did, but it used up any money I had (ID3, App. 3J, p.52)*

Psychological and financial issues, such as *lack of confidence* and *low self-esteem* were brought on by and/or intertwined with a lack of educational achievements for only one company dancer compared to the majority of independent dancers.

### *c. Educational issues*

Differences in education levels, achieved by company and independent dancers are shown in Chart 3.4.

**Chart 3.4: Highest education levels for Company and Independent dancers**



85.7% of company dancers had a Post-graduate degree; four MA, one MPhil and one MBChBMed. One company dancer had part-completed an Under-graduate degree. This

indicated 100% of company dancers had studied at degree level during performance with *Organisation A* or post performance. In comparison 10.5% of independent dancers had a Post-graduate degree; one MA and one MGeology. These two independent dancers studied post performance and one self-financed his degree and the other relied on a partner for financial support. The MA qualified independent dancer had also gained teaching qualifications during his training years and said in his interview:

*I am qualified to teach post-16 in vocational schools...that led me on to going and doing my Masters' degree...self-financed and self-supported (ID6)*

In comparison, company dancers had the opportunity to study during dance performance, supported internally by *Organisation A* and externally by close links with the company's City University. Although his degree was also self-funded, at questionnaire stage one company dancer said:

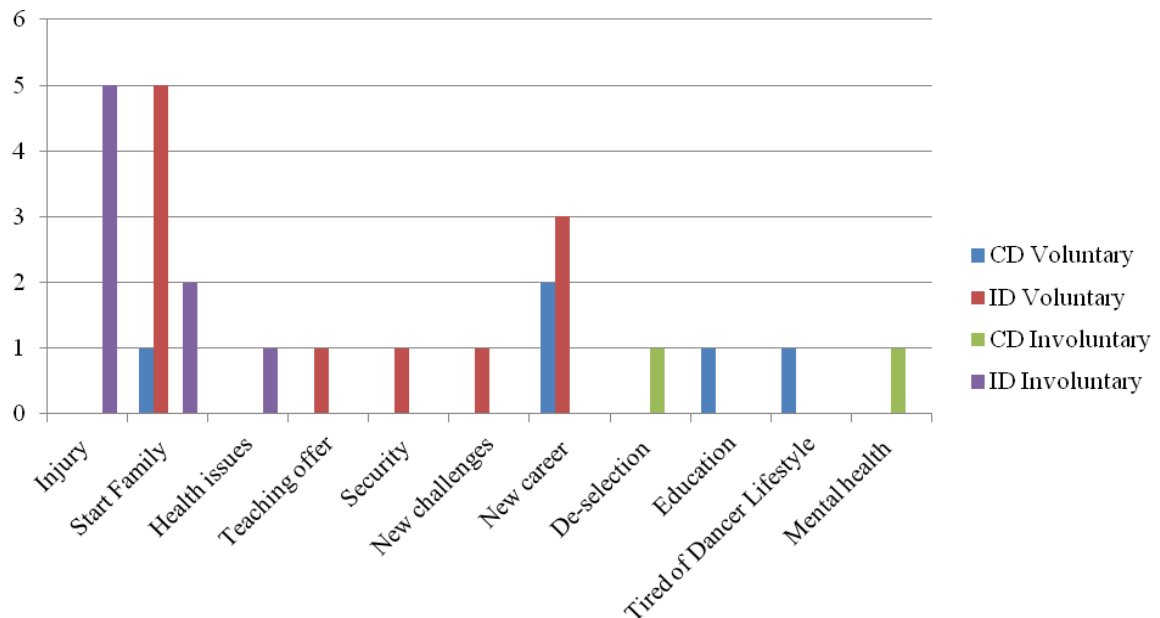
*The dancers' degree course, which I self-funded, grounded me a great deal...my MA and management training experiences had opened up the dance world – and widened my interests (CD6, q.8 & q.9)*

Issues of lack of educational opportunities, dancers' retirement age, length of time to feel adjusted to a new life post performance and the psychological and financial issues lined out above were affected by, and/or affected, the *reasons for transition* for company and independent dancers.

### **3. Main Reasons for Transition**

Agreeing with literature, DPCTQ and interview data indicated dancers' *reasons for transition* were divided into two groups: *involuntary* and *voluntary* reasons for transition (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Roncaglia, 2010). Further details, shown in Chart 3.5, highlighted where company and independent dancers' *reasons for transition* aligned and/or conflicted.

**Chart 3.5: Main *involuntary* and *voluntary* reasons for transition**



***a. Involuntary reasons leading to transition***

Questionnaire results showed 19.2% of all dancers expressed *injury* as their main involuntary reason for transition. These five dancers were all engaged in the independent dance arena of ‘West End’ musical theatre. One independent dancer said at questionnaire stage:

*I sustained a serious calf injury and was unable to perform for the rest of the contract that I had to seriously consider whether my days as a dancer were over (ID1, q.13)*

Although some company dancers stated they had suffered injuries throughout their careers they did not list *injury* as their main reason to leave dance performance. However, it was due to the physical pressures of a ballet career that eventually forced some company dancers to retire earlier than anticipated. When asked about the first signs of the realities of retirement, one company dancer divulged the following answer at questionnaire stage:

*Throughout career suffered injuries, so although aware of impending retirement did not address the issue fully (CD7, q.10)*

Another company dancer added at questionnaire stage:

*I suffered a second knee injury at the age of 27 and required surgery. During the recovery period the inevitable mortality of my career choice became apparent and I decided to take active steps towards a second career path (CD1, q.10)*

This company dancers' healthcare was financially and psychologically supported by his employer *Organisation A*, but in comparison one independent dancer stated at DPCTQ stage that he had to retire earlier than expected at 29 years of age as:

*Very soon into my career when I suffered a back injury and I lost a job because of it (ID15, q.10)*

He received no support from his employer. 'When a change occurs suddenly and unexpectedly, no such preparation or rehearsal is possible' (Schlossberg, 1981, p.9), therefore, prolonging the transition. This particular independent dancer felt his transition was still 'on-going', eight years after he had sustained his injury.

Company dancers engaged by *Organisation A* had benefited from trained physiotherapists 'on site' in a dedicated health-centre that monitored their health and fitness on a regular basis (Dance UK, 2012). In comparison, independent dancers questioned had often sourced, and paid for, their own dancer health-care during their performance career, particularly during periods of unemployment.

#### ***b. Voluntary reasons leading to transition***

23% of the total questionnaire sample said *starting a family* was the main reason for beginning the transition process. Seven female independent dancers stated their desire to *start a family* had brought on the transition and one female company dancer stated *starting a family*

as her main reason for leaving *Organisation A*. In a completed questionnaire, one independent dancer retired at 36 years of age and said her *free-choice* (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) to start the transition was:

*Very much a voluntary decision. More time was required to commit to a new family*  
(ID13, q.13)

*Starting a family* created financial issues for some, as several retired independent dancers said they had relied on their partners to support them post-transition. At questionnaire stage one former independent dancer said:

*I earned enough to buy and improve property during my career. Since then, having had children and not worked, I relied on my partner for financial support* (ID5, q.8)

No dancers questioned or interviewed for this study had started a family whilst they were *still* performing. All had left performance *before* they started a family and no retired dancers in the study had returned to performance *after* they had started a family. However, I am aware of dancers who had taken ‘time out’ to start a family and had successfully returned to dance performance. One independent dancer, whose decision to start a family was linked to her age, and the often financial and social insecurity of the dance profession, said in her interview:

*I had just got married and had been told by the doctor that I might have difficulties having a baby ... so I knew that I mustn't put it off. So I was thinking having seen other people in shows have children and it not work out the way I would want, because it's not very secure* (ID3, App. 3J, p.48)

I considered this particular theme would make an important and separate research study at a later stage. I acknowledged this main *voluntary reason* for dancers leaving the profession, could be different if less female dancers had engaged in the study. Gender remained an affecting factor in the adaptation to transition process as ‘characteristics of the individual’ (Schlossberg, 1981, p.12) contributed to an individual’s transition and therefore, affected results.

19.3% of the total questionnaire sample said *pursuing a new career* was the main reason for voluntary starting their career transition. At 30 years of age, one prepared company dancer, a former Principal ballerina with *Organisation A*, said at questionnaire stage that she was ready to pursue a new career:

*I researched what Pilates instructor courses were the best well ahead of time. I applied for Dancers' Resettlement and the Pilates course about 8 months before I stopped dancing* (CD3, App. 2D, q.11)

In agreement with documented issues of *age* and *de-selection* causing the transition process (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) she added, again at questionnaire stage:

*...knew age would become an issue, I wanted to end on a high, not feel as though I was being kicked out the door...* (CD3, App. 2D, q.12)

The retired company dancer continued as she divulged the importance of preparation:

*Planning so far ahead made my transition smooth, much less traumatic and so much more fun really. I was excited for the change* (CD3, App. 2D, q.10)

In agreement with these dancers' thoughts, and literature that states a prepared transition is an easier transition (Schlossberg 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006), another company dancer substantiated the importance of preparation and simply said at the end of his interview:

*Preparation is key* (ID6)

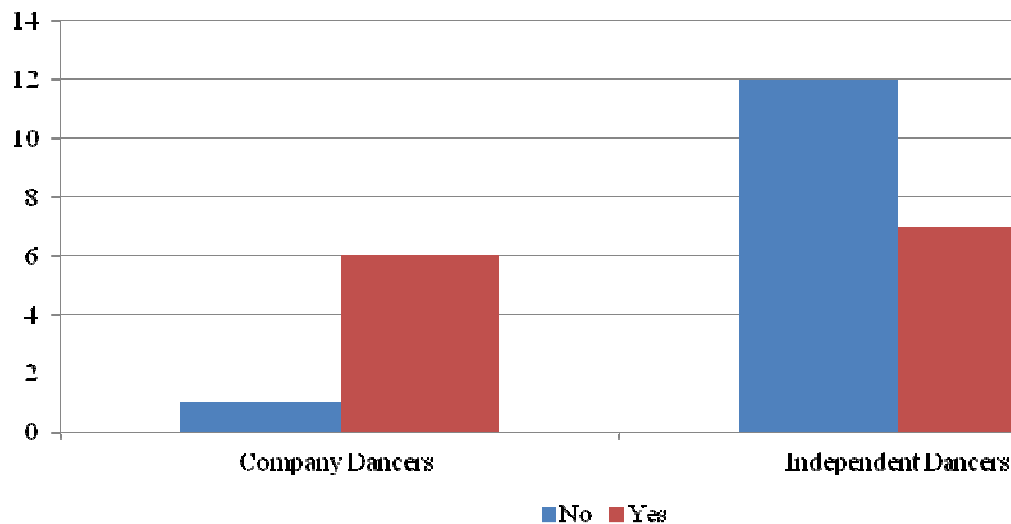
Jeffri & Throsby (2006) substantiates this and states 'all in all, the conclusion is inescapable: preparation is key' (Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, p. 56) and Schlossberg (1981) adds 'transitions whose onset is gradual are usually easier to adapt to because the individual can prepare for them' (Schlossberg, 1981, p.9). The next section compares the pre-transition planning experiences between company and independent dancers.



#### 4. Pre-transition planning

As with dancers who had prepared for their transition, the career transition of ID6 quoted above was a positive experience and successful transition for him. It had involved HE (self-financed) and job satisfaction in a new career, teaching dance to the next generation of dancers. However, results indicated differences in company and independent dancers pre-transition planning figures. See Chart 3.6:

**Chart 3.6: Pre-transition planning**



Results indicated 86% of company dancers had prepared for their transition compared to 37% of independent dancers. Literature stated the main reason dancers did not prepare for their transition was the fear that it would “jeopardise their career” (Levine, 2006, p. 56). This is substantiated by DSA1 as he raised the issue of dancers keeping the transition ‘under wraps’ as he said at interview stage:

*There is of course one problem. That is that dancers who want to retire may feel they need to keep their intentions unknown to their company's administration. That is because it may be felt that this knowledge could lead to his or her being passed over in casting, or promotion. That is why the members of the DCD Board who represent*

*the contributing companies ought not to be employees of their company but outside company board members. It is also an argument for the prime importance of DCD since often dancers move from one company to another, and a dance company is hardly likely to support someone who has left for another organisation. DCD has an overall view of the career of a dancer and the length of that career. That is why transition support cannot be left to dance companies alone (DSA1, App. 3M, p.63)*

I agreed that the employer was not solely responsible for contributing to dancers' CTSS and therefore, to understand the current situation for dancers, I delved further into the participants' narratives and engaged further with the frameworks operationalised for this study and considered the dancers' *self* in the transition process (Schlossberg, 1981). This feeling of shared-responsibility was substantiated by all employers and support agency Directors interviewed for this study:

*Naturally 'self' matters. You have to have the will to make good in adopting a new career. And it is all to the good when dancers can and do prepare themselves for this - and especially good when they can devote their own earnings to take on preliminary courses. But that isn't always possible. So their help must come from elsewhere (DSA1, App. 3M, p.63)*

One company dancer said in an interview:

*...I like to have control over things, I am very obsessive, very organised...I don't feel it [the transition] was sudden because I am a super organised person. I am a planner, I had it all planned.... (CD3, App 3H, p.45)*

In accordance with literature (Levine, 2004, Taylor & Ogilvie, 2004), results indicated a significant number of independent dancers had not planned, or resisted planning, until very close to their transition. This led to long-term complications for many independent dancers, including low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence. Increasing these feelings, and in agreement with literature, *de-selection* (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Roncaglia, 2010) from roles

was one reason dancers from both groups, had decided to leave performance prematurely. One company dancer said at questionnaire stage:

*The decision to leave came quite suddenly but also was not fully my choice to leave. Quite a difficult position to be in and it was very upsetting and stressful at the time* (CD2, q. 10)

This feeling was confirmed at interview stage by a retired independent dancer who believed a younger generation was more favourable when producers auditioned and selected ensemble dancers for 'West End' productions:

*I got to my mid-thirties when I thought that as an ensemble member I couldn't really go any further. I was never going to get any lead roles and so I decided that I didn't want to be the oldest boy in the chorus, as to say, and I just decided that it was time for me to stop dancing really* (ID7)

Sports literature indicated de-selection from athletic performance created psychological issues for some retiring athletes (Cecić Erpič et al, 2004, Wylleman et al, 2004, Alfermann et al, 2004, Marthinus, 2007). This was substantiated by dance literature, and *both* company and independent dancers, who agreed *feelings of isolation, reduction in their self-confidence* and a *lowered self-esteem* affected their transitions (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006).

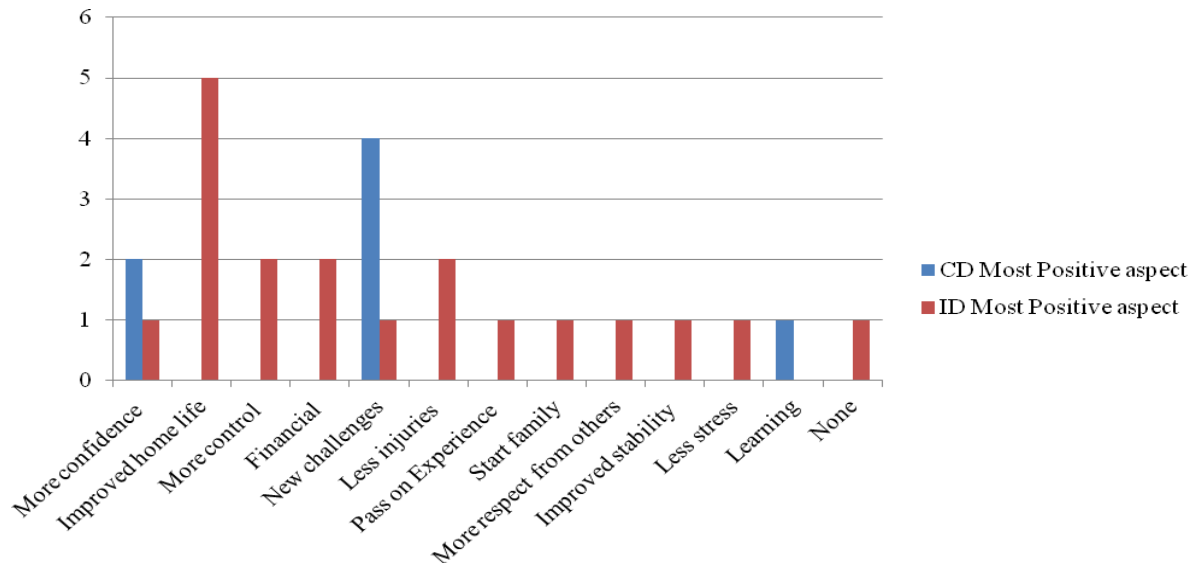
*Main reasons for transition* came to light after further exploration of indicative data. Reasons were supported by retired dancers' *most positive* and *most negative aspects* of their career transitions.

## **5. Aspects of the transition**

### ***a. Most positive aspects of the transition***

Questionnaire results of most *positive* aspects of the dancers' transitions are shown in Chart 3.7:

**Chart 3.7: Most *positive* aspect of the transition**



Five independent dancers, 23% of the total sample of retired dancers questioned, believed their *most positive aspect* of the transition was an *improved home-life*. They considered spending more time with a partner, family and friends, had greatly improved their quality of life post transition. This feeling was not dependant on the new career, but a sense that the retired dancers had more free time to move towards their new identities. This followed a reduction in the evening and weekend work they had experienced as dancers. Both company and independent dancers expressed this at questionnaire stage:

*Free weekends, longer holidays* (CD5, q.18.1)

*Much more social especially weekends and holidays for family* (ID5, q.18.1)

Interviews substantiated this:

*I get to have my evenings and it is less stressful, it is definitely less stressful than putting yourself through all of the auditions and everything else, yes (ID3, App. 3J, p.53)*

In contrast to independent dancers' most positive aspects, company dancers felt *new challenges, learning and more confidence* were the most positive aspects of their transition. I considered this 'higher thinking' indicated differences in the ways the two dancer sets thought about their transitions. Results suggested the higher ranked company dancers (Principal dancers) who had worked for *Organisation A* had experienced an easier transition compared to the lower ranks (the corps de ballet). DSA1 pointed out during his interview:

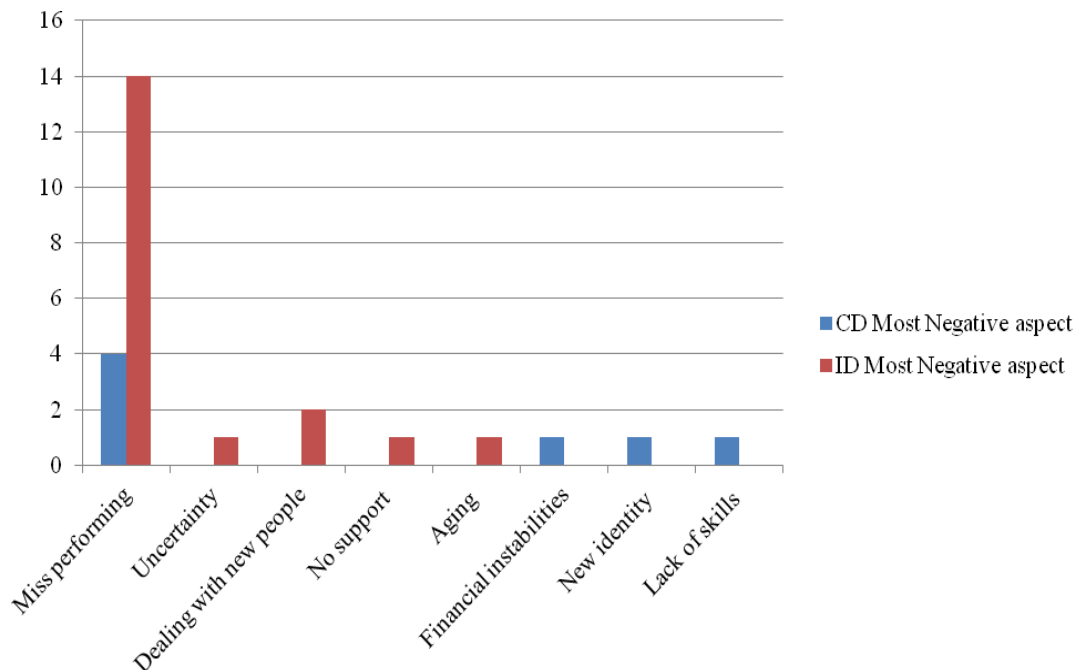
*Take the example of [Principal dancer name provided], who was helped by [Organisation A] to take on responsibility in the company, then was helped by DCD and worked in various theatrical and dance companies, and has just been made Director of the Royal Ballet (DSA1, App. 3M, p.63)*

In comparison there was no evidence that a retired independent dancer, engaged in the current study, had been supported by his/her employer and climbed the ranks to become Director of a musical theatre production company. Retired independent dancers had little experience of positive peer-knowledge whilst still dancing for *Organisation B* compared to the peer knowledge shared and experienced by company dancers during employment with *Organisation A*.

#### ***b. Most negative aspects of the transition***

Dancers' were also asked to talk about the most *negative* aspect of their career transition and results are shown in Chart 3.8.

**Chart 3.8: Most *negative* aspect of the transition**



A significant number of retired dancers *missed performing* post transition and results indicated this was the *most negative aspect* of transition. 69.23% of the total sample said they missed aspects of their performance career, particularly the feeling of dancing on stage in front of an appreciative audience, the choreography, and particularly, backstage camaraderie between fellow dancers and colleagues. This was substantiated in questionnaires:

*Missing the high you get onstage. The feeling of being high from dancing something beautiful!* (CD3, App. 2D, q.18.2)

*I miss it. I miss dancing and that feeling you get performing and being part of a company* (ID3, App. 2E, q.18.2)

Interviews substantiated this feeling for the majority of dancers:

*I do miss performing from time to time – I don't feel I achieved everything I was capable of in my performing career (CD2)*

Alongside these feelings of *regret* and *missing dance performance*, *uncertainty about the future*, *dealing with new people outside the dance sector*, *no support*, *ageing*, *financial instabilities*, *fear to find a new identity* and *lack of skills* were also listed as *negative aspects* of dancers' career transitions.

No dancers' transitions were without one, two or a combination of all three psychological, financial and educational issues (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006). These issues were either resolved by the interception of employers' and/or dancers' support agencies CTSS, or hindered by very little, or no CTSS, at all. In an attempt to answer research question two, employers' and support agencies' initiatives, and their affects, or not, on dancers' career transitions unfolded.

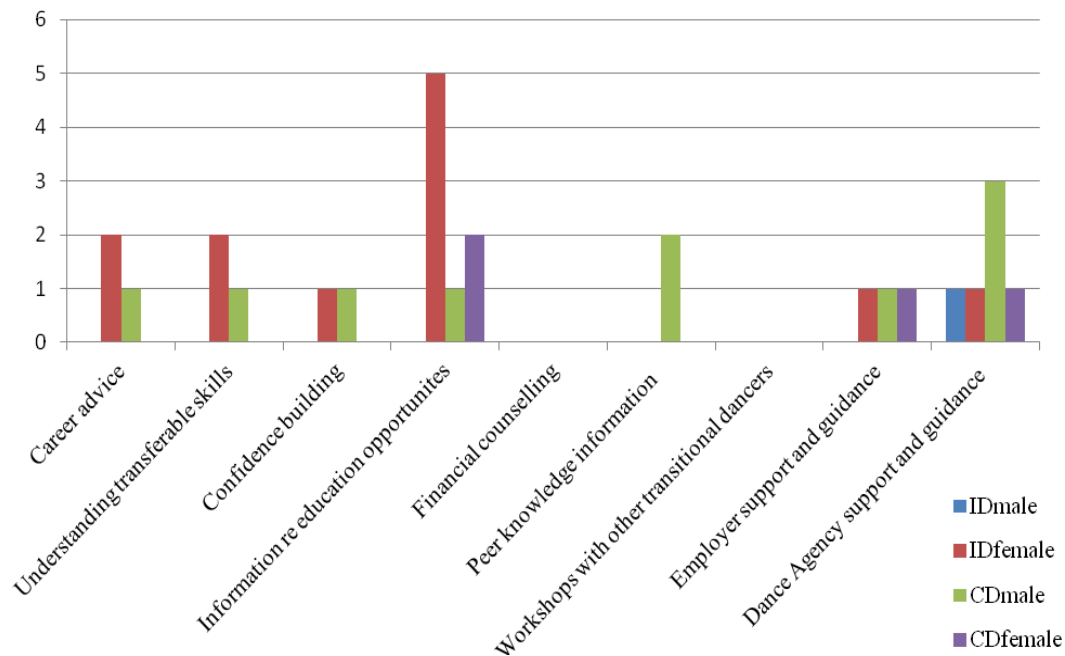
## **6. Career Transition Support Systems (CTSS)**

A further area of the current study concentrated on CTSS offered to retired company and independent dancers, internally by their employers and externally by support agencies (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Sports literature expressed the importance of both external and internal support strategies to 'have available to surmount the difficulties that arise' (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, p. 10). Dancers' questionnaires and dancers' and gatekeepers' interviews focused on the support services granted to both dancer sets, and similarities and differences are discussed here.

### ***a. CTSS dancers benefited from pre transition***

At questionnaire stage, retired dancers were asked if they had benefited from support services whilst they will *still* dancing, to help them prepare for life post performance. Results are shown in Chart 3.9.

**Chart 3.9: Support services dancers benefited from whilst still dancing to help prepare for post-performance life**

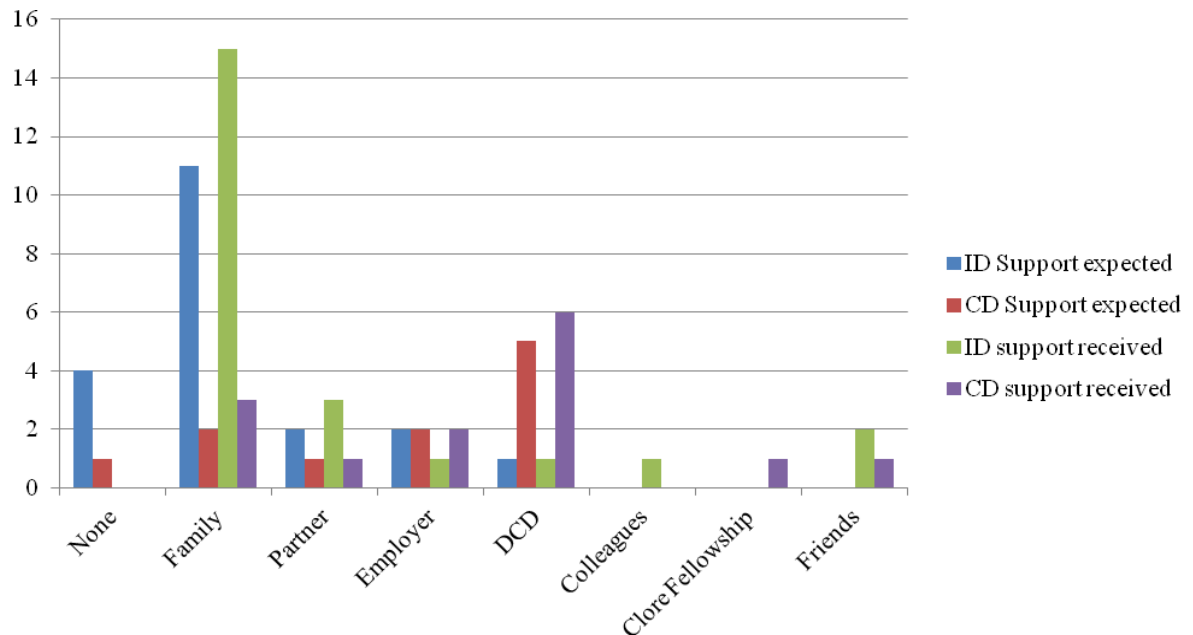


29% of company dancers compared to 5.3% independent dancers had benefited from *employer support and guidance during* the performance years. 86% of company dancers compared to 10.5% of independent dancers questioned had benefited from *dance agency support and guidance during* the performance years.

At questionnaire stage company and independent dancers were asked how they had *expected* to be supported during their transition and results were compared with the support they had eventually *received*. See Chart 3.10.



**Chart 3.10: A comparison of dancers' *support expected* and *support received***



A large number of company and independent dancers expected and received support from *family*. However as the current study predominantly concentrated on similarities and differences in employer and agency support, I explored these particular findings and results are discussed below.

***b. Employer support expected and received by transitional dancers***

28.6% of company dancers *expected* employer support and 28.6 % of company dancers eventually *received* employer support. 10.5% of independent dancers *expected* employer support compared to 5.3 % of independent dancers who eventually *received* employer support. Company dancers had a higher level of expectation compared to independent dancers and eventually received a higher level of employer support. Independent dancers expected more employer support compared to support eventually received. Only one independent

dancer received employer support and this consisted of practical advice only. He said at interview stage:

*I think it was only if you ever forged personal relationships, personal friendships with any of your employers that you may get some guidance (ID6)*

He added:

*There were some choreographers who would give you guidance, would give you recommendations. There were very few of that time that would give you anything (ID6)*

The independent dancers' employer added:

*Dancers, like sportsmen, know that the career they have chosen is potentially limited. They have to take a large amount of the responsibility for this on themselves (IDE, App. 3L, p.60)*

The independent dancers' employer pointed out the differences in the ways the ballet and West End musical theatre arenas are funded, and revealed in his interview:

*Larger dance companies such as the Royal Ballet and ENB [English National Ballet] can presumably offer a lot more assistance but these are subsidised companies so the tax payer is ultimately footing this bill...Anyone in any profession can find themselves for a variety of reasons not being able to continue their chosen career. In these circumstances most people can only fall back on any personal insurance plan that they have in place. My feeling is that dancers should do the same thing as a matter of course...*

He added:

*As a commercial West End show we offer no service to any retiring employee (IDE, App. 3L, p.61)*

Results indicated that the attitude for company dancers was very different. Although all four gatekeepers agreed that dancers should, in some part, be responsible for their own transition, the company dancers' employer said in her interview:

*I think the easy answer is to say that they should. They should really take responsibility for themselves... (CDE, App. 3K, p.58)*

She supported her answer with additional comments about the CTSS strategies *Organisation A* offered to its company dancers:

*Open University courses, Dancers' Career Development, training weeks if they are interested... Obviously we subscribe to DCD so they [the dancers of Organisation A] have the opportunity to go there and access funding for whatever they choose to do (CDE, App. 3K, pp.56-58)*

This was compared to the independent dancers' employer who said:

*As a commercial enterprise we do not offer any CPD opportunities to dancers (IDE, App. 3L, p.60)*

Further analysis of results suggested that employers' interaction with CTSS came in many forms for company dancers. Direct links with dancers' support agencies, for example DCD, company and peer knowledge of DCD and Dance UK initiatives discussed earlier, and teacher training programmes offered to retiring dancers by the RAD, were all presented to, and supported, retiring company dancers. Directors, from both artistic and administrative departments of *Organisation A*, provided a high level of support and/or guidance as one retired company dancer revealed in her interview:

*I told him [Director of Organisation A] and he was probably very happy and very supportive and I think because I did that he made my last year incredibly special, gave me things that I wanted, you know first cast to Juliet, just made my year perfect...I think because of my years of service as a professional dancer, you know always doing what I was told and he knew I always worked hard and I think he rewarded me for that...*

The same former Principal ballerina said of her employer *Organisation A*:

*...everybody was so encouraging...everybody was very supportive...*

She was also aware of the privileged position she found herself in with her employer's relationship with DCD and acknowledged the advantage of peers' shared knowledge within the company (CD3, App. 3H, p.45).

One former Soloist ballet dancer with *Organisation A* confirmed the presence of employer support:

*I had been offered lifelines and options within the company and, 'have you ever thought about this or that, or notation, or go off and teach?' (CD7)*

One former company dancer had not met the criteria for financial support from DCD and expressed in her interview that *Organisation A* had 'opened doors' for her, but felt it had been presented due to her earlier *de-selection* (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) from the Company:

*I also did a lot of work in the education department as a dancer and I really enjoyed it. I worked with [name of Learning Department initiative provided], school projects and ballet training and summer schools...Director opened up the option of a post in the Education department as the department was going through a big change over with staff anyway. But I only feel that was partly a way of getting them out of a difficult situation...*

Again, experience of peer knowledge within *Organisation A* was substantiated in her additional comment:

*One [a colleague] who coached me, to help support my transition, as my whole identity was shaken up and I was lacking confidence. He had been through the transition himself...he really knew what I needed to get me back on my feet in a new career and to build a new identity (CD2)*

In comparison to company dancers' experiences of employer support, the narratives of independent dancers were considerably different as they explained their experiences of employer interaction with CTSS. One independent dancer said at interview stage his support came from family and friends however, from his employers:

*Nothing at all actually, absolutely nothing...No dance agencies or any employers, no nothing at all. Family and friends yes...*

He added:

*Even though they [the independent dancers] have worked 20 years before, it doesn't really count for anything, actually...you have got to start from scratch again...you have to start right at the bottom again (ID7)*

Another independent dancer summarised her feelings at interview stage:

*So no, no, no, no support from any company that I worked for. I remember I needed some time off to complete a course on [production name provided] and no, it wasn't allowed, so I had to miss part of it and then pay to do it again. I thought, 'you could just give me a day off to complete my course!' but because somebody else had the day off I wasn't allowed... (ID3, App. 3J, p.51)*

This was substantiated by another independent dancer in his interview:

*If I am honest, there was no advice, there was no support. You were one of the many, you were a contract to them, you did your job and that was it (ID6)*

Questionnaire and interview results indicated independent dancers' experiences of interaction with employer's and dancers' support agencies' CTSS was limited compared to the positive accounts of interaction for company dancers. Further differences between company and independent dancers came to light as dancers' support agency CTSS was explored.

***c. Agency support expected and received by transitional dancers***

Whilst one dancers' support agency Director said:

*There is no doubt that dancers from ballet companies and the West End might all need support after they retire. Presumably some who have had particularly starry careers will not need that, and we know of many distinguished dancers who have not had to turn to DCD for help, though that help is open to everyone, irrespective of their distinction, and for years after their retirement (DSA1, App. 3M, p.62)*

DSA2 expressed the importance of both company and independent dancers entering training programmes to gain teaching qualifications to guide and nurture dancers of the future. She explained her reason for recruiting a broader range of former dancers:

*Absolutely, and one of the things in the last four years since I have been managing the programme is that we have looked very carefully at recruitment and I have specifically looked for a broader range of dancers from both West End and ballet dance company, because the commercial theatre is a huge employer but, more importantly, it is also huge in needing teachers. The number now of musical theatre colleges has really expanded in the last 15 years and they want good quality teachers, and again, you can employ any number of performers but they may not necessarily have the skills to teach week in, week out and develop vocational students (DSA2, App. 3N, p.70)*

Results indicated 71% of company dancers sampled *expected* a level of agency support, and 86% of company dancers eventually *received* agency support, either psychologically or financially, or a combination of both support mechanisms. This high level of uptake for company dancers was substantiated by DSA1:

*I have no figures but the level of uptake from dance and ballet Fund companies is very high, and still increasing thanks to the current efforts to publicise DCD and its work. Certainly it is much, much higher than a few years ago (DSA1, App.3M, p.66)*

DSA2 suggested their agency was reaching a high number of West End dancers and uptake remained positive for their teaching training and distant learning courses as she said in her interview:

*I think we are almost at a stage where we are sort of 40% West End dancers, it has really come up and also we are getting dancers who are undertaking our distance learning degree, our BA Hon. Dance Education, because they can do those modules while they are performing, while they are touring, it is all distance learning (DSA2, App. 3N, p.71)*

At questionnaire stage, one company dancer said she had not received financial support from DCD as she was one year short of the required eight years in active service to apply for the dancers' resettlement fund (CD2, q.8). However she had received a level of psychological support and career advice from the dancers' support agency. Only one company dancer received no help from both his employer and a dancers' support agency. At questionnaire stage, he said it had been his *free-choice* to leave *Organisation A*, only four years into his dance performance career, in order to pursue new challenges in the medical profession (CD5, q.16).

In comparison, 5.3% of independent dancers sampled *expected* agency support and 5.3 % of independent dancers *received* agency support. Independent dancers' main level of support came from family members. This did not match the thoughts of the DSA2 Director and I acknowledged, a different set of retired independent dancers who had been engaged with a

different employer could have presented different results. Although DSA2 suggested her agency reached a high level of independent dancers, this was usually due to dancers seeking out their own support and not due to a DSA2/independent dancers' employer relationship. Only one independent dancer engaged in this study *expected* and *received* support from a dancers' support agency. This breakdown in support directed at independent dancers could be due to the lack of independent dancers' employers represented on the DCD Board:

*As for reaching West End managements, great efforts are made to do so...But we have actively courted managements to ask them in particular to participate in our work, by offering them places on the Trust committee which looks at independent and show dancer applications. So far, though we did have one member, pressure of work made it impossible for him to come to meetings* (DSA1, App.3M, p.67)

On a positive note, when asked about reaching independent dancers, DSA1 added:

*Yes, there is more difficulty in getting information to West End and independent dancers than to the ballet and dance companies. Though the efforts are being made to do this, and more and more show dancers come to us through articles in the dance press or through word of mouth* (DSA1, App. 3M, p.66)

The one independent dancer, who had received agency support, sourced his funding from DCD after hearing about their work through another dancer:

*I was introduced to them [DCD] by an ex dancer. They awarded me a bursary*  
(ID2:Q.20)

No independent dancers, engaged in this study, had been exposed to dancers' support agency initiatives via employer/dancers' support agency relationships.



Results indicated, from questionnaire and interview data, company dancers believed their financial support from DCD was invaluable. One retired company dancer said in her interview:

*Well financially the help from DCD that was absolutely amazing, even though I had saved money, because of my years of service with the company they gave me the full amount, so I didn't have any stresses financially...*

She continued:

*DCD was incredible...from the moment I went down to London and had meetings with them, wow that was a pretty amazing organisation (CD3, App. 3H, pp.45-46)*

Another company dancer shared his thoughts of agency support at interview stage:

*Come the transition I knew I had a fund available to me through the Dancers' Resettlement, DCD but I knew this was a one-shot wonder. I could waste that opportunity, so I had to be certain that I had found something that I could invest in to use because once it is gone it is gone. So once I decided on dance photography then I contacted DCD again and put forward my plan. So they helped finance my initial outlay of kit, which although it is considerable amount, in photography it doesn't go very far. But without them I just wouldn't have been able to start...*

Peer knowledge of agency support also advantaged retiring company dancers and the same retired dancer with *Organisation A* said:

*I always knew that fund was there because I had heard of other people [former company dancers] that had gone on...and I knew they were helped with that...*

Substantiating literature that referred to DCD offering a number of transition services, this retired company dancer, now a professional photographer, expressed his gratitude of the organisation:

*It is such a step up to have that sort of [support from DCD], not just financial help, but that they are there for other things. They put me in touch with a network of photographers so I can feel I am a little bit of a network. I couldn't fault them, they were absolutely fantastic (CD7)*

There was no doubt DCD and RAD continued to offer an invaluable service to both company and independent dancers. However, results suggested information about their services was not reaching all independent dancers in this current study. Dancers were asked if they were aware of DCD and the services they offered (see Table 2.5, p.30). At questionnaire stage 100% of company dancers were aware of the services offered by the organisation compared to 21% of independent dancers questioned. This was substantiated at dancers' interview stage. In contrast to company dancers' experiences of agency support, a significant number of independent dancers had no contact with a dancers' support agency pre, during or post transition. One retired independent dancer expressed in his interview:

*No dance agencies or any employers, no nothing at all. Family and friends yes...*

However, this independent dancer moved on from dance performance, now taught dance and believed times were changing for his dance students:

*I think it is different now, it has changed so much even in the last few years, but I do know people that have been in similar situations as me and it has taken them a long time to get somewhere with their new career...*

He criticised the application process of DCD and added:

*For me personally, there was no support, especially with the dancers' benevolent funds. It is such a limited criteria, which I understand it has to be for help. There is nothing else out there as far as I am aware (ID7)*

Another independent dancer was in agreement and said in her interview:

*I filled out, when I was going to do my first course, I filled out a form. A friend of mine who was doing an aerobics, because I did that too, to teach aerobics course, filled it out and it was so flipping complicated and they only have an adjudication panel every so often and it didn't fall in the time I needed to do it in order to take over this school so I just thought, 'oh sod it, it is too complicated'. I just did it [paid for it] ...*

With regards to DCD, she added:

*No, no, absolutely nothing. I didn't really know what it [DCD] was ...I just didn't even know it existed really...*

The independent dancer continued and provided her perspective of the current issue:

*I think the difference between West End performers and ballet dancers is they are in a company so feel a bit safe, so they are fine to say, 'my shelf-life isn't until whenever'. When you are in a West End show you are always auditioning every six months or whenever, so for you to admit to everyone, 'oh actually I am thinking about stopping' is a bit of a frightening thing to say, because if your Company Manager mentions it to your agent who then says, 'what are you doing? That is a bit negative!' ... that is what perhaps people will be afraid of too because you have always got to be seen on form and ready for your next audition (ID3, App.3J, p.54)*

This independent dancer substantiated literature and the thoughts expressed by DSA1. She feared talking about her transition could have resulted in earlier *de-selection* from dance performance than she had anticipated (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006).

Results indicated obvious differences existed between the transitions of *Organisation A's* company dancers and the transitions of *Organisation B's* independent dancers. Overall the majority of company dancers' transitions had been eased by employer and/or support agency intervention. The social, political and cultural setting of the company arena provided

important internal and external influences that had eased the career transitions of their dancer workforce. This was substantiated in the frameworks utilised for this study that suggested internal and external strategies eased the adaptation to transition (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Guidance, with pre-retirement planning, and peer knowledge of support agencies' initiatives, had significant effects on positive adaptations to transitions for company dancers (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). In comparison a higher percentage of independent dancers experienced negative adaptations to transition.

To shed more light on dancers' experiences of CTSS and the ways they impacted the transitions or not, retired company and independent dancers were asked to talk about their experiences post their transition.

## **7. Dancers' experiences post career transition**

Agreeing with literature that said dancers 'tend not to question authority' (Langsdorff, 2006, p. 26), a number of company and independent dancers expressed they had finally found their voice and had more confidence post transition. One retired company dancer said at questionnaire stage, her dancer status had granted her very little opportunity and confidence to express her own thoughts during the performance years. This experience changed post transition:

*As a dancer, particularly as a student, the learning environment I was brought up in was very much you just get on with everything and didn't question anything...it took a while to actually get used to the fact that my voice mattered and that I could bring my opinions or ideas forward in the dept. I moved into (CD2)*

In comparison, one independent dancer's thoughts turned to his self-confidence and a sheer determination to succeed in a second career. He said in his interview:

*Dance makes you pretty confident really and determined and through your dance career you are faced with so many uncertainties and insecurities but my determination*

*to succeed in a new career is as strong as the determination I started with when I embarked on the performing career...*

But although this independent dancer's self-confidence had developed during the performing years he also felt he had no other choice to succeed due to his financial commitments:

*Self-confidence helps too...I knew I could make something else work, well, I had to really. Mortgage to pay and all that! (ID7)*

Another former independent dancer substantiated these thoughts and advised dancers not to delay the decision to make the transition:

*I just think it takes a strong character to make that decision [to leave performance]...There are some people, friends of mine, that have left it too long, and they are now floundering because they don't know what they are going to do in their lives (ID6)*

There was no doubt the dancer's 'self' mattered (Schlossberg, 1981). The most successful dancers' transition to come to light was one of a company dancer who had made the voluntary decision to move forward. She had confidently left her performance years behind following job-satisfaction as a Principal dancer in *Organisation A*, had experienced support from the company's Director and received financial support from DCD. Once again, agreeing with literature, her obsessive nature to organise and prepare had eased her transition (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Levine, 2004, Jeffri and Throsby, 2006). She said in her interview:

*I felt like a whole weight had been lifted off my shoulders. So I went from incredibly sad to feeling incredibly, just free – not from a terrible world I had been in but I was ready. The world was my oyster now (CD3, App. 3H, p.46)...I just say to any dancer, like I say to people now, just make sure you are prepared...I like to say to people, 'you had better be prepared, mentally, financially of course and do some kind of training*

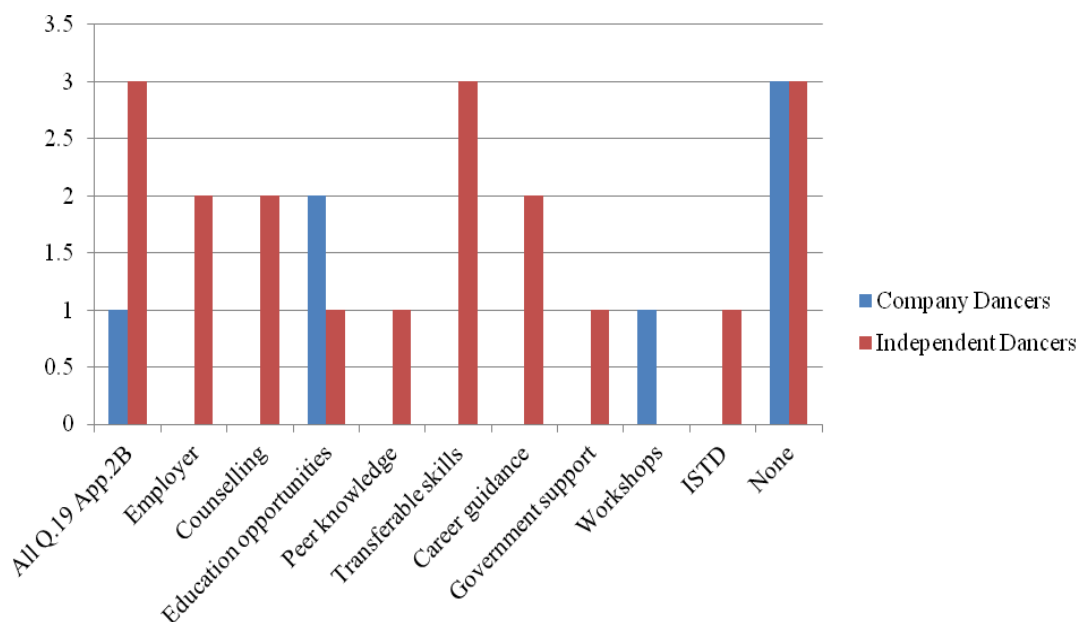
like I did while you are earning salary so you are ahead of the game’ (CD3, App. 3H, p.47)

Finally, so *all* dancers were aware of the support available, and the importance of preparation on the adaptation to transition process (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994), the retired dancers engaged in the current study, suggested ideas to improve the dissemination and delivery of CTSS at questionnaire stage.

## 8. Ideas to improve CTSS for retiring dancers

Four retired dancers (three independent and one company) suggested all points from Q.19 in Appendix 2C. Other suggestions ranged from *employer support, counselling, education opportunities, peer knowledge, transferable skills, career guidance, Government support and workshops*. One independent dancer suggested the organisation *Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance* (I.S.T.D.) that had granted him teaching qualifications during his dancer-training years, could do more to help its members. See Chart 3.11.

**Chart 3.11: Dancers’ ideas for improvement of CTSS**



Literature, and analysis of results, indicated support services were currently available to company and independent dancers however a large number of comments suggested areas of support were not reaching all dancers. Through triangulation of data, company and independent dancers substantiated their thoughts of improving CTSS for retiring dancers. One company dancer said at the end of his interview:

*Compulsory discussion, because there is some pride of 'I'm alright Jack, I don't need help' ... Advice about your transferable skills...I wasn't looking at what I have got which is experience in the theatre and some form of knowledge of how things work. There is so much hidden experience (CD7)*

One former independent dancer expressed her fear of communicating with people outside of the dance arena:

*...there is a whole way of speaking in an office that everybody else seems to understand and have conversations in that manner and we don't in theatre, it is very different. I think it would have been really useful for people to help you through that because I wasted such a lot of time not being able to communicate. ... (ID3)*

At questionnaire and interview stage, company and independent dancers agreed on ideas to improve CTSS for retiring dancers; *compulsory discussions, coaching sessions, earlier interaction at schools and colleges*, independent dancers' *agents* (professional representatives) and performers' union *Equity* to do more, were amongst the ideas to unfold.

## **Summary**

There is no doubt that since the 1970s there has been a growing interest in the provision of CTSS for retiring dancers as they face career transition (Yates, 2002, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Roncaglia, 2010, DCD, 2011). As in sport, career transition in the dance arena is now perceived as a life-span perspective, supported with personal and professional development initiatives and not solely left to support intervention at the time of transition (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Wylleman et al, 2004, Roncaglia, 2010). Literature and results

indicated all dancers' career terminations can be supported, and prepared for, with the intervention and support from the two dancers' support agencies interviewed for the current study. However, findings discovered company dancers were supported by employer CPD initiatives and employer/support agency relationships. In comparison, independent dancers' experiences of transition appeared disadvantaged by, no employer provision and, a breakdown in relationships between their employer and the support agencies. The current study indicated independent dancers were more likely to source and nurture their own transition support compared to company dancers whose support was more likely to be presented to them through existing employer/support agency relationships.

Tables 3.12 below summarises key findings to answer research question one and outlines similarities and differences of career transition experiences for retired company and independent dancers.

**Table 3.12: Summary of similarities and differences of career transition experiences for retired Company and Independent dancers**

| R.Q. 1              | Retired Company Dancers (CD)  | Retired Independent Dancers (ID) |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Similarities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both sets faced psychological issues</li> <li>• Both sets expressed similar ideas to improve CTSS</li> <li>• Experiences post transition (<i>one, two or all 3 issues of the 'triad of needs' – psychological, financial and educational</i>)</li> <li>• Most Negative Aspects of the Transition (<i>majority of dancers missed dance performance</i>)</li> </ul>  |                                  |
| <b>Differences</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dancer lifestyles (<i>politically, culturally and socially favoured CD</i>)</li> <li>• Time to feel adjusted post transition (<i>longer for ID</i>)</li> <li>• Retirement age post performance years (<i>later for ID</i>)</li> <li>• Length of time in active dance performance (<i>longer for ID</i>)</li> <li>• Contracts (<i>CD: full-time, ID: self-employed</i>)</li> <li>• Peer-knowledge (<i>non-existent for ID</i>)</li> <li>• Pre-transition planning (<i>little for ID compared to more for CD</i>)</li> <li>• Main Reasons for Transition (<i>CD higher thinking</i>)</li> <li>• Financial issues (<i>CD more likely to be supported</i>)</li> <li>• Educational issues (<i>CD offered ed. Opportunities during performance</i>)</li> <li>• Most Positive Aspects of the Transition (<i>CD higher thinking</i>)</li> <li>• CTSS (<i>CD more likely to benefit</i>)</li> </ul> |                                  |



|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer support (<i>CD more likely to benefit</i>)</li> <li>• Agency support (<i>available to all but CD more likely to benefit</i>)</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

To answer research question two, similarities and differences of employers' perceptions of CTSS are listed in Table 3.13:

**Table 3.13: Summary of similarities and differences of *Employers'* perceptions of CTSS in company and independent dance contexts**

| R.Q. 2              | Company Dancers   | Independent Dancers |
|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>Similarities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both sets contribute to a successful industry</li> <li>• Both sets have a level of responsibility for their transition</li> <li>• Both sets will face 'triad of needs' at transition (<i>psychological, financial and educational</i>)</li> <li>• Both sets will face identity crisis</li> <li>• No follow-up support provision offered to both sets post transition</li> </ul>  |                     |
| <b>Differences</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer support (<i>CD: Yes, ID: No</i>)</li> <li>• Employer/dancers' support agency relationship (<i>CD: Yes, ID: No</i>)</li> <li>• Funding criteria leading to CTSS delivery (<i>favoured CD</i>)</li> <li>• CPD opportunities during performance years (<i>for CD only</i>)</li> <li>• Educational opportunities (<i>for CD only during performance years</i>)</li> <li>• Financial support through relationships with DSA1 (<i>CD only</i>)</li> <li>• Peer knowledge (<i>more prevalent in the CD arena</i>)</li> </ul> |                     |

Further summary of dancers' support agencies' perceptions of CTSS are outlined in Table 3.14.

**Table 3.14: Summary of similarities and differences of *Dancers' Support Agencies'* perceptions of CTSS in company and independent dance contexts**

| R. Q. 2             | Company Dancers   | Independent Dancers |
|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>Similarities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both dancer sets contributed to a successful industry</li> </ul> |                     |

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
|                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All dancers had a level of responsibility for their own transition<br/>Both sets faced ‘triad of needs’ at transition: psychological, financial and educational (<i>support available to both dancer sets through company and independent funding provisions offered by DSA1</i>)</li> <li>• Both sets faced identity crisis</li> <li>• Educational support offered through DSA1 and DSA2</li> <li>• DSA1 offered ‘triad of needs’ support to all dancers</li> <li>• Closed discussions as dancers fear Director’s knowledge of their transition will lead to de-selection</li> </ul>                                 |
| <b>Differences</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer/DSA relationships (<i>non-existent for ID</i>)</li> <li>• Funding criteria leading to CTSS delivery (<i>ID missed out</i>)</li> <li>• CPD opportunities during performance years (<i>ID missed out</i>)</li> <li>• Educational support (<i>appeared to breakdown for CD</i>)</li> <li>• Financial support through dancer relationships with DSA1 (<i>appeared to breakdown for CD due to lack of dissemination through employers</i>)</li> <li>• Financial support through employer relationships with DSA1 (<i>appeared to be a less successful application process for independent dancers</i>)</li> </ul> |

To summarise, data suggested all dancers’ career transitions met with some negative problems related to psychological, financial and educational issues (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Although support was available to all dancers, results indicated company dancers significantly benefited from CTSS compared to the majority of independent dancers who missed out. Data suggested company dancers’ career transitions were completed with a higher level of support. This was particularly due to employers’ and dancers’ support agency intervention for company dancers compared to support agency provision, but no employers’ support for independent dancers. Data indicated the independent dancers’ employer remained absent from the career transitions of their committed and invaluable workforce.

Bringing together these key findings, a Conclusion presents the strengths and weaknesses of the study, further recommendations and ideas for further research.

## CONCLUSION

## CONCLUSION

This section presents key findings in response to Research Questions 1 and 2, further recommendations, strengths and weaknesses in the study, and ideas for subsequent research.

### Key findings in response to Research Questions

1. *What are the similarities and differences in career transition experiences for retired company and independent dancers?*
2. *What are the similarities and differences of dancers', employers' and dancers' support agencies' perceptions of CTSS in company and independent dance contexts?*

**In response to research question one** results identified significant similarities and differences existed between company and independent dancers' career transition experiences. These similarities and differences indicated the majority of company dancers had lived through positive transitions and the majority of independent dancers had lived through negative transitions post performance. Discussed in more detail below, data highlighted key emergent themes, and provided similarities and differences in dancers' experiences. Recommendations are made alongside these themes to allow *all* dancers to benefit from CTSS at transition.

**Key timelines throughout dancers' transitions:** Results indicated company dancers retired from dance performance on average five years earlier than independent dancers. Increased confidence levels in company dancers, brought on by higher levels of support intervention appeared to start the transition sooner. Company dancers were granted significantly higher levels of employer's and support agency's CTSS during their dancing years. This had led to the majority of company dancers being prepared at transition stage. In comparison independent dancers appeared to prolong their transition, attributable to confusion and fear about their next move, and little or no CTSS granted to them by their employer or a dancers' support agency. Findings indicated 100% of company dancers considered they had 'moved

on' post-performance compared to 47% of independent dancers who believed their transition was still 'on-going'. *Recommendations*: a compulsory transition and mentoring service during employed or self-employed contracts for *all* dancers in the form of group and/or one-to-one meetings with support facilitators; gatekeepers' and dancers' networking opportunities to allow shared knowledge and experiences to be told; to utilise former independent dancers' positive transition stories in gatekeepers' publicity materials and websites to help independent dancers feel less isolated; for gatekeepers to improve the ways CTSS information is disseminated through improved employer/support agency relationships.

Substantiating past research, the quality, and outcome of the career transition, depended on *a triad of needs*; psychological, financial and educational support provisions offered to ease transition (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006). Results indicated company dancers were more likely to benefit from psychological and financial support through employer/support agency relationships. In comparison the majority of independent dancers received no psychological or financial support due to an obvious absence of employer/support agency relationships. Psychological issues were heightened by educational issues for the majority of independent dancers as results indicated the majority had not committed to Higher Education past secondary education. In comparison, the majority of company dancers' transitions had been advantaged by Higher Education opportunities through an employer/University relationship. This relationship offered a tailored-degree programme and improved life skills and personal and professional standing post performance. In comparison independent dancers were offered no educational and personal/professional development opportunities by their employer. Subsequently the majority of independent dancers considered their transitions were disadvantaged by a lack of skills and qualifications. *Recommendations*: independent dancers' employers to engage with support agency organisations and their initiatives so their dancer workforce are exposed to psychological, financial and educational support; for independent dancers' employers to consider the introduction of distant learning programmes and career professional development opportunities for independent dancers, particularly for dancers who remain with the same employer for many years.

***Pre-transition planning***: Findings substantiated literature and agreed the intervention of pre-transition planning shaped the happiest and smoothest career transitions (Taylor & Ogilvie,

1994, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006). The intervention of employer and agency CTSS policy and practice had positive effects on dancers' career transitions. Findings indicated the majority of company dancers had prepared for their transition assisted by the effectiveness of shared peer knowledge, employer support and employer/support agency relationships. In comparison independent dancers' transitions were disadvantaged by an obvious absence of employer CTSS and a breakdown in employer/support agency relationships.

*Recommendations:* independent dancers' employers to re-evaluate the importance of CTSS in dancers' lives and improve interaction with support agencies and their dancer workforce so the dissemination of support information is guaranteed to reach the workforce; independent dancers' employers and the wider dance industry to utilise the success stories of *both* company and independent dancers to improve chances for all dancers to be exposed to successful, inspiring transition stories; preparation to start much earlier, to 'sow the seeds' during training. Pre-professional dance schools, professional vocational schools, dance examination boards and parents to consider CTSS policy and practice so it becomes a life-long occurrence, rather than wait until close to the retirement before support systems are sourced and initiated.

*Main reasons for transition:* Results indicated the onset of transition for company and independent dancers was due to a range of *involuntary* (injury, health issues, de-selection) and *voluntary* reasons (to start a family, security, new challenges, education). Substantiating past research (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006) it was evident voluntary decisions resulted in smoother transitions compared to involuntary reasons that created increased complications and longer periods of adjustment. *Injury* was the main reason for dancers starting the transition involuntarily. This was increased in independent dancers' transitions due to reduced provision in employer-led healthcare compared to onsite health facilities for company dancers. Independent dancers found healthcare expensive and often avoided important physiotherapy due to cost implications. Dancers also feared employer knowledge of injury would lead to de-selection and eventual unemployment. *Starting a family* was the main reason for dancers to retire voluntarily. This created confusion for many female dancers as they battled with retiring from dance performance at their professional and physical peak. This resulted in further psychological issues for the dancer turned parent.

*Recommendations:* improved psychological support provision for all dancers and improved healthcare provision for all dancers irrelevant of their working environment.

***Most positive and most negative aspects of the transition*** were greatly affected by the implementation, or not, of ***Career Transition Support Systems*** (CTSS). Company dancers' *most positive aspect* of the transition was *new challenges* and independent dancers was an *improved home-life*, the opportunity to spend more time with family or a partner. I considered the higher-thinking of company dancers was an important finding as it proved their exposure to former career transitions and educational opportunities affirmed the benefits of CTSS and resulted in positive and successful transitions. Results indicated the dominant *negative aspect* of the career transition for both company and independent dancers was a significant number of former dancers *missed performing*, the camaraderie in the dressing room and the 'high' from dancing on stage. *Uncertainty* and the fear of *dealing with new people* also created negativity for the retired dancers, more notably in the cases of independent dancers.

*Recommendations:* Employer-led CTSS stopped once all dancers left their employer. This created a sense of loneliness and solitude for many dancers as they moved beyond a new existence away from performance; employers and dancers' support agencies improve long-term contact with retired dancers to continue support *beyond* the transition; employers to develop *alumni* of their retired workforce and invite them to production events, first nights, galas and support networking meetings post retirement/transition. This would allow dancers to remain part of a familiar setting and therefore less isolated from industry post transition; independent dancers' employers to engage with the invaluable work of dance support agency *Dancers' Career Development* (West End employers to become DCD Board members as they are currently not represented) and disseminate information about dancers' networks offered through *Dance UK*. This development in engagement with CTSS would allow all retiring dancers to benefit from support systems and strategies.

***Dancers' experiences post transition:*** Before I embarked on this study I had hoped my pre-study assumptions would be confirmed, and the research would demonstrate my views of inequality in the delivery of CTSS, particularly the differences in employer support that had seemed to favour company dancers. Results indicated the majority of company dancers were experiencing positive lives post transition compared to a significant number of independent

dancers who were still experiencing a difficult transition. Company dancers had benefited from employer and dancers' support agency CTSS and this greatly improved their transition experiences and life-chances. *Recommendations*: as discussed earlier, improvements in independent dancers' employer/support agency relationships; for dancers to seek out support information and prepare for transition during the performance years irrelevant of the arena they are engaged in. Substantiating past research, support starts with the *self* and can only be initiated if working and/or retiring dancers are open to suggestions and are aware of the resources available to them pre, during and post transition (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006).

Finally in response to research question one, *ideas to improve CTSS for retiring dancers* provided retired dancers' ideas of transition support. These have been utilised throughout the recommendations above. Further recommendation suggests industry to increase utilisation of the retired dancers' voices and narratives leading to wider industry sharing, learning and improving CTSS, its delivery and eventual take up. These stories can report where CTSS works and where it fails resulting in improvements being noted and implemented. More importantly they allow the dancers themselves to open up, share and discuss experiences leading to less isolation and withdrawal at transition stage.

**In response to research question two**, key findings indicated similarities and differences existed in dancers', employers and dancers' support agencies' perceptions of CTSS that greatly affected the career transitions of retiring dancers. Although support agency provision was available to both company and independent dancers, there were obvious inequalities in the ways *employers' and dancers' support agencies' CTSS* information was disseminated and subsequently implemented to retiring dancers. Results indicated company dancers were aware of available CTSS through a long-standing employer/support agency relationship. A significant number of independent dancers were not aware of available CTSS available and only improved knowledge of support through participation in this study. Agreeing with employers, support agency Directors believed all dancers contributed to a successful dance industry, and although it was desirable to support all dancers through transition, they agreed with employers, dancers had a level of responsibility for their own transition. Substantiating findings in literature, both employers and support agency Directors, agreed all dancers faced



the *triad of needs* at transition stage (Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Roncaglia, 2010). The current study indicated opportunities were available to all dancers to receive psychological, financial and educational support/advice however the cultural, social and political standing of the dance arena affected the levels of dissemination and implementation of CTSS. Close links between employers and Arts Council of England and dancers' support agencies in the ballet arena improved levels of support for company dancers. In comparison the absence of employer/support agency relationships in the musical theatre arena resulted in little CTSS information being disseminated to independent dancers. This resulted in the majority of independent dancers missing out of CTSS and eventually seeking out their own personal and professional development opportunities. *Recommendations:* to improve skills and life-chances, the working dancers to seek out, nurture and maintain industry relationships resulting in the discovery, consideration and implementation of development opportunities before transition starts; for independent dancers' employers to acknowledge the invaluable need for CTSS interaction and intervention at transition stage; for independent dancers' employers to engage with dancers' support agencies and Government strategies and reports, that aim to protect and develop the dancer workforce, leading to shared knowledge and industry-wide equality of CTSS delivery and take-up.

The current study's results were congruent with the findings of past studies (Taylor & Ogilvie, 2004, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Roncaglia, 2010). Results indicated the importance and effectiveness of employers' and support agencies' CTSS in dancers' lives, and this correlated with literature that stated the implementation of internal and external mechanisms, eased career transitions. The current study substantiated past research, 'preparation is key' (Schlossberg, 1981, Levine, 2004, Taylor & Ogilvie, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006).

## **Strengths**

The study's journey improved life-chances for several retired independent dancers as they were not aware of their transferable skills and the work of organisations, for example, DCD, The RAD and Dance UK before their involvement in the study. Post study they were cognisant of the support systems available. A success was a significant number of

independent dancers' comments of gratitude, and relief, to have had the opportunity to talk about their transition experiences following years of silence and withdrawal from the subject. Sports literature added useful dimensions and underpinned the current study due to the similarities of athlete and dancer lifestyles. Both transition models (Schlossberg, 1981, Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994) had been utilised to discuss career transitions of ballet dancers (Roncaglia, 2010) but the current study was original as it was the first to utilise the models to discover similarities and differences of company *and* independent dancers' experiences. The critical, interpretative paradigm provided well-grounded data and answered the two research questions. Although more independent dancers engaged in the study at questionnaire stage, qualitative responses from open-ended questionnaires provided a range of valuable data from both dancer sets. Questionnaires successfully provided interview participants' details for further investigation. Considering the subjectivity of the study, my past and current employment in both dance contexts strongly benefited the research and allowed rare access through my insider approach. This could have created a weakness in the study as a number of participants were known to me, however equal methods used to contact participants and collate data, lowered the risk of any bias (Robson, 2002, Grix, 2004). Personally, and professionally, I have learned a great deal from the research process and believe my current role within the ballet organisation has benefited significantly. Personally the process has improved my confidence levels and professionally my methods of research, analysis and evaluation, are now initiated with more logical thinking on a day-to-day basis. Finally, the opportunity to study has realised a life-long ambition for me, having missed out until now, due to my commitment to musical theatre dance performance from nineteen years of age.

## **Weaknesses**

A weakness of the study was the small number of completed questionnaires from retired company dancers. Dancer involvement may vary with a different company and may also produce different results. However, results indicated all company dancers had been supported, irrelevant of the number of participants. The study attracted a large number of retired independent dancers and results indicated the majority of their transitions were unsupported. Some inequalities in interview settings were unavoidable due to participants' availability and email responses from the IDE and DSA1. The IDE provided little narrative and personally

this was a disappointing response for me, especially following my past employment in the musical theatre arena. However, I considered this lack of participation confirmed the absence of employer interaction with CTSS for independent dancers. In comparison, the company dancers' employer engaged openly in a face-to-face interview, and provided detailed answers. This supported the evidence that retired company dancers were advantaged by employer support (Yates, 2002, Levine, 2004, Jeffri & Throsby, 2006, Roncaglia, 2010).

### **Further Research**

The study could be expanded to explore career transition experiences from a range of dance arenas, for example, contemporary dancers, community dance facilitators, cruise ship dancers, small to mid-scale dance companies and dancers with disabilities. Further study could also concentrate on different employers and support agencies and explore professional dance schools, early years training, professional training and parental awareness of CTSS. Further research could also concentrate on a particular theme, for example, female dancers who had decided to stop dancing at the height of their career to start a family, the positive effects of educational initiatives in dancers' lives and long term employment satisfaction post performance.

### **Finally**

In 2012 and as the wider dance industry, Government and educational stakeholders consider *dance* as a whole, and not in individual genres, it may allow all retiring dancers to feel their performance years mattered and deserved access to CTSS. If independent dancers' employers engage with their dancer workforce and support agencies equal to the ways company dancers' employers engage with their workforce and agency CTSS, it could open, develop and create positive transition experiences for *all* retiring dancers as they face their second careers.

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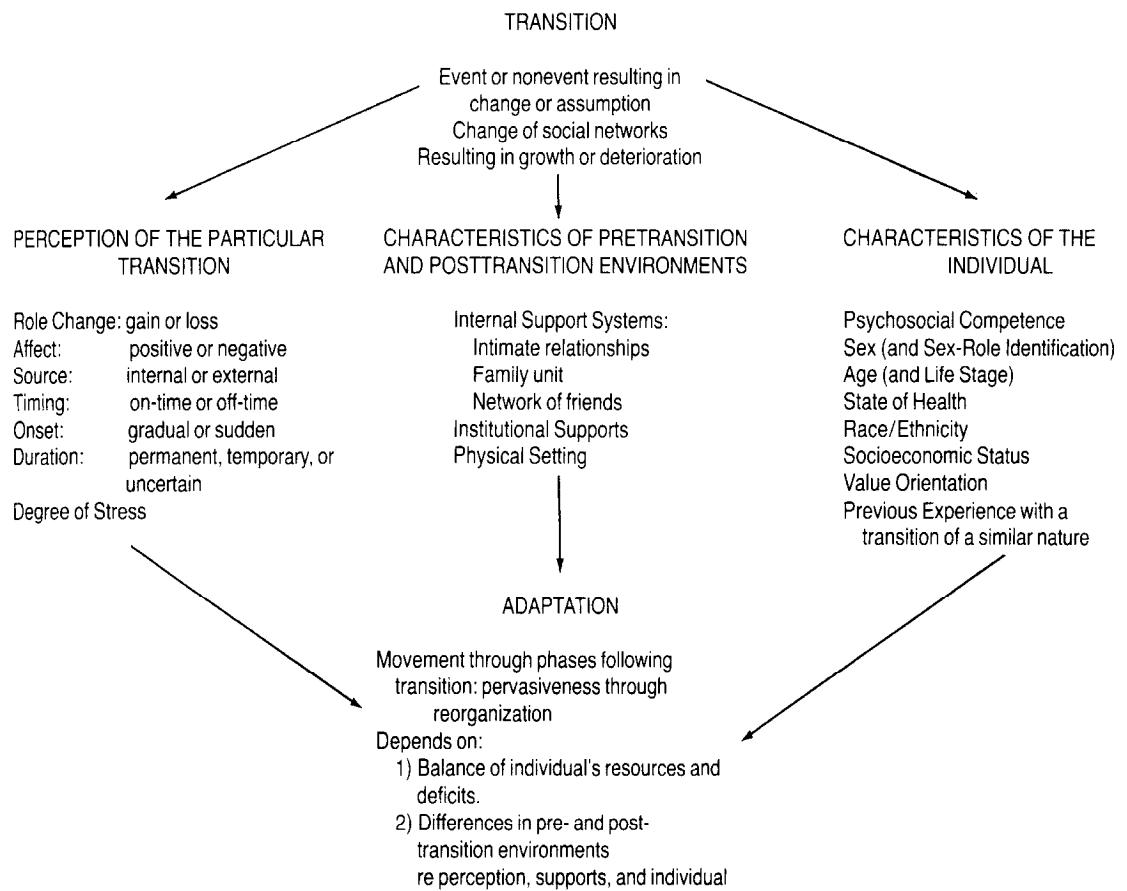
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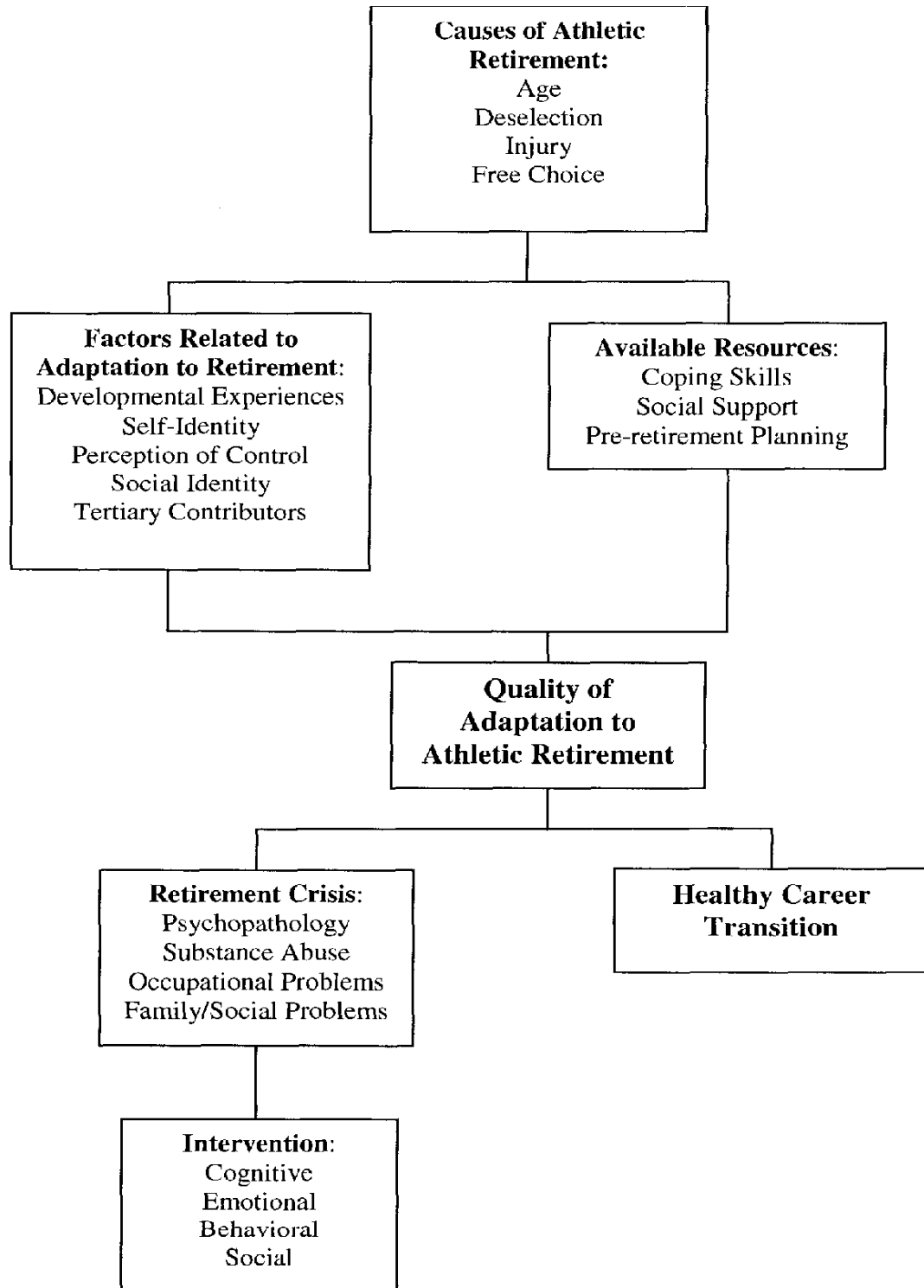
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## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1A: A model for analysing human adaptation to transition**  
(Schlossberg, 1981)



**Appendix 1B: A conceptual model of adaptation to retirement among athletes**  
(Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994)



# Sport Career Termination Questionnaire

(Adapted version of the SCTQ II)

Name:

This questionnaire deals with the course of your sport career termination and adjustment to post-sport life. If you are still active in sport (e.g., competing in minor or amateur leagues) consider the questions as referring to your elite-sport career, which has already ended.

## Instructions

You will be required to answer the majority of questionnaire items by **circling the number** that best represents your opinion on the statement in question.

**Example:** *I started planning my post-sport life during my sports career.*

**1** means 'I strongly disagree' and **5** 'I strongly agree'.

So, if you completely agree with the statement, you will circle **5**.

In the case of questions with **checkbox answers**, check the **one** that applies.

When completing **specific details** in the space provided, please **print** where applicable to ensure legibility.

- Please respond to every statement.
- Make sure you always choose one response unless specifically advised otherwise.
- It is essential that your answers are sincere.
- Your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

I appreciate your willingness to participate.



## Biographical Information

1. Main sport: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Years
4. Marital status:  
☐ Single ☐ Married/living together  
☐ Separated/divorced/widowed ☐ Partner relationship but living alone
5. Do you have children? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If "yes", how many children? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Current occupation: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Highest level of completed education:  
☐ Primary school ☐ Tertiary (post-school) Diploma  
☐ Technical school ☐ Bachelor's degree  
☐ High school ☐ Master's degree  
☐ Doctoral degree
- Are you still studying? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If "yes", please specify \_\_\_\_\_
8. Have you taken any educational or training programmes (e.g., coaching certificate programme/course)? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If "yes", which? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many years did you compete in your sport (all levels)? \_\_\_\_\_ Years

10. For how many years were you a member of a:  
 (a) Provincial team? \_\_\_\_\_ Years      (b) National team? \_\_\_\_\_ Years
11. For how many years was sport your top-priority commitment? \_\_\_\_\_ Years
12. Approximately how many training sessions per week did you have at the height of your elite sports career? \_\_\_\_\_ Sessions  
 Approximately how long was the average training session? \_\_\_\_\_ Hours
13. At which level did you compete at the peak of your career?
- ☐ Olympic Games      ☐ World Cup events
- ☐ World championships      ☐ National championships

## Life During Your Elite-Sport Career

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Did you study during your elite-sport career?<br>If "yes", at what level?  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no<br><input type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary   |
| 2. What was your schooling status at that time?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Did not study <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time study <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time study |   |
| 3. Did you stop studying as a result of your sport commitment?  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no  |
| 4. During your elite career, were you married or involved in a close relationship?  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no  |
| 5. In your opinion, how much have you earned with your sports involvement?  | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-size: small;"> <span>very little</span> <span>a lot</span> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">             1   2   3   4   5           </div>                |
| 6. Have you earned enough in sport to ensure yourself a comfortable post-sport life (e.g., to buy an apartment, a house, to start your own business)?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no  |
| 7. How famous were you during your elite sport career?  | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-size: small;"> <span>publicly unknown</span> <span>very well known</span> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">             1   2   3   4   5           </div> |



|      |  |  |                             |
|------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| 8.   | Did you enjoy a privileged status among your peers due to your sport involvement?  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes                             | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 9.   | Did you enjoy a privileged status among adults due to your sport involvement?  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes                             | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
|      |  | <input type="checkbox"/> uncertain                       |                             |
| 10.  | Because of your total commitment to sport, did you neglect other important aspects of life that were not related to sport?   | very little<br>1 2 3 4 5                                 | a lot                       |
| 11.  | Because of your total commitment to sport, did you miss some important events and activities that were not related to sport? | not at all<br>1 2 3 4 5                                  | a lot                       |
| 12.  | How often did you engaged in social activities during your elite sports career?  | very rarely<br>1 2 3 4 5                                 | often                       |
| 13.  | How many friends did you have during your elite sports career?   | very few<br>1 2 3 4 5                                    | many                        |
|      |  | <i>Circle the number that best reflects your opinion</i> |                             |
| 14.  | During your elite sports career, were most of your friends from the world of sport?  | not at all<br>1 2 3 4 5                                  | a lot                       |
| 15.  | What was your relationship with your family like during your elite sports career?  | very bad<br>1 2 3 4 5                                    | very good                   |
| 16.  | Did your parents offer you support during your sports career?  | very little<br>1 2 3 4 5                                 | a lot                       |
| 17.  | In your opinion, how much did your parents invest financially in your sports career?   | very little<br>1 2 3 4 5                                 | a lot                       |
| 18.1 | An education   | a lot lower<br>1 2 3 4 5                                 | much higher                 |
| 18.2 | Life experiences   | a lot fewer<br>1 2 3 4 5                                 | many more                   |
| 18.3 | Friends  | a lot fewer<br>1 2 3 4 5                                 | many more                   |
| 18.4 | An experience with partner relationships   | a lot fewer<br>1 2 3 4 5                                 | many more                   |
| 18.5 | Work/professional experiences  | a lot fewer<br>1 2 3 4 5                                 | many more                   |
| 18.6 | Relationship with parents  | much worse<br>better<br>1 2 3 4 5                        | much                        |
| 18.7 | Difficulty in starting a professional career   | much less<br>1 2 3 4 5                                   | much more                   |

|      |   |                      |   |   |   |   |   |                |
|------|---|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| 18.8 | Financial situation   | much worse<br>better | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | much<br>better |
| 19.  | Did you think about the end of your sport career already during your active sports involvement? | not at all           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | a lot          |
| 20.  | Did you start planning your post-sport life during your sports career?                          | not at all           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | a lot          |
| 21.  | During your sports career, did you think of yourself mostly as an athlete?                      | not at all           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | a lot          |
| 22.  | During your sports career, were most of your goals related to sport?                            | not at all           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | a lot          |
| 23.  | During your sports career, was sport the most important aspect of your life?                    | not at all           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | a lot          |
| 24.  | During your sports career, did other people see you primarily as an athlete?                    | not at all           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | a lot          |

### Sport Career Termination

25. Which year did you first start thinking about ending your sports career?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ year  
 Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

26. Which year did you terminate your active sports \_\_\_\_\_ Year  
 career?

27. At what time of the season did you terminate your sport career?

☐ At the end of the season      ☐ Before the start of a new season

☐ During preparation period      ☐ During the season

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>28. How strongly did each of the following factors influence your decision to terminate your sports career? Using the 1-to-5 intensity scale, indicate the influence each factor had on your decision to end your sports career.</p> | <p><i>Circle the number that best reflects your option.</i><br/> <i>Numbers range between:</i><br/> <b>1</b> = no influence at all<br/> <b>5</b> = very strong influence</p> |
| <p>No influence at all                      Very strong influence</p>   |  |
| 28.1 You achieved most major goals in your sport  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.2 You grew tired of the lifestyle of an athlete (e.g., traveling/stress)   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.3 You were offered an opportunity outside your sport career (e.g., job offer/an educational opportunity)   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.4 You committed yourself to school/study   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.5 You found a job  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.6 You committed yourself to your family  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.7 You wanted to devote more time to your partner relationship  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.8 You had problems with coaching staff   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.9 You had problems with the sports federation  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.10 You suffered an injury or other health problems   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.11 You were in a poor relationship with team mates   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.12 You had financial difficulties  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.13 You had poor working and training conditions  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.14 You did not qualify for the national team/competition   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.15 Your age  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.16 Changes in competition regulations  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.17 Changes in techniques   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.18 Changes in equipment  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.19 Unsatisfactory performance  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.20 Lack of support from family   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.21 Lack of support from friends  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 28.22 Pressure from parents   | 1 2 3 4 5  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>28.23 Other: _____</p> <p>29. From the above, choose the <b>three</b> factors that had the <u>strongest influence</u> on your decision to end your sport career?</p> <p>30. How voluntary was your decision to end your sport career?</p> <p>31. Did the end of your sport career come about gradually?</p> <p>32. What was the level of your performance when you decided to end your sport career?</p> <p style="margin-top: 20px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> my performance was improving      <input type="checkbox"/> my performance was declining         </p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> I was at the peak of my sport career         </p> | <p>1   2   3   4   5</p> <p>Provide the number of the three factors.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>not voluntary at all      completely voluntary</p> <p>1   2   3   4   5</p> <p>not at all      a lot</p> <p>1   2   3   4   5</p> |
|--|---|

### General Mental and Emotional State During Sport Career Transition

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>33. Is your withdrawal from elite sport (as a competitor):</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> permanent      <input type="checkbox"/> temporary      <input type="checkbox"/> unresolved         </p> <p>34. Did you have doubts about your decision to end your sport career?</p> <p>35. Below is a list of emotional states that may have accompanied your retirement from sport. Using the 1-to-5 intensity scale, indicate which number best reflects the absence/presence of each of them.</p> <p>35.1 Dissatisfaction</p> <p>35.2 Could not reconcile myself to the end of my sport career</p> <p>35.3 Sadness</p> <p>35.4 Fear of an uncertain future</p> | <p>not at all      a lot</p> <p>1   2   3   4   5</p> <p><i>Circle the number that best reflects your opinion.</i></p> <p><i>Numbers range between:</i></p> <p><b>1 = not at all</b></p> <p><b>5 = a lot</b></p> <p>1   2   3   4   5</p> <p>1   2   3   4   5</p> <p>1   2   3   4   5</p> <p>1   2   3   4   5</p> |
|--|--|

|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |                      |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------|
| 35.5  | Relief  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 35.6  | Other   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
|       |   |   |   |   |   |   |                      |
| 36.   | How much has retirement from sport changed your life?   | not at all  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | a lot                |
| 37.   | How was the change generally?   | very negative   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | very positive        |
| 38.   | Below is a list of problems which elite athletes are often faced with after retirement from sport. Using the 1-to-5 intensity scale, indicate the magnitude of each problem as it applied to you at the close of your elite-sport career. | <p><i>Circle the number that best reflects your opinion. Numbers range between:</i></p> <p><b>1 = no problem at all</b></p> <p><b>5 = great problem</b></p> |   |   |   |   |                      |
| 38.1  | Health problems (injuries, etc.)  | Posed no great problems   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Posed great problems |
| 38.2  | Detraining difficulties   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.3  | Weight problems   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.4  | Alcohol abuse   | Posed no problems   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Posed great problems |
| 38.5  | Drug abuse  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.6  | Missing friends from the world of sport environment   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.7  | Missing sport-related social activities   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.8  | Difficulties in establishing social contacts  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.9  | Missing the lifestyle of an athlete   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.10 | Feelings of underachievement in sport-related goals   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.11 | Loss of status of a public figure   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.12 | Loss of public admiration   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.13 | Financial difficulties  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.14 | Problems with finding a job   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.15 | Difficulties with adjustment to the requirements of your occupation   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.16 | Difficulties with adjustment to regular school/study  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |
| 38.17 | Feelings of incompetence in activities other than sport   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                      |

|       |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38.18 | Lack of professional knowledge   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.19 | Work/school/study pressure   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.20 | Difficulties with planning one's future  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.21 | Lowered self-confidence  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.22 | Lowered self-worth   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.23 | Lack of self-control   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.24 | Relationship difficulties with parents/family  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.25 | Relationship difficulties with one's partner   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.26 | Relationship difficulties with one's coach   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.27 | Relationship difficulties with one's sport association   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.28 | Relationship difficulties with one's sport club  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.29 | Low self-esteem  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.30 | Fear of an uncertain future  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38.31 | Other:   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <hr/> |  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 39.   | Have you achieved all of your sport-related goals?   | not at all                      completely<br>1   2   3   4   5 |   |   |   |   |
| 40.   | To what extent did you depend on sport financially at the end of sport career?   | not at all                      completely<br>1   2   3   4   5 |   |   |   |   |
| 41.   | After your retirement from sport, how much support (e.g., emotional, financial, etc.) did you <b>receive</b> from the following: | none    little    a lot<br>1   2   3   4   5                    |   |   |   |   |
| 41.1  | Partner (girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse)  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41.2  | Parents  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41.3  | Other family members   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41.4  | Teammates  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41.5  | Friends  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41.6  | National sport association   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41.7  | Coaching staff   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41.8  | Olympic Committee  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41.9  | Sports psychologist  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 41.10 Other:  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| <hr/>   |  |
| 42. After your retirement from sport, how much support (e.g., emotional, financial, etc.) did you <b>expect</b> from the following:   | none little a lot  |
| 42.1 Partner (girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse)  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 42.2 Parents  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 42.3 Other family members   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 42.4 Team mates   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 42.5 Friends  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 42.6 National sport association   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 42.7 Coaching staff   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 42.8 Olympic Committee  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 42.9 Sport psychologist   | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 42.10 Other:  | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| <hr/>   |  |
| 43. How long did it take before you felt completely adjusted to the new demands and social roles outside elite-sport?   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-2 months <input type="checkbox"/> 3-6 months <input type="checkbox"/> 7-11 months <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3+ years |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> not adjusted completely yet  |  |
| 44. How would you describe your general attitude to retirement from sport at this point?  | very negative   very positive<br>1 2 3 4 5               |
| 45. Immediately after retiring from sport, did you have some activity to become involved in right away? (e.g., job, school, relationship, hobby, etc.)?                           | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 46. To what extent did you miss sport and the lifestyle of an athlete after you ended your career?  | not at all   very much<br>1 2 3 4 5                      |
| 47. Did you feel after a while that you miss sport (e.g. you thought about your sports career, achievements, the people from the world of sport, etc.)?                           | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |

Comments:

---

48. Are you still active in sport? If "no" continue with Q49.  
If "yes", what do you do?
- a) I work professionally in sport as coach. ☐ yes ☐ no
- b) I work professionally in sport as manager. ☐ yes ☐ no
- c) I work professionally in sport as counsellor. ☐ yes ☐ no
- d) I work professionally in sport as referee/official. ☐ yes ☐ no
- e) I work in sport as a volunteer (e.g. part-time coaching, etc.). Specify: ☐ yes ☐ no
- 
- f) I compete in a minor league. ☐ yes ☐ no
- g) I compete in a local amateur league, a veterans' league, etc. ☐ yes ☐ no
49. Do you still enjoy public reputation because of your sports career? ☐ yes ☐ no
50. How does your current post-sport life compare with your active sport career in terms of its importance for your personality?   
much less important 1 2 3 4 5 much more important
51. In general, how satisfied are you with your post-sport life?   
very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 very satisfied
52. In general, how do you cope with the adjustment to post-sport life?   
very unsuccessfully 1 2 3 4 5 very successfully
53. How important is the role of a former elite athlete for you?   
very important 1 2 3 4 5 very unimportant
54. Is sport still the most important aspect of your life?   
completely agree 1 2 3 4 5 completely disagree



## Counselling For Retiring

55. Did you expect any psychological problems after your retirement from sport? ☐ yes ☐ no

If "yes", what kind of problems did you expect?

Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

56. If you were having hard and stressful times after retirement, who, if anyone, would you turn to for help? *Check all that apply.*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> sport psychologist   | <input type="checkbox"/> other sport-related expert (e.g., sport manager, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> counsellor/therapist | physical therapist, etc.)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> coach                | <input type="checkbox"/> parents <input type="checkbox"/> close friends   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> physician            | <input type="checkbox"/> siblings <input type="checkbox"/> no one         |

| 57. How useful would you find the following services after sport retirement?                 | not useful |   |   |   |   | very useful |  |  |  |  |
|--|------------|---|---|---|---|-------------|--|--|--|--|
| 57.1 Help in finding a new career or area of interest  | 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |  |  |  |  |
| 57.2 Help in learning how to transfer your mental skills to a new career or area of interest | 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |  |  |  |  |
| 57.3 Help in building your confidence in post-sport life                                     | 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |  |  |  |  |
| 57.4 Information on work and educational opportunities                                       | 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |  |  |  |  |
| 57.5 Financial counselling   | 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |  |  |  |  |
| 57.6 Assistance in finding a place to live   | 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |  |  |  |  |
| 57.7 Assistance/guidance with medical and health care  | 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |  |  |  |  |
| 57.8 Physiological and dietary detraining programme  | 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |  |  |  |  |
| 57.9 Information on how other athletes have dealt with retirement                            | 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |  |  |  |  |
| 57.10 Workshops with other retired athletes to share and learn from each other's experience  | 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |  |  |  |  |

## Retrospect

What are the most important things that you gained from your sport career?  
Rank the following by placing a number (5 = most important to 1 least important) next to each aspect.

☐ Financial      ☐ Fame      ☐ Fitness      ☐ Friendships

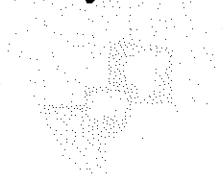
Others:

---

Would you recommend your children to follow a career similar to yours?

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Uncertain

**Thank you for your co-operation**



## Appendix 2B – Introductory letter with Questionnaire

March 7<sup>th</sup> 2011

Dear Participant

I am an employee in a ballet company in Birmingham and a part-time Master's Degree student at the University of Birmingham. I am hoping for your voluntary participation in my study, through your agreement to take part in completing a questionnaire (for which I need 50 people), and possibly also a follow-up interview (for which I need 6). I intend to compare the career transition experiences of professional dancers from a Ballet Company environment with those of independent dancers from the West End Musical Theatre environment. The aim of the study is to improve policy and practice in the important life-stage of dancers' career transition.

The attached questionnaire explores a number of factors related to the transition process taking place and the experiences of dancers connected with moving away from their performing careers.

The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes. Please try to answer all the questions as accurately and fully as you can. Should you have any questions about the questionnaire please do not hesitate to contact me by email.

Please note the questionnaire will be treated with absolute confidentiality and participation is entirely voluntary. The questionnaire is anonymised by the use of number coding so that no participant will be identifiable in the write-up of the study. Participant's personal information will be held securely by the researcher, following the University's code of practice and will not be disclosed under any circumstances. To ensure confidentiality please return your completed questionnaire in the self-addressed envelope provided.

Also, anyone who would be prepared to volunteer for a follow-up interview with the researcher is asked to include their contact details at the end of the questionnaire. Once again any disclosed information is treated with complete confidentiality. I would like to record interviews if you give permission for this to help with transcription stage and accuracy. They will be arranged at your convenience and will take 30 – 45 minutes.

Thank you, in anticipation, for taking part in this study.

I look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire. Ideally, to continue with the study, I will need all questionnaires completed and returned to me by April 11<sup>th</sup> 2011.

Yours faithfully,

Simon Harper

MPhil Education Studies Student No. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Tansin Benn, School of Education  
The University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 2TT

## Appendix 2C: Dance Performance Career Transition Questionnaire (DPCTQ)

Identification  
number:

**ALL INFORMATION WILL BE TREATED WITH ABSOLUTE  
CONFIDENTIALITY. NO NAMES ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE  
ANONYMITY.**

If you would prefer to complete this electronically please email [REDACTED]

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Which dance arena were you engaged in during your performing career?  
☐ Ballet Company Dancer ☐ Musical Theatre Company Dancer
2. ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Age:                      Years
4. Length of time in your professional dance career?      Years
5. Time since retirement as a performer?      Years
6. Please list educational qualifications you have gained:
7. Have you completed any training programmes (e.g., teacher-training programme/course or dance teacher qualifications):

### LIFE DURING YOUR DANCE CAREER

8. In your opinion, did you earn enough money with your dance involvement to support you through career transition? E.g., did you earn enough in dance to ensure yourself a comfortable post-dance life, to buy an apartment, a house, to start your own business, to study?

Please expand:

9. Can you summarise your feelings about those years in your performing career

10. When were you first aware of the realities of retirement from that career? Please expand:

11. Did you start planning your post-dance life during your performing dance career? Please expand:

## **DANCE (PERFORMANCE) CAREER TERMINATION**

*To help you answer the next four questions (Q.12 to Q.14 inclusive) please look at the following possible reasons for leaving a performing a career:*

- Free-choice after achieving all your performance goals
- You grew tired of the lifestyle of an athlete (e.g., travel, stress, financial insecurity)
- You were offered an opportunity outside your dance career (e.g., job offer, educational opportunity)
- You committed yourself to school study
- You found another job
- You committed yourself to your family
- You wanted to devote more time to your partner/relationship
- You suffered an injury or health problems
- You were in poor relationships with other company members
- You had financial difficulties
- You had poor working conditions
- You were no longer cast in good roles (*de-selection*)
- Your age
- Unsatisfactory performance

12. Which year did you first start **thinking** about ending your dance career and why?

13. Would you consider your retirement as a voluntary decision or one that was forced by other circumstances?

14. Did the end of your dance career come about gradually or quickly?

## **GENERAL EMOTIONAL STATE DURING DANCE CAREER TRANSITION**

15. To help you during and after your retirement from dance *performance*, how much support (e.g., emotional, financial, educational) did you **expect** from any/all of the following?

Dance Colleagues

Dance Support Agency (for example, Dancer's Career Development, Dance UK)

Employer  
Teaching Staff  
Family  
Other

***Please expand:***

16. To help you during and after your retirement from dance *performance*, how much support (e.g., emotional, financial, educational) did you **receive** from any/all of the following?

Dance Colleagues  
Dance Support Agency  
Employer  
Teaching Staff  
Family  
Other

***Please expand:***

17. How long did it take before you felt completely adjusted to the new demands and social roles outside of dance performance?

18.1 What were the most *positive* aspects about retiring from dance performance?

18.2 And the most *negative*?

## **COUNSELLING FOR RETIRING**

19. Did you benefit from any of the following support services to help prepare you for post-performance life?

19.1 Help in finding a new career or area of interest

☐ Yes      ☐ No

19.2 Help in understanding your transferable skills

☐ Yes      ☐ No

19.3 Help in building your confidence

☐ Yes      ☐ No

19.4 Information on work and educational opportunities

☐ Yes      ☐ No

19.5 Financial counselling

☐ Yes      ☐ No

19.6 Information on how other dancers have dealt with retirement from performance

☐ Yes      ☐ No

19.7 Workshops with other transitional dancers to share and learn from each other's experiences

☐ Yes      ☐ No

19.8 Employer support and guidance to help life after performance

☐ Yes      ☐ No

19.9 Dance Agency support and guidance

☐ Yes      ☐ No

If 'No', what would you have liked?

If 'Yes', which aspects were the most useful and were the other aspects of support you would have liked?

20. What do you know about *Dancers' Career Development*?

21. What do you know about *Dance UK*?

### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

**Please indicate if you would be happy to take part in a further discussion in the form of a one-to-one (face-to-face) interview with the researcher, at your convenience and mutually agreed time.**

☐ Yes      ☐ No

If 'yes' please provide your name and contact details below:

Name:

Email:

Telephone:

Participant's personal information will be held securely by the researcher, following the University's code of practice and will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION**

## Appendix 2D: SAMPLE Dance Performance Career Transition Questionnaire

Identification  
number:

**ALL INFORMATION WILL BE TREATED WITH ABSOLUTE CONFIDENTIALITY.  
NO NAMES ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE ANONYMITY.**

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Which dance arena were you engaged in during your performing career?  
☐ Ballet Company Dancer ☐ Musical Theatre Company Dancer
2. ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Age: 41 Years
4. Length of time in your professional dance career? 18 Years
5. Time since retirement as a performer? 5.5 Years
6. Please list educational qualifications you have gained:  
*High School Diploma USA*  
*MA – While dancing with BRB*
7. Have you completed any training programmes (e.g., teacher-training programme/course or dance teacher qualifications):  
*Pilates instructor course – 1 year full time with Alan Herdman*

### LIFE DURING YOUR DANCE CAREER

8. In your opinion, did you earn enough money with your dance involvement to support you through career transition? E.g., did you earn enough in dance to ensure yourself a comfortable post-dance life, to buy an apartment, a house, to start your own business, to study?  
  
*Please expand: Yes. But I was very lucky to have reached a position within the ranks where I earned a good salary. I was smart with my finances and able to save. I bought a house in 1995 when house prices were very low. Although I had savings the Dancers' Career Development award was extremely helpful! Otherwise I think my savings would have depleted quickly! I was also very lucky to have a partner (eventually husband) to fall upon for support if I needed to. Fortunately the DCD covered everything and more.*
9. Can you summarise your feelings about those years in your performing career? *Amazing! Some of the most stressful and nerve wracking years of my life, but some of the best so far! I lead a very privileged life! It was an honour to work with BRB.*



10. When were you first aware of the realities of retirement from that career? *I started preparing for retirement at 30 years old. I began studying and working on a Masters degree. It opened my eyes to the big wide world outside of ballet. One I knew I must be prepared for. I planned my retirement and discussed it with my Director. He made my last year a very special one. Planning so far ahead made my transition smooth, much less traumatic and so much more fun really. I was excited for the change.*
11. Did you start planning your post-dance life during your performing dance career? *Yes I researched what Pilates instructor courses were the best well ahead of time. I applied for Dancers' Resettlement and the Pilates course about 8 months before I stopped dancing.*

### DANCE (PERFORMANCE) CAREER TERMINATION

To help you answer the next four questions (Q.12 to Q.14 inclusive) please look at the following possible reasons for leaving a performing a career:

- Free-choice after achieving all your performance goals
- You grew tired of the lifestyle of an athlete (e.g., travel, stress, financial insecurity)
- You were offered an opportunity outside your dance career (e.g., job offer, educational opportunity)
- You committed yourself to school study
- You found another job
- You committed yourself to your family
- You wanted to devote more time to your partner/relationship
- You suffered an injury or health problems
- You were in poor relationships with other company members
- You had financial difficulties
- You had poor working conditions
- You were no longer cast in good roles (*de-selection*)
- Your age
- Unsatisfactory performance

12. Which year did you first start **thinking** about ending your dance career and why? *At the age of 30. I knew age would become an issue. I wanted to end on a high, not feel as though I was being kicked out the door. Plus I started to become tired of the routine which became harder as I aged. Not only routine, but the stress touring and performing, injury prevention (extra exercise), and of course maintaining a ballerinas waif like physique became more difficult and tedious.*
13. Would you consider your retirement as a voluntary decision or one that was forced by other circumstances? *Definitely voluntary but I think there was an underlying pressure to get out before you were given 'the chat'. Who knows if I would have been give 'the chat' about future plans but I wanted to leave with confidence and head held high. Still feeling as though I was a good dancer. Not someone who was now useless and over the hill.*
14. Did the end of your dance career come about gradually or quickly? *Gradually. I asked to speak to the Director. I told him my plans. I think he appreciated my honesty.*

## GENERAL EMOTIONAL STATE DURING DANCE CAREER TRANSITION

15. To help you during and after your retirement from dance *performance*, how much support (e.g., emotional, financial, educational) did you **expect** from any/all of the following?

Dance Colleagues

Dance Support Agency (for example, Dancer's Career Development, Dance UK) – *Financial*

Employer

Teaching Staff

Family

Other

***Please expand:** I think I was so ready for a big change in my life I didn't face a lot of the emotional struggles many dancers do. I felt a lot of freedom when I left, like a huge weight off my shoulders. After immersing myself into my career and loving my life in the ballet world, it was a shock to feel this way. I went through a short identity crisis and weight gain which made me feel awkward, normal and not so special anymore, but that soon passed. I missed my colleagues and the fun times on and offstage like crazy sometimes but I was meeting so many new people that I soon grew to LOVE my new life!*

16. To help you during and after your retirement from dance *performance*, how much support (e.g., emotional, financial, educational) did you **receive** from any/all of the following?

Dance Colleagues

**Dance Support Agency – Financial**

Employer

Teaching Staff

Family

Other

***Please expand:***

17. How long did it take before you felt completely adjusted to the new demands and social roles outside of dance performance? 2-3 years. *But I also had to get used to the role of being a mother*

18.1 What were the most *positive* aspects about retiring from dance performance? *Meeting new and interesting people from all walks of life energizes me! All I talked about for 18 years was ballet! : (*

18.2 And the most *negative*? *Missing the high you get onstage. The feeling of being high from dancing something beautiful.*

## COUNSELLING FOR RETIRING

19. Did you benefit from any of the following support services to help prepare you for post-performance life?

19.1 Help in finding a new career or area of interest

☐ Yes      ☐ No

19.2 Help in understanding your transferable skills

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

19.3 Help in building your confidence

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

19.4 Information on work and educational opportunities

☐ *Yes – Dancers’ Degree Programme* ☐ No

19.5 Financial counselling

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

19.6 Information on how other dancers have dealt with retirement from performance

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

19.7 Workshops with other transitional dancers to share and learn from each other’s experiences

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

19.8 Employer support and guidance to help life after performance

☐ Yes ☐ *No*

19.9 Dance Agency support and guidance

☐ *Yes - DCD* ☐ No

If ‘No’, what would you have liked? I pretty much figured things out on my own. It was straight forward (my course, DCD etc.). Maybe some workshops on dealing with identity change and how to deal with it would have been helpful. I felt that because I was no longer a dancer I was now ordinary, very ugly and fat. Crazy! Soon passed tho’!

If ‘Yes’, which aspects were the most useful and were the other aspects of support you would have liked?

20. What do you know about *Dancers’ Career Development*? *A lot. They were a huge help financially and also so positive about the future – life after dance.*

21. What do you know about *Dance UK*? I have given a presentation for Dance UK on the female athlete triad/osteoporosis at the London Society of medicine. Great work they do.

## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

**Please indicate if you would be happy to take part in a further discussion in the form of a one-to-one (face-to-face) interview with the researcher, at your convenience and mutually agreed time.**

☐ *Yes* ☐ No

If 'yes' please provide your name and contact details below: (*contact details removed for anonymity*)

Participant's personal information will be held securely by the researcher, following the University's code of practice and will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION**

## Appendix 2E: SAMPLE Dance Performance Career Transition Questionnaire

|                           |
|---------------------------|
| Identification<br>number: |
|---------------------------|

**ALL INFORMATION WILL BE TREATED WITH ABSOLUTE CONFIDENTIALITY.  
NO NAMES ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE ANONYMITY.**

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Which dance arena were you engaged in during your performing career?  
☐ Ballet Company Dancer ☒ Musical Theatre Company Dancer
2. ☐ Male ☒ Female
3. Age: 32 Years
4. Length of time in your professional dance career? 12 Years
5. Time since retirement as a performer? 2-3 Years
6. Please list educational qualifications you have gained:  
*12 GCSE  
2 A levels (English Lit and History)*
7. Have you completed any training programmes (e.g., teacher-training programme/course or dance teacher qualifications):  
*ISTD ballet, tap and modern teaching qualifications, Pilates mat teacher cert, Pilates studio cert and fitness instructor qualification*

### LIFE DURING YOUR DANCE CAREER

8. In your opinion, did you earn enough money with your dance involvement to support you through career transition? E.g., did you earn enough in dance to ensure yourself a comfortable post-dance life, to buy an apartment, a house, to start your own business, to study?  
*Please expand: I needed to teach and earn extra money whilst performing in order to buy house, new business etc. Just performer's allowance was not enough to invest in future*
9. Can you summarise your feelings about those years in your performing career? *I was doing what I loved. Nothing compares to it. I feel lucky to have had a passion for something that could become my job – however it was extremely tough at times!*
10. When were you first aware of the realities of retirement from that career? *At the time I started to think about planning a family, I realised show schedules and auditions etc would not suit*

*becoming a parent. The uncertainty and unreliable income are no good for supporting a family.*

11. Did you start planning your post-dance life during your performing dance career? *Yes I qualified to teach mat Pilates during my final West End contract.*

## **DANCE (PERFORMANCE) CAREER TERMINATION**

To help you answer the next four questions (Q.12 to Q.14 inclusive) please look at the following possible reasons for leaving a performing a career:

- Free-choice after achieving all your performance goals
- You grew tired of the lifestyle of an athlete (e.g., travel, stress, financial insecurity)
- You were offered an opportunity outside your dance career (e.g., job offer, educational opportunity)
- You committed yourself to school study
- You found another job
- You committed yourself to your family
- You wanted to devote more time to your partner/relationship
- You suffered an injury or health problems
- You were in poor relationships with other company members
- You had financial difficulties
- You had poor working conditions – hours bad and money offered getting worse
- You were no longer cast in good roles (*de-selection*)
- Your age
- Unsatisfactory performance

12. Which year did you first start **thinking** about ending your dance career and why? *A year before I began retraining – but I always knew from being a child that performing arts is a short term career.*
13. Would you consider your retirement as a voluntary decision or one that was forced by other circumstances? *Voluntary – I was offered more work but turned it down.*
14. Did the end of your dance career come about gradually or quickly? *Quite quickly – it is all or nothing.*

## **GENERAL EMOTIONAL STATE DURING DANCE CAREER TRANSITION**

15. To help you during and after your retirement from dance *performance*, how much support (e.g., emotional, financial, educational) did you **expect** from any/all of the following?

Dance Colleagues

Dance Support Agency (for example, Dancer's Career Development, Dance UK)

Employer

Teaching Staff

Family

Other

**Please expand:** *Didn't expect anything. Being self-employed dancer you soon learn only help is from yourself. My family are always very supportive!*

16. To help you during and after your retirement from dance *performance*, how much support (e.g., emotional, financial, educational) did you **receive** from any/all of the following?

Dance Colleagues  
Dance Support Agency  
Employer  
Teaching Staff  
Family  
Other

**Please expand:** *Family lots of encouragement. Otherwise none.*

17. How long did it take before you felt completely adjusted to the new demands and social roles outside of dance performance? *I still don't – it's hard to fit into other social roles.*

18.1 What were the most *positive* aspects about retiring from dance performance? *Not so much pressure and worry over contracts. Can plan life easier. Definite better income. Better hours.*

18.2 And the most *negative*? *I miss it. I miss dancing and that feeling you get performing and being part of a company. I miss some of the people.*

## **COUNSELLING FOR RETIRING**

19. Did you benefit from any of the following support services to help prepare you for post-performance life?

19.1 Help in finding a new career or area of interest

☐ Yes      ☐ **No**

19.2 Help in understanding your transferable skills

☐ Yes      ☐ **No**

19.3 Help in building your confidence

☐ Yes      ☐ **No**

19.4 Information on work and educational opportunities

☐ Yes      ☐ **No**

19.5 Financial counselling

☐ Yes      ☐ **No**

19.6 Information on how other dancers have dealt with retirement from performance

☐ Yes      ☐ **No**

19.7 Workshops with other transitional dancers to share and learn from each other's experiences

☐ Yes      ☐ **No**

19.8 Employer support and guidance to help life after performance

☐ Yes      ☐ *No*

19.9 Dance Agency support and guidance

☐ Yes      ☐ *No*

If 'No', what would you have liked? *I would have liked all those things. Now I've left performing it's like it never happened. You have to start all over again from scratch – it's tough. It doesn't count for anything. It'd be nice to compare with others.*

If 'Yes', which aspects were the most useful and were the other aspects of support you would have liked?

20. What do you know about *Dancers' Career Development*? *Nothing*

21. What do you know about *Dance UK*? *Is it a magazine? Competition?*

#### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

**Please indicate if you would be happy to take part in a further discussion in the form of a one-to-one (face-to-face) interview with the researcher, at your convenience and mutually agreed time.**

☐ Yes      ☐ No

If 'yes' please provide your name and contact details below: (*contact details removed for anonymity*)

Participant's personal information will be held securely by the researcher, following the University's code of practice and will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

#### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION**



**Appendix 2F: SAMPLE Dance Performance Career Transition Questionnaire –  
Analysis process**

|                           |
|---------------------------|
| Identification<br>number: |
|---------------------------|

**ALL INFORMATION WILL BE TREATED WITH ABSOLUTE CONFIDENTIALITY.  
NO NAMES ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE ANONYMITY.**

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

1. Which dance arena were you engaged in during your performing career?  
☐ Ballet Company Dancer ☒ Musical Theatre Company Dancer
2. ☐ Male ☒ Female
3. Age: 32 Years
4. Length of time in your professional dance career? 12 Years **AR TP**
5. Time since retirement as a performer? 2-3 Years **TR AR**
6. Please list educational qualifications you have gained:  
*12 GCSE  
2 A levels (English Lit and History) **HE Ed***
7. Have you completed any training programmes (e.g., teacher-training programme/course or dance teacher qualifications):  
*ISTD ballet, tap and modern teaching qualifications, Pilates mat teacher cert, Pilates studio cert and fitness instructor qualification **Ed PTP***

**LIFE DURING YOUR DANCE CAREER**

8. In your opinion, did you earn enough money with your dance involvement to support you through career transition? E.g., did you earn enough in dance to ensure yourself a comfortable post-dance life, to buy an apartment, a house, to start your own business, to study?  
*Please expand: I needed to teach and earn extra money whilst performing in order to buy **Fi** house, new business etc. Just performer's allowance was not enough to invest in future **Fi***
9. Can you summarise your feelings about those years in your performing career? *I was doing what I loved. Nothing compares to it. I feel lucky to have had a passion for something that could become my job – however it was extremely tough at times! **Ps EPT***
10. When were you first aware of the realities of retirement from that career? *At the time I started to think about planning a family, I realised show schedules and auditions etc would not suit*

*becoming a parent. The uncertainty and unreliable income are no good for supporting a family. **Fi Ps PTP***

11. Did you start planning your post-dance life during your performing dance career? *Yes I qualified to teach mat Pilates during my final West End contract. **Ed PTP Self***

## DANCE (PERFORMANCE) CAREER TERMINATION

To help you answer the next four questions (Q.12 to Q.14 inclusive) please look at the following possible reasons for leaving a performing a career:

- Free-choice after achieving all your performance goals **VOL**
  - You grew tired of the lifestyle of an athlete (e.g., travel, stress, financial insecurity) **Ps**
  - You were offered an opportunity outside your dance career (e.g., job offer, educational opportunity) **Ed**
  - You committed yourself to school study **Ed MRT PTP**
  - You found another job **VOL MRT**
  - You committed yourself to your family **VOL MRT**
  - You wanted to devote more time to your partner/relationship
  - You suffered an injury or health problems
  - You were in poor relationships with other company members
  - You had financial difficulties
  - You had poor working conditions – hours bad and money offered getting worse **Fi Ps MRT**
  - You were no longer cast in good roles (*de-selection*)
  - Your age
  - Unsatisfactory performance
12. Which year did you first start **thinking** about ending your dance career and why? *A year before I began retraining – but I always knew from being a child that performing arts is a short term career. **PTP Ed***
13. Would you consider your retirement as a voluntary decision or one that was forced by other circumstances? *Voluntary – I was offered more work but turned it down. **VOL***
14. Did the end of your dance career come about gradually or quickly? *Quite quickly – it is all or nothing. **TFA***

## GENERAL EMOTIONAL STATE DURING DANCE CAREER TRANSITION

15. To help you during and after your retirement from dance *performance*, how much support (e.g., emotional, financial, educational) did you **expect** from any/all of the following?

Dance Colleagues

Dance Support Agency (for example, Dancer's Career Development, Dance UK)

Employer

Teaching Staff

Family

Other

***Please expand:** Didn't expect anything. Being self-employed dancer you soon learn only help is from yourself. My family are always very supportive! AS ES Self*

16. To help you during and after your retirement from dance *performance*, how much support (e.g., emotional, financial, educational) did you **receive** from any/all of the following?

Dance Colleagues  
Dance Support Agency  
Employer  
Teaching Staff  
Family  
Other

***Please expand:** Family lots of encouragement. Otherwise none. AS ES*

17. How long did it take before you felt completely adjusted to the new demands and social roles outside of dance performance? *I still don't – it's hard to fit into other social roles. Ps EPT*

18.1 What were the most *positive* aspects about retiring from dance performance? *Not so much pressure and worry over contracts. Can plan life easier. Definite better income. Better hours. MPA Fi EPT*

18.2 And the most *negative*? *I miss it. I miss dancing and that feeling you get performing and being part of a company. I miss some of the people. MNA*

## **COUNSELLING FOR RETIRING**

19. Did you benefit from any of the following support services to help prepare you for post-performance life?

19.1 Help in finding a new career or area of interest

☐ Yes ☐ **No**

19.2 Help in understanding your transferable skills

☐ Yes ☐ **No**

19.3 Help in building your confidence

☐ Yes ☐ **No**

19.4 Information on work and educational opportunities

☐ Yes ☐ **No**

19.5 Financial counselling

☐ Yes ☐ **No**

19.6 Information on how other dancers have dealt with retirement from performance

☐ Yes ☐ **No**

19.7 Workshops with other transitional dancers to share and learn from each other's experiences

☐ Yes ☐ **No**

19.8 Employer support and guidance to help life after performance

☐ Yes      ☐ *No*

19.9 Dance Agency support and guidance

☐ Yes      ☐ *No*

If 'No', what would you have liked? *I would have liked all those things. Now I've left performing it's like it never happened. You have to start all over again from scratch – it's tough. It doesn't count for anything. It'd be nice to compare with others.* **IdImp EPT Ps Peer Knowledge**

If 'Yes', which aspects were the most useful and were the other aspects of support you would have liked?

20. What do you know about *Dancers' Career Development*? *Nothing* **AS DCDa**

21. What do you know about *Dance UK*? *Is it a magazine? Competition?* **AS DUKa**

#### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

**Please indicate if you would be happy to take part in a further discussion in the form of a one-to-one (face-to-face) interview with the researcher, at your convenience and mutually agreed time.**

☐ **Yes**      ☐ No

If 'yes' please provide your name and contact details below: (*contact details removed for anonymity*)

Participant's personal information will be held securely by the researcher, following the University's code of practice and will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

#### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION**

**APPENDIX 2G: Dancers' Questionnaire (DPCTQ) Evaluation Document for analysis:** TP=Time in Profession (Yrs.), TR=Time since retirement (Yrs.), AR=Age at Retirement (Yrs.), TFA=Time to feel adjusted post-transition, HE=Highest Education level achieved, ES=Employer support, AS=Agency support, FS=Financial support, PTP=Pre-transition planning, V / I=Voluntary or Involuntary transition, MRT=Main reason for transition, DCDa=Dancers' Career Development aware, DUKa=Dance UK aware, MPA=Most Positive aspect, MNA=Most Negative aspect, IdImp=Ideas for improvement, TQ=Teaching Qualifications, NI=New identity (*Red font highlights the dancers who were interviewed post questionnaire stage*)

| D    | G | Age | TP | TR  | AR | TFA       | HE         | SE                             | SR                             | ES  | AS  | FS      | PTP       | V / I | MRT                | DCDA   | DUKA      | MPA                      | MNA                     | IdImp                  |
|------|---|-----|----|-----|----|-----------|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|-----|---------|-----------|-------|--------------------|--------|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| ID1  | F | 47  | 30 | 1   | 46 | Ongoing   | Diploma    | None                           | Family                         | No  | No  | Self    | No        | I     | Injury             | No     | Yes       | More confidence          | Miss performing         | Counselling            |
| ID2  | M | 43  | 22 | 2   | 41 | Ongoing   | Diploma    | DCD                            | DCD                            | No  | Yes | DCD     | No        | I     | Injury             | Yes    | Yes       | Improved home life       | Miss performing         | Ed. Opportunity        |
| ID3  | F | 32  | 12 | 2.5 | 30 | Ongoing   | GCSE A     | Family                         | Family                         | No  | No  | Self    | Yes       | V     | Start family       | No     | Magazine? | Improved home life       | Miss performing         | Peer Knowledge         |
| ID4  | M | 42  | 20 | 5   | 37 | Ongoing   | Other      | None                           | Family                         | No  | No  | Self    | TQ        | I     | Health issues      | No     | No        | More control             | Miss performing         | Counselling            |
| ID5  | F | 43  | 19 | 5   | 38 | Ongoing   | Diploma    | Partner                        | Partner                        | No  | No  | Partner | No        | I     | Start family       | No     | No        | Improved home life       | Miss performing         | Transferable skills    |
| ID6  | M | 32  | 9  | 5   | 27 | Instantly | MA         | Employer                       | Family                         | Yes | No  | Self    | TQ        | V     | Teaching offer     | Little | Little    | Financial                | Miss performing         | Transferable skills    |
| ID7  | M | 43  | 23 | 5   | 38 | Ongoing   | GCSE O     | Family                         | Family                         | No  | No  | Self    | Financial | V     | Security           | Little | Magazine? | Improved home life       | Miss performing         | Career guidance        |
| ID8  | F | 46  | 22 | 6   | 38 | Ongoing   | None       | Family                         | Family                         | No  | No  | Self    | TQ        | V     | New challenges     | No     | No        | New challenges           | Uncertainty             | Government support     |
| ID9  | F | 46  | 27 | 6   | 40 | Quickly   | GCSE O     | None                           | Family                         | No  | No  | Self    | No        | I     | Injury             | No     | No        | Less injury              | Non dancers             | Career guidance        |
| ID10 | M | 44  | 24 | 6   | 38 | Instantly | None       | Family                         | Family / Friends               | No  | No  | Family  | No        | V     | New career         | No     | No        | More control             | Miss performing         | None                   |
| ID11 | F | 43  | 20 | 6   | 37 | 6 months  | None       | Fam/Emp                        | Family                         | No  | No  | Self    | No        | V     | New career         | No     | Yes       | Pass on my experience    | Miss performing         | None                   |
| ID12 | F | 36  | 9  | 7   | 29 | Gradually | GCSE O     | Family                         | Family                         | No  | No  | Partner | No        | V     | Start family       | No     | No        | Starting family          | Miss performing         | None                   |
| ID13 | F | 43  | 18 | 7   | 36 | Instantly | GCSE O     | Family                         | Family / Friends / Employer    | No  | No  | Self    | Yes       | V     | Start family       | Little | Yes       | Improved home life       | Miss performing         | Employer               |
| ID14 | F | 38  | 12 | 8   | 30 | 4 years   | GCSE A     | None                           | Family / Colleagues            | No  | No  | Partner | No        | V     | Start family       | No     | No        | Financial/Imp. home life | Miss performing         | ISTD                   |
| ID15 | M | 37  | 10 | 8   | 29 | Ongoing   | None       | Family                         | Family / Partner               | No  | No  | Self    | No        | I     | Injury             | No     | No        | None                     | No support              | All Q. 19              |
| ID16 | F | 44  | 25 | 9   | 35 | Instantly | GCSE O     | Family                         | Family                         | No  | No  | Self    | Yes       | V     | New career         | No     | No        | More respect from others | Miss performing         | Employer               |
| ID17 | F | 44  | 17 | 10  | 34 | Instantly | GCSE O     | Partner                        | Partner                        | No  | No  | Self    | No        | V     | Start family       | No     | No        | Improved stability       | Miss performing         | All Q. 19              |
| ID18 | M | 40  | 10 | 10  | 30 | Ongoing   | MGeol      | Family                         | Partner                        | No  | No  | Partner | No        | I     | Injury             | No     | No        | Less injury              | Non dancers             | Transferable skills    |
| ID19 | F | 47  | 15 | 14  | 33 | Quickly   | GCSE O     | Family                         | Family                         | No  | No  | Family  | No        | I     | Start family       | No     | Little    | Less stress              | Aging                   | All Q. 19              |
| CD1  | M | 35  | 16 | 1   | 34 | Instantly | MPhil      | DCD                            | DCD                            | Yes | Yes | DCD     | Yes       | V     | New career         | Yes    | Yes       | New challenges           | Financial instabilities | All Q. 19              |
| CD2  | F | 29  | 7  | 4   | 25 | Quickly   | MA         | DCD/Family                     | Employer                       | Yes | No  | Self    | Education | I     | De-selection       | Yes    | Yes       | More confidence          | Miss performing         | None                   |
| CD3  | F | 41  | 18 | 5.5 | 36 | 3 years   | MA         | DCD                            | DCD                            | Yes | Yes | DCD     | Yes       | V     | Start family       | Yes    | Yes       | New challenges           | Miss performing         | Workshops / NI help    |
| CD4  | M | 41  | 18 | 6   | 35 | Gradually | MA         | Employer                       | Cloze                          | Yes | Yes | Self    | Yes       | V     | Education          | Yes    | Yes       | Learning                 | New identity            | None                   |
| CD5  | M | 29  | 4  | 7   | 22 | 3 years   | MBChBMed   | None                           | Family / Partner               | No  | No  | Self    | Yes       | V     | New career         | Yes    | Little    | New challenges           | Miss performing         | None                   |
| CD6  | M | 39  | 13 | 8   | 31 | 5 years   | MA         | DCD/ Partner/ Employer/ Family | DCD/ Partner/ Family/ Employer | Yes | Yes | DCD     | Yes       | V     | Tired of lifestyle | Yes    | Yes       | More confidence          | Miss performing         | Co. Ed dept to do more |
| CD7  | M | 42  | 15 | 8   | 34 | 2 years   | UGD (part) | DCD                            | DCD/ Family/ Friends           | No  | Yes | DCD     | No        | I     | Mental Health      | Yes    | Yes       | New challenges           | Lack of skills          | Ed. Opportunity        |

### **Appendix 3A: Letter to Interview Participants – Employers/Dance Support Agencies**

Dear Participant

I am an MPhil Education Studies (Dance) student at University of Birmingham comparing the career transition experiences between professional dancers from two dance arenas: Ballet Company Dancers and West End Musical Theatre Independent Dancers.

I would very much like the opportunity to interview you about the support mechanisms that are in place for retiring dancers from the perspective of dancers' employers/dance support agencies.

The interview will take approximately 40 minutes and I am happy to travel to your place of work to meet with you. All interviews need to be conducted by the end of May 2011.

It will be my intention, with your permission, to record the interview (audio only) so I can then transcribe and analyse the data. All information will remain confidential and I will be the only person to have access to the recording. Your name and occupation will not be included and all information will remain anonymous.

I hope you are interested in participating in this study and I look forward to hearing from you to arrange a time that suits you for the interview. .

Best wishes

SIMON HARPER  
MPhil Student  
University of Birmingham

Supervisor:  
Professor Tansin Benn, School of Education  
The University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 2TT

### **Appendix 3B: Consent Form – Dancers’ Interview**

University of Birmingham

Department of Education Studies

#### **RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

The purpose of this research study is to explore the career transition experiences of professional dancers from two dance arenas: Ballet Company Dancers and West End Musical Theatre Independent Dancers.

If you are happy to be part of this study you will be asked to participate in an interview about your experiences of transition post your dance performance years.

By signing this form you are consenting to your interview being recorded (audio only), transcribed and analysed.

You will be given an opportunity to comment on the analysis to ensure that you are happy with the interpretation of your experiences. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time. The information will help towards a Masters research study and your name and specific details will be removed to guarantee anonymity.

I hereby consent to participate in this study. I understand my role within this study and my right to withdraw without necessarily giving a reason for doing so.

Name.....

Signature.....

Date.....

### **Appendix 3C – ORIGINAL interview schedule – ballet dancer (Roncaglia, 2010)**

1. Can you start telling me about yourself (e.g. your age, when did you start dancing, when did you stop)?
2. How did you feel when your career was coming to an end?  
Was retirement planned?  
Was retirement sudden?  
Do you want to share the reasons for your retirement?
3. How did you come to the decision of retiring?  
Was it a lengthy process?
4. Was/is the experience important for you?  
Do you want to share your feelings around the time of retirement?
5. Did/do you feel you have/had control of the situation?  
Did/do you feel that you had enough support around you?
6. If you explore the events since retirement, which area has been more important?  
Your friends? Your work? Your family? Yourself?  
What kind of support you received in any? (friends, family, outside agency)
7. How did/do you feel towards your family?  
How did they feel towards you?
8. How did/do you feel towards your colleagues that were still dancing?  
How was the transition away from the ballet company?
9. How did you cope through the whole experience?
10. How did/do you cope with the transition?
11. How do you feel about the future?  
Did/do you have a new purpose in life?  
How is the future looking for you?
12. How do you define yourself now that you have “retired”?  
Do you consider yourself still a dancer?  
Do you see yourself as an individual looking for a new identity?
13. Are there any other experiences that you might want to share or address?
14. Looking retrospectively has the experience been important in a positive or negative way?



### Appendix 3D: Interview schedule – Dancer

1. Can you begin by telling me about yourself as a dancer, for example, when did you *start* dancing professionally and when did you *stop* dancing?
2. Can you tell me about the area of dance you worked in? For example, ballet or musical theatre?  
*Prompt:* How did it make you feel to be part of that sector of the dance profession?
3. How did you come to the decision of retiring from performance? (For example, *de-selection, age, injury, free-choice, security, pursue other goals, spend time with family, partner, offered another job*)  
*Prompt:* Was the transition sudden?
4. How did you feel when the dance-performing part of your career was coming to an end and you were faced with a career transition?
5. Did you feel *you* had control of the situation? (Due to, for example, *self; personal characteristics such as confidence, positive-thinking, personal strengths*)
6. Did you feel you had enough *external* support around you?  
*Prompts:* Did you receive any advice during your dance training years?  
Did you receive any advice and support from your employer?  
Did you receive any advice from a dance development agency?  
Did you receive support from family, friends or colleagues?  
(Key words: *pre-transition planning – financial, educational opportunities, counselling, mentoring, workshops*)
7. How did/do you feel towards your colleagues that were/are still dancing?  
*Prompt:* Do you miss performing?
8. How do you feel about the future now post performance?

*Prompts:* Do have a new career?

How do you feel the future is looking for you?

9. Looking retrospectively, what were the most ***positive*** aspects of the transition?
10. Looking retrospectively, what were the most ***negative*** aspects of the transition?
11. Do you have any suggestions or ideas that may improve support systems for dancers facing a career transition? (For example, *improved resources, knowledge sharing, employer sensitivity, communication with other dancers already post-transition, education, Career Professional Development (CPD) workshops, learning about your transferable skills and help when applying for work outside the dance arena*)
12. Is there any other dancer's career transition experiences that you would like to share?

**Appendix 3E: ORIGINAL Interview Guide for Performance Lifestyle Advisers**  
(Gilmore, 2008)

**Can you tell me about your position within the Institute?**

- PROBE: how long you have been in post, what programmes/assistance you deliver, who you work with, etc...?

**What issues do you think an athlete might face when they retire from competitive sport?**

- PROBE: what factors might influence whether these are a problem for an athlete?

**Who do you think should be responsible for assisting athletes with their transition out of sport?**

- PROBE: Should other institutions contribute? Coaches, admin, psych, other?

**Can you briefly describe the services that you offer to Institute and Area Institute athletes through the Performance Lifestyle programme? Are any of these services targeted specifically at, or particularly useful to, transitional athletes? What has been the response of athletes and coaches towards the provision of transitional services?**

- PROBE: how many athletes have made use of these services with you?

**What is your opinion of the services offered by the Institute to athletes at the end of their sporting careers?**

- PROBE: do you think they are comprehensive enough?

**Are there any additional services that could improve the provision offered by the institute? Are there any future plans for expansion of the services offered to retiring athletes by the Institute system? Does the Institute system maintain contact (either formally or informally) with retired athletes?**

- PROBE: can you describe the form(s) in which the contact takes?

**Are similar services provided to athletes who are deselected from the institute system?**

- PROBE: do they feel that these athletes require a similar amount of support as retiring athletes?

**Should the same services be provided to male and female athletes?**

- PROBE: are there issues that female athletes may face that are unique to them?

**Is there anything else you want to say about this topic, that I haven't already asked you?**

### Appendix 3F - Interview schedule – Employer

1. Can you tell me about your job and the organisation you are employed by?
2. Do you consider that dancers (Ballet or Independent) contribute to a successful (Ballet or West End) industry?
3. Can you tell me about the Career Professional Development (CPD) opportunities you offer to dancers?  
*Examples/prompts: Teaching opportunities*  
*Participation with Education / Outreach projects*  
*Company Management job-share*
4. What issues do you think a dancer (Ballet Company or West End independent dancer) might face when they retire from performance?  
*Prompts: Financial, Educational and Psychological*
5. Who do you think should be responsible for the transition preparation and support of a dancer leaving the performing side of their career?  
*Prompts: Dance school*  
*Employer*  
*Self*  
*Family*  
*Friends*  
*Dance support agency*
6. Can you describe the services you offer to retiring dancers?  
*Prompts: Pre-transition: Financial, Educational and Psychological*  
*Post-transition: Financial, Educational and Psychological*  
*Your organisation's relationship with Dancers' Career Development*
7. What has been the response and uptake to the support offered?
8. Does your organisation keep in touch with former company dancers in order to follow their transition experiences?
9. Are there any future plans to provide more career transition support for retiring dancers?
10. Is there anything you would like to add about dancers' career transition and their support post-performance years?

### Appendix 3G: Interview schedule – Dance Support Agency

1. Can you tell me about your job within the Dance Sector and the organisation you are employed by?
2. Do you consider that dancers from both Ballet and West End arenas contribute to a successful industry and so are entitled to support post performance?
3. What issues do you think a dancer might face when they retire from the performing part of their dance career?
4. **Who** do you think should be responsible for the transition preparation and support of a dancer leaving the performing side of their career?  
*Employers*  
*Self*  
*Family*  
*Friends*  
*Dance support agencies*
5. Can you describe the services your organisation offers to retiring dancers?  
*Pre-transition*  
*Post-transition*  
*Financial, Educational, Psychological*
6. What has been the response to the support offered to ballet company dancers?
7. What has been the response to the support offered to West End independent dancers?
8. In your opinion, what are the differences your organisation is faced with when reaching ballet and West End dancers with the information about the services you offer?
9. Are there any future plans to provide more career transition support for retiring dancers from both arenas?
10. Is there anything you would like to add about dancers' career transition and their support throughout the process?

### Appendix 3H – Sample interview transcript – Company Dancer (CD3)

**SH:** An interview with CD3 [*dancer's code used*] on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June. Can I start by asking you question one? Can you begin by telling me about yourself as a dancer - for example, when did you start dancing professionally and when did you stop dancing?

**CD3:** OK, I started dancing professionally at the age of 17. I finished up with high school and moved over to Atlanta, Georgia to join the Atlanta Ballet. That was in 1987. Previously to that I studied ballet just in a regional ballet school in St. Louis, Missouri, trained in New York every summer on our summer holidays at the Joffrey Ballet School and then at 17 was asked to join the Atlanta Ballet after being seen at a regional ballet festival. I danced in Atlanta for five years and at the end of the fifth year- well, just before the end of the fifth season there- my dad was speaking to me, saying that he thought I could dance in a company, get bigger and better roles and just more experiences in general. They were coming over to England at the time for a holiday (because my parents are English), so they said, 'why don't you come over to England and audition for some companies in England?' And the reason why they said that, going back to Atlanta, there was a lady from New York City Ballet setting a piece, a Balanchine piece, and she had just been at [*Organisation A*]. I was doing the lead role in Atlanta in *Theme and Variations* and she said, 'you could go to a bigger company. I think you have probably done enough in this company.' Even though it was a great company, it was a small regional company in the States, great for getting experience, but I knew I could do better. And she said, 'I have just been to [*Organisation A*], [*name provided*] is the director there, he is an amazing, very theatrical director. I think the style would really suit your dancing'. So she put the idea in my head and then my parents encouraged me and pushed me. So I came to England, auditioned for a few companies, but eventually decided on [*Organisation A*] just because of the feeling I got from the company, from the dancers. The atmosphere was very different from London-based companies and I thought it would suit my personality more. So I moved over in 1992 to join [*Organisation A*] and I danced there until 2005. I was coming up to 36 and thought it was a good time to end my career. I felt I was still on a little bit of roll there but I thought I would get out of the profession before I started going downhill.

**SH:** So you have told me a little bit about the area of dance that you worked in and obviously that was the ballet world. Can you tell me a little bit more about that area of ballet and what it meant to you? How did that particular sector of the dance profession make you feel?

**CD3:** Well really ballet was the only thing I knew because I started off at the age of 5- I think I was 5- in a very classical ballet school in St. Louis. So I wasn't- I was exposed occasionally to things like jazz and modern, but it was always when we went to different ballet festivals, so I was in strictly classical mode from the very start. And it wasn't until the age of 13, when I was asked to go to Mr Joffrey's workshop in San Antonio, Texas that I really thought, 'right, this is what I want to do'. So I started going down to do workshop with him, which consisted of 30 young dancers from all around the States. Mr Joffrey ran the show there and took all the classes and we gave a performance at the end and he brought his dancers down from New York to inspire us and give different performances for us. So I was exposed to very classical ballerinas and male dancers from an early age. So the ballet world is really all I ever kind of wanted to be involved in because really I was in that bubble from a very early age.

**SH:** Great, thank you. Obviously these questions are about career transition, so how did you come to the decision of retiring from performance? I can give you some examples of de-selection, age, injury, free choice, security, you wanted to pursue other goals, careers, family.

**CD3:** I think it is a bit of everything you said. I always knew in the back of my mind that once dancers reached a certain age sometimes they were looked at differently, maybe the director- you know I had heard things that certain dancers of a certain age were being called in and asked what their plans were for the future, you know, hinting that maybe it was time to make a move. I never, I think for my own self-esteem, I never wanted to be kind of put in that position. Also, when I hit 30 I decided to do the dancers' degree and I think it was in those three years I started to kind of move away and open my mind, I would say, and see things outside this ballet bubble. From the go of being a professional dancer I was seriously involved in ballet. You know, that was my life, I was what they call a bit of a 'bun-head'- very disciplined and dedicated. It wasn't until I got a little bit older and hit 30, started this degree that was opening my eyes to other things, and I just thought I began to become a bit, not tired of the profession, but maybe a bit tired of the routine, tired of the stress- I put myself under a lot of unnecessary stress my whole career, a very nervous dancer. I started to get a bit tired of all that, started to get a bit tired of what went on in a ballet company and just saw it for what it was. And then in my personal life I had met my husband who wasn't my husband at the time, but I knew we were serious and we had talked about our future and as a woman I wanted children. I didn't want to do that as a ballet dancer, I wanted to become a mum and not have to work like that. So it was a combination of age, yes I wanted to end on a high, not have people looking at me in kind of disgust, I wanted to have children, I wanted to get married, I wanted to do something else, I wanted a life change, so it was a whole combination. I was ready, really ready.

**SH:** OK, thank you. I think you have kind of answered it really, but my next question is how did you feel when the dance performing part of your career was coming to an end and you were faced with a career transition? And did you feel it was sudden?

**CD3:** I don't feel it was sudden because I am a super organised person. I am a planner, I had it all planned, I had my money saved, I had this real kind of plan of what was going to happen, so it wasn't really sudden. I told [*Director*] a year ahead of time, you know I went into his office to discuss something else and said, 'oh by the way, this is what I am going to do, I am going to one more year'. And I could see a little bit of that 'phew I don't have to give her the chat', because you know, I could see that coming, so I thought I am going to tell him before he says anything to me. So I told him and he was probably very happy and very supportive and I think because I did that he made my last year incredibly special, gave me things that I wanted, you know first cast to Juliet, just made my year perfect. I was able to say do I have to do this? Can I not do Sugar Plum anymore? Can I not do that? So he made my year great. And I thought I was ready for that transition but the closer it got to the very, very end, think I was having- I could feel these emotions starting to run high. And then I ended my career in Hamburg doing Enigma Variations, which again was one of my- I have been doing that since I joined, beautiful role, beautiful music, very emotional.

**SH:** So do you think a lot of directors for lead dancers in the ballet world would really try and- do you think that happens for a lot of dancers? That the director might try and make their final year kind of special or do you think it just happened?

**CD3:** You would hope so. I think [*the Director*] was very nice to me and I think he did, not sounding funny, but I think he did respect me as a dancer because- not really for my dancing because I probably wasn't one of his favourites- but I was always professional and he made me very aware of that. And I think because of my years of service as a professional dancer, you know always doing what I was told and he knew I always worked hard and I think he rewarded me for that. You would hope it would happen for other dancers but no, I am sure it doesn't, I am sure there are a lot of directors who don't care. But when it came to Hamburg and it was my final performance and it was my leaving speech, Simon if you would have seen me, I was a mess, I was a big mess. So no matter how prepared you are for it, when it comes down to the very, very bitter end, it was extremely emotional.

**SH:** I bet. So you have talked a bit about your being a planner and details, so do you feel because of that, because of yourself and your personal characteristics that you personally had control of the career transition situation?

**CD3:** Yes I definitely had control and I think that is just kind of in my nature. You know I like to have control over things, I am very obsessive, very organised, if I am not I just can't function like that. So as soon as I made the decision that that was going to be my last year, that was it, I was right away making my plan, down to [*Director*] at DCD, had already been saving money for years because I knew. And at the time, even though [*partner*] and I were serious, I was still single and bringing in my own money and wasn't relying on him and, in the back of my mind, I never knew what was going to happen in the future really, so I made sure that I was secure financially on my own to get me through whatever I needed to get through that first couple of years and had the Dancers' Settlement all lined up ready to go way ahead of time.

**SH:** So you feel that you had enough external support around you? So I am thinking about certain prompts- external support, advice during dance training, advice and support from your employer, advice from DCD for example, and then family and friends- do feel that was all there?

**CD3:** Family and friends- definitely. [*Organisation A*] I wouldn't say they gave me that much- of course they gave me support because everybody was so encouraging. I knew I wanted to be a Pilates teacher, I made that decision, everybody was very supportive. I wouldn't say there was any advice given from [*Organisation A*] but I wasn't really looking for that. I knew, I didn't really need their advice, I was ready to go out and finally branch out on my own anyway, but DCD was incredible.

**SH:** Did you know about DCD because of working with [*Organisation A*]?

**CD3:** Yes.

**SH:** Right.



**CD3:** And former dancers. But from the moment I went down to London and had meetings with them, wow that was a pretty amazing organisation.

**SH:** Do you think to you it was important having stories of former colleagues that had been through the same process as well and being aware of their experiences? Do you think that helped?

**CD3:** Yes I already knew that being in [*Organisation A*], Royal, how lucky we were, they are still, to have this organisation, which, coming from America and American companies, dancers just aren't looked after there at all, salary-wise or- I think it is starting to happen more, they are starting to help dancers with career transition, but I knew from all these stories that I was going to be looked after.

**SH:** So how do you feel towards your colleagues that were or are still dancing now? Do you miss performing?

**CD3:** Strangely enough, no. As emotional - I was sobbing like you wouldn't believe leaving that company saying my goodbye speech, couldn't even speak really, it was that bad. And I thought, 'oh what is happening to me?' I was all prepared and then on my last day I was uncontrollably sobbing. I flew back to England and I was flying out to America the next day and I do remember specifically that next morning leaving for the airport for America, I felt like a whole weight had been lifted off my shoulders. So I went from incredibly sad to feeling incredibly, just free- not from a terrible world I had been in but I was ready. The world was my oyster now.

**SH:** That takes me on to my next question. So how do you feel about the future now, post-performance? And tell me a little bit about your new career.

**CD3:** I feel, ever since I started retraining- I was quite scared to go and retrain in London as a Pilates teacher because I was so used to being in this family environment and being in this bubble where you were just safe. And, surprisingly I was in a group of 12 other trainees at Alan Herdman's studio in London and it became, because a lot of them were ex-dancers, it became a new little family environment. Alan Herdman was amazing and we were in every day and it became very close-knit, and again, because a lot of them were dancers, they had that open kind of openness that dancers do, so I made friends instantly and I felt again very safe in that environment.

**SH:** So looking retrospectively at the transition, what do you think the most positive aspects of the transition were for you?

**CD3:** Well, financially, the help from DCD. That was absolutely amazing, even though I had saved money, because of my years of service with the company they gave me the full amount, so I didn't have any stresses financially. Obviously I had [*partner*] backing me, so I know a lot of other dancers are never going to be in that position. I knew if I was in serious trouble, [*partner*] would be there to fall back on and by that point he had asked me to marry him so we were engaged. I think also just getting out into the normal world, meeting new people. I am energised now by meeting new people whereas when I was a ballet dancer, when new people came in I was probably quite reserved, like I see dancers now. Going back to your question

about how I feel about my ex-colleagues and people who are still dancing, I am still friends with many of them, but I am very aware that when I go back down there that there is a little bit of something between us now, almost as if they can't communicate with me the way they used to, which is a bit weird.

**SH:** So you mentioned your Masters, do you think your Masters has really helped give you a voice as well? Do you think doing that further education, has then helped with the transition, having that opportunity?

**CD3:** Definitely. Oh yes, and I think doing the Masters made me a much more confident person because I noticed the more I did that- obviously I was getting older, I was 30, 31, 32- I noticed I was much more confident as a dancer. I didn't care as much what people thought of me, whereas before I would be crying after performances, being pathetic, worrying what people thought, if I was too fat, wasn't good enough, just that kind of ridiculous mentality that a lot of dancers have. So definitely the Masters changed me as a person.

**SH:** Retrospectively again, looking back at the career transition, what were the most negative aspects, if there were any?

**CD3:** I would say there weren't many. I think I went maybe through a period, after I left the ballet, a little bit of identity crisis, maybe a tad. My body- I went from extreme, extreme exercise to really chilling out and enjoying life in London and putting on a bit of weight. I had a bit of a freak out about that because I thought, 'ooh my clothes are all tight and I'm looking a bit different'. I had a bit of a moment there, but brought back down to reality by my husband and myself really. And things all worked out and I realised that, again, that is a dancer's mentality. But, no, there weren't many negative aspects at all for me, fortunately.

**SH:** So do you have any suggestions or ideas for things that may improve support systems for dancers facing a career transition?

**CD3:** I just say to any dancer, like I say to people now, just make sure you are prepared. I think a lot of dancers take for granted the fortunate situation they are in down there, the salaries, the security and I think they forget that the career is actually short and sometimes your retirement happens before you think it is going to happen, through injury or whatever. So I always like to say to people, 'you had better be prepared, mentally, financially of course and do some kind of training like I did while you are earning that salary so you are ahead of the game'.

**SH:** Brilliant. Is there any other dancer's career transition experience that you would like to share? I think you have said everything.

**CD3:** I have been a very lucky dancer in that respect, making that transition because it was so smooth, so enjoyable and I went into something not feeling I made a mistake and spent all the money that DCD gave me on something actually I am not going to do now and I'm going to move on. That has happened to dancers, my husband for instance. So I am lucky that it has all worked out really.

**SH:** Brilliant. Thank you.

### Appendix 3J – Sample interview transcript – Independent Dancer (ID3)

**SH:** This is an interview on the 15<sup>th</sup> July with [ID3] for Simon Harper's research study. So can you begin by telling me about yourself as a dancer? For example, when did you start dancing and when did you stop dancing?

**ID3:** I suppose I started full-time training at Elmhurst ballet school, so I started off thinking maybe ballet and then I graduated from there and I started to work straight away on cruise ships, so you leave when you are 19, just 19. So I went when I was 16 from Norfolk, went up to do that, then started dancing from the age of 19 well, in between jobs, working front of house, whatever else, but pretty much working the whole time until I gave up, I'm not sure exactly when, because I stopped doing full-time shows after [*production name provided – Organisation B*], so that was 2007 maybe, but then I was retraining and I kept doing a few bits and pieces of dancing and then since having [*child's name provided*] I haven't done any performance work.

**SH:** So you're a mum now?

**ID3:** Well I'm working but I'm a mum, I'm not finding it hard to juggle them both.

**SH:** We'll go on to that, career-wise, a little bit later. Can you tell me about the area of dance that you worked in, obviously the two areas I am looking at are ballet and musical theatre, so can you tell me about the sector of dance that you worked in?

**ID3:** Musical theatre mostly, that was most of my time. I never danced purely with ballet, but as I said I did some cruise ships, I did some tours, but mostly musical theatre, mostly West End shows or tours and some commercial stuff, things like that.

**SH:** How did you feel to be part of that, particularly the West End? Proud...?

**ID3:** Yes, it was my dream to do that, so it was literally a joy going into work. I really enjoyed it, I would have paid to have got my first West End job, you know, rather than the other way round, and then you begin to alter your views as time goes on. But yes, it was a real dream come true for me.

**SH:** How did you come to the decision of retiring from performance? I am looking at age, injury, was it your choice, security, family?

**ID3:** I suppose a few things were leading up to it. I suppose one of the things was that there weren't particularly many other shows coming in that were West End shows but really good for dancers and I had done some really good ones I felt. Also, the contracts were getting worse and worse and the money was getting worse and you were already having to double up your time, so having to teach as well. Also I had just got married and had been told by the doctor that I might have difficulties having a baby because I have polycystic ovarian syndrome so they said, 'you may have real difficulties', so I knew that I mustn't put it off. So

I was thinking having seen other people in shows have children and it not work out the way I would want, because it's not very secure, then I thought I would have to retrain. It truly wasn't because I wasn't getting any jobs any more, I was in [*production name provided – Organisation B*] and just decided, 'right I think I need to change'. Well, I say that, I retrained and then a whole new job sort of fell in my lap which had never happened before, and I either had to take it or not, so I took it.

**SH:** So how did you feel when the dance performing part of your career was coming to an end and you were faced with a career transition?

**ID3:** At the time I was quite- I remember being really upset last show and then I felt really pleased, 'ooh I've got my evenings to myself, and that is really fun and good'. And so at the beginning, yes it was much better, I thought, 'I haven't got to audition ever again unless I want to' and all of those stressful parts of it seemed brilliant, I could book a holiday in advance and all that squit, you know. And then, after a while, you really miss it so much, so then, I don't know, you've not really asked me that question.

**SH:** So a bit of mixed emotion really, you have kind of freed you up to do things.

**ID3:** Frees you up but then...

**SH:** A sadness...

**ID3:** But then very sad and very difficult then to be yourself, because you just don't know who on earth you are any more. Do you bring up the fact of what you used to do when you meet somebody new or when you're meeting new mums or teaching a new client? It is not really important any more but it still feels so much of you. Yes, so very difficult, very difficult actually.

**SH:** So do you feel that you had control of the situation? So I'm thinking did you feel did your confidence help, positive thinking, personal strengths?

**ID3:** Did it help what? The transition?

**SH:** The transition, yes.

**ID3:** Yes I think- it is still difficult now actually, so it is still something you're going through, I think, because I still keep thinking that maybe one day I'll go back, but yes, I guess positive thinking. I guess because I'm a mum now, so I need to not think of myself so much, but there are moments when I do and I do really miss it. But it is very easy to look back with rose-tinted glasses but yes, a lot of positive thinking, keeping yourself busy. It is difficult for me because my husband still has a show timetable, so therefore I am in every night on my own, unless I'm teaching, and then I'm leaving Chloe, so I don't want to do that, because that is why I gave up shows, so that is difficult.

**SH:** So when he talks about those kinds of hours and the schedules does that-

**ID3:** Wind me up?

**SH:** Wind you up or does it also remind you of, ‘oh my god, those are the reasons why I also left as well?’

**ID3:** Well I don’t know, I’m still in limbo, one minute I feel really envious of him because he gets to be part of a team and gets to play his instrument, which I know I never played an instrument, but you know, that outlet, which you don’t get that in anything else, that sort of escapism. So I feel very envious. On the other hand, oh and I also feel envious because, yes there are a lot of reasons why I guess I feel envious. But on the other hand I am with [*child’s name*] quite a lot, I am still working so I am not all the time with her, but yes I guess I do feel a bit of envy, I do.

**SH:** I think as an ex-dancer I think that is what is coming across really, is that on the identity side of it you will always be a dancer or a performer doing something else. I still very much feel a performer but I am now in an administrative role. So I will always feel a dancer that is doing that.

**ID3:** Yes, and people say, ‘so what do you do? Hi are you [*child’s name*]’s mum?’, yes I am [*child’s name*]’s mum [*child’s name provided*], I am not [*ID3 gave her first name*] any more, and then, ‘what do you do?’ and I have to say, ‘well I’m a pilates teacher and I teach dance’ and then they want to talk to you about it. And I think, ‘that is not really what I do! It is so boring! Don’t actually talk to me about it’, because I really feel like the real me is all that old stuff that people now don’t know anything about really.

**SH:** So that is the real you as far as another career was, wasn’t it really?

**ID3:** I suppose, yes. This feels like work now, whereas before it felt like it was a path somewhere, whereas this just feels like a job to earn money, which I am earning decent money, which is what I wanted. You have got to be careful of what you wish for.

**SH:** Yes. Do you feel you had enough external support around you when you were thinking about transition? So I am looking at did you receive any advice during the dance training years, support from an employer, a dance development agency, family and friends? Any advice?

**ID3:** Absolutely nothing apart from my mum saying, ‘you need to do something more secure’, because she is the poor person on the end of the phone when you are in between jobs and you’re worrying, ‘oh I am worried about money, my contract finishes soon’. So she was all for me retraining to do something else, and I was too. I had at college, at Elmhurst, qualified to teach, just with ISTD, dance but I have never actually used any of that in all the teaching.

**SH:** It is quite interesting because you trained at what is now a ballet school, predominantly and then you went into musical theatre.

**ID3:** Yes, and I could have not bothered with that, because I did my A Levels too at Elmhurst, because it was so expensive to be there I felt the pressure to just get as much out of it as I could. I have never used those either yet, I have never used the dance either really, maybe I will, as in I have been teaching at Arts Ed and Italia Conti and different places like that but you never really need the qualification, just experience really, do you think?

**SH:** Yes

**ID3:** So no, no, no, no support from any company that I worked for. I remember I needed some time off to complete a course on [*production name provided*] and no, it wasn't allowed, so I had to miss part of it and then pay to do it again. I thought, 'you could just give me a day off to complete my course!' but because somebody else had the day off I wasn't allowed, which is very annoying because I should have just gone sick like everyone else, but you try to do things the right way.

**SH:** And is that because of, just explain the holiday situation then in the West End shows. If someone else is off then that means...

**ID3:** Yes if someone else is off you're not allowed off. [*Organisation B*] was quite lenient in that you could take the odd day off in a week, whereas another company, if you wanted a Saturday off for a wedding, you had to take the whole week off. So that was really rubbish. You could make it to two social events maybe in a year if no one else had anything else on. So that is not good for family. So I get to do that now, but without [*husband's name*], single mum.

**SH:** So how did you feel towards your colleagues that are still dancing? We have kind of talked about that a little bit I guess.

**ID3:** Well, you know I separated myself from them so much at the beginning because I couldn't, I dared not go and watch a show in case I felt like, 'oh I have made a mistake!' I don't think I should admit to all this but I did, I didn't feel like I should go and see things in case I regretted my decision. And then now I go and see things and I just feel happy, it is so nice to see something live. Friends- I have seen all different things. Some people didn't, not bother, but didn't time it so they had retrained and then have had babies and they are in trouble, they are really struggling, some people have retrained and then, we are all feeling the same, that you miss what you used to do and it is very hard to integrate into social circles, especially with a child. Financially, you don't start off your life with a family with a good position because you never get chance to save any money in a West End show. Does that make sense?

**SH:** Yes. So how do you feel about the future now? Tell me a bit about your new career and how all that came about.

**ID3:** My future now in terms of my dancing?

**SH:** Your career.

**ID3:** Career, well as I say it just feels like work.

**SH:** So tell me about what you are doing and how you got there.

**ID3:** When I had just qualified in mat work to teach Pilates I met a lady in my village at the course who was retiring, selling up, had been teaching for 17 years in the area and she wanted to sell me her business. I just thought, 'I can't believe this, so simple', you have got to be careful what you wish for. So I thought, 'yes I will just do it and see what happens' and I sort of, for a year I managed to juggle it with other things, with a few cellophane gigs and bit for Ness and bit and pieces, performing stuff, a few TV things, adverts, a few things. And then it got less and less because I had to say, 'oh I can't make it to that casting, or I can't do this because I've got these jolly lessons I have got to teach and people are paying termly, so I have to be there'. So I have found now that agents don't call anymore, because when you are pregnant you are no good, when you have got a child-

**SH:** Pregnancy adverts, with a bump.

**ID3:** Well, no, because I was still working, I had to work, this is the terrible thing is that I am self-employed so this business that I bought, my secure business, meant I had to work up until [*child's name*] was, so I had three weeks and then she came and she was a week late, so I worked up until two weeks, which was ridiculous tapping and what have you. Then she arrived and I had three months off, which isn't very much, and I still think that has messed me up a bit in my head. And you have no cover, and no maternity leave, so that is awful and no one tells you that when you're, you know. So for the future? I don't know. I would like another child but I don't know because that would be very disruptive for everybody, I would like to go back into dance, I would love to do the odd bits and pieces but you have to be footloose and fancy free and I am not now.

**SH:** Yes so what about the training to become a Pilates teacher? That was obviously self-funded.

**ID3:** I had to pay for all of that. It was really expensive, for the course and then they say you have got to do 80 hours of further tuition and observing, so I am really pleased I am a bit of a square and did it before [*child's name provided*] arrived. I have some poor friends who haven't done that, have got their child and now need to pay for childcare as well, so I am pleased I did, but it used up any money I had.

**SH:** So you knew nothing about the Dancers' Career Development, DCD organisation?

**ID3:** I filled out, when I was going to do my first course, I filled out a form. A friend of mine who was doing an aerobics, because I did that too, to teach aerobics course, filled it out and it was so flipping complicated and they only have an adjudication panel every so often and it

didn't fall in the time I needed to do it in order to take over this school so I just thought, 'oh sod it, it is too complicated'. I just did it.

**SH:** And were you aware you knew anything about DCD while you were working? So was it advertised in dressing rooms or on a stage door notice board or did the Company Manager ever say that DCD were coming in to chat to you?

**ID3:** No, no, absolutely nothing. I didn't really know what it was Simon, I just didn't even know it existed really.

**SH:** Okay, so looking back what were the most positive aspects of the transition?

**ID3:** The most positive aspects, I suppose, are that I have more of a definite income, that must be it and that I can plan a bit better. I can do my term dates when I like, but still I am working for myself so it is equally as precarious really, so that is always a bit stressful. I get to have my evenings and it is less stressful, it is definitely less stressful than putting yourself through all of the auditions and everything else, yes.

**SH:** And what were the most negative or are the most negative, do you think, looking back?

**ID3:** The most negative things about the transition, I guess just not really knowing who on earth you are now and how to be because you just can't be that same person you were in a company, you just can't out there teaching 50 year olds pilates. That is so difficult.

**SH:** So saying that then, do you think having some sort of support network that was quite obvious to come in and for people to talk to you about interview skills or transferable skills, just skills that you learned as a dancer that are so useful in other industries, that could have really helped? Just having someone to talk to?

**ID3:** Yes, definitely, like even on my pilates course, so much of the anatomy side I really struggled with because I hadn't had to do anything like that for so long, and there is a whole way of speaking in an office that everybody else seems to understand and have conversations in that manner and we don't in theatre, it is very different. I think it would have been really useful for people to help you through that because I wasted such a lot of time not being able to communicate. I know it sounds really silly but I couldn't, I just didn't know. I felt frightened, I had no confidence whatsoever.

**SH:** I think also, during the day with West End performers as well, is that fact that we get so much free time during the day so there is the perfect opportunity to bring in some pre-transition ideas, planning. I am looking at ballet dancers as well who are often rehearsing during the day, they have done class in the morning, so their time is busier. So in a way a West End dancer's lifestyle would be easier for someone to come in and actually work out.

**ID3:** It would be easier but I bet you, and you probably won't want me to say this, it would only be me and you that would turn up, because I know like I was the one doing pilates to prevent myself getting injured. Hardly anyone else bothers to, or take class like ballet dancers



do, maybe because I came from a ballet school, maybe that is why, I don't know. But I know with Equity meetings and things like that, because no one has explained to you previously how important it is and how hard it is going to be. No one tells you, you just disappear.

**SH:** So I think people almost fear it in a way and I think if, like the ballet world, people could see positive transitions, see someone that has gone on to another career and show it in a positive way with all these great other avenues that are out there then that could maybe help people have a bit more confidence about attending those kind of workshops.

**ID3:** I think it really would. I have got lots of friends, and I am not blowing my own trumpet, but think I am doing really well, because I have taken over a whole school, I'm earning lots more money than I used to in a show and [*husband's name*] and I are managing to juggle it all, but I feel like, 'oh am I doing the right thing and is it right?' and it definitely would be better to, as you were saying, have some support. It would have been so helpful.

**SH:** But you have done it because of your own...

**ID3:** Only because I am frightened all the time of what is happening tomorrow. I think the difference between West End performers and ballet dancers is they are in a company so feel a bit safe, so they are fine to say, 'my shelf-life isn't until whenever'. When you are in a West End show you are always auditioning every six months or whenever, so for you to admit to everyone, 'oh actually I am thinking about stopping' is a bit of a frightening thing to say, because if your Company Manager mentions it to your agent who then says, 'what are you doing? That is a bit negative!' And that is really, really- that is what perhaps people will be afraid of too because you have always got to be seen on form and ready for your next audition because you might really, really need it. Is that true? I don't know.

**SH:** So do you have any suggestions or ideas that may improve the support systems for dancers? I have kind of got improved resources, knowledge sharing, employer sensitivity, communication with other dancers who have gone through the same thing, workshops.

**ID3:** I think definitely at the colleges people need to speak more, people need to know more because that is where you are doing your exams, that is where you are learning, that is when you are learning, it should be then, I think, so you plant the seed then. So then when you are having your fun in your West End shows or whatever you are doing you already know that this isn't forever and I must have a different mindset and therefore, that is why I had my mindset. I was never a rich kid who was like, 'oh yeah well if it doesn't work out it will be fine'. I always had to worry about that. Well I have and I think maybe that would be useful there. Then something, as you were saying meetings, as you are going along. Agents, why don't they help? They should help. They don't care, do they? They just want their cut, they don't really care. It is hard enough getting them to remember you anyway without saying, 'I am worried about my retirement'. But anyway.

**SH:** OK. Are there any other dancers' career transition experiences that you would like to share?

**ID3:** Oh god I don't know. In terms of what? What do you mean? What sort of stories?

**SH:** Just anything that you feel that we haven't covered. I think we have gone through employer support, DCD, so if you feel that you have...

**ID3:** DCD, I feel that a big part that you don't know is going to be that hard is the social side of it. That is really hard, that is really difficult and that I found ever so challenging, that no one seems to understand at all and when you talk to people. Also I think a lot of dancers don't want to admit it even. I was at an opening night of Shrek the other night and to actually hear somebody say, 'oh I really miss dancing' or, 'it is quite difficult' was so refreshing because I just thought it was in my head but it is quite normal. So it would be good to get people together but I don't know. Is that enough?

**SH:** That's great, thank you.

### **Appendix 3K – Sample interview transcript – Company Dancer Employer (CDE)**

**SH:** This is an interview with [CDE] who is the HR Director of *Organisation A*. The date is Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June and it is to help with a research study looking at policy and experience and practice of career transitions between ballet company and West End independent dancers. [Director's name] can you tell me about your job and the organisation you are employed by?

**CDE:** I am the Human Resources Director of [*Organisation A*], which is a touring ballet company employing, when fully staffed, 60 dancers. Do you need any more on that?

**SH:** No, that is absolutely fine, thank you. Do you consider that ballet dancers contribute to a successful industry?

**CDE:** Of course.

**SH:** Can you tell me about the career and professional development opportunities that you offer to dancers?

**CDE:** Yes it is quite varied actually. I have always tried to get hold of the dancers when they are relatively young to try and impress upon them the need to actually continue to learn throughout their career. It is quite tricky because they are not necessarily actually very interested in anything other than dancing and, in fairness, they probably haven't got an awful lot of time to do anything other than dancing either. But we have had some successes in that, in the main the younger ones, but not exclusively so, have undertaken some Open University modules, mostly but again, not exclusively, in things like Biology and Human Biology, something like that. They feel that not only do they gain intellectually, but they can also apply that back to their own bodies, how it works and to make it work better and so on and so forth. So I would say we have probably had, in total, it doesn't sound an awful lot when you think of it, about 10 or 12 dancers over the years that have taken these modules. So I have been quite pleased by that.

Obviously we subscribe to DCD so they do have the opportunity to go there and access funding for whatever they choose to do. The difficulty with that is that historically DCD, and quite rightly so, have maintained absolute total confidentiality on what is going on, which means to say that I can't tell you what the dancers have actually done because I don't necessarily know unless the dancers have been back to me to tell me what they have done. I personally think that DCD are a bit steeped in history there in the times when it was almost a sin to do something other than dance. Attitudes have changed so much now that companies really don't mind, as long as the work is being done, if dancers do start to think about what they are going to do when they are no longer dancing but nonetheless, that is why we really don't have a lot of information on what dancers have accessed. However I do know that there are some classic cases that we know of. Do you want me to go into detail?

**SH:** Yes, just a couple.

**CDE:** One dancer retrained to be a [name provided - this is a high profile dancer and the job title will give away name of *Organisation A* to those in the industry] so that was actually funded through DCD. Other dancers have gone through the process and they have retrained as

Pilates instructors and that sort of thing. So there is evidence that they are using that to their advantage.

We do have training weeks- every couple of years we have training weeks in the organisation that are open to dancers as well as all the other staff. There are a couple of pictures on the board there of dancers that did some I.T. training back in 2009. Not a huge uptake, it has to be said from the dancers. They are very welcome to but they choose not to, unfortunately.

**SH:** Do you think it is the dancers that are a little bit older and thinking about their transition that hop into that service?

**CDE:** No, not really, the example that you can see there, I think that was probably in [*dancer's name provided*] first or second year with us and obviously [*dancer's name provided*] has only been with us a few years.

**SH:** It is interesting that the three dancers you have got there doing the I.T. are the three that are doing the MA so they have obviously got a natural interest.

**CDE:** Their interest I think was about the time that they were about to take up the MA, so they thought, 'crikey, we had better learn how to get some skills on the computer.' So generally, I do find it really difficult to engage the dancers in anything other, maybe it is because they have so much else to learn that they don't have the time or the energy or the mental capacity for anything else.

**SH:** Just looking at my prompts here, what about the opportunities of the Company Management job share or dancers getting involved with the outreach projects?

**CDE:** There is definitely a lot of work- I can't give you details, [*colleague's name provided*] would obviously be in a better position to give you numbers and everything- but clearly there are opportunities there for dancers to get involved in the Department for Learning projects. We have not actually been able to convince dancers that that is a development opportunity, it is really an earning opportunity rather than a development opportunity, but nonetheless, even though it is paid for, they do actually develop different skills and we have got evidence for one of the dancers who retired from dancing and is actually working in that department now. So that has followed through, so that has been good.

The Company Management was something that we offered but wasn't actually followed through. I don't know if the dancer concerned was sick or something or whatever, it didn't happen so that was a shame.

Apart from that, one of the First Soloists did actually undertake the Company Management role when we had the [*name of tour*] Tour. He did it twice actually, and so it gave him the chance to see what it was like on the other side of the desk.

**SH:** Brilliant. It is all god experience isn't it? So what issues do you think a ballet company dancer might face when they retire from performance?

**CDE:** I think it falls very much into two categories. From what I have seen and the dancers that I have actually watched go through the transition, it falls into emotional and practical issues really. They have invested so much of their life in learning to be a professional ballet dancer that that is their life, essentially, and there is a huge emotional shift to have to accept

that, 'I have got to do something else now. Either my body has given up on me, or I am not able to reach the standards that are required'. Whatever reason it is, or if it is an injury, it is a huge emotional turmoil that they go through. So I think they do need an awful lot of support in that.

And then there is the practical side of it as well, the fact that, again, that is all they have ever done. It is a very rigorous, very strict environment where they are told where they should be, when they should be there, what they should wear, how they should look, where they should stand, how they should stand and all the rest of it. So they haven't had as much worldly wise experience as people who might have left school at 18 and had to just get out there and do it. So there is a lot of almost like a naivety really, without wishing to say anything that is unfair, but they haven't had to get out there and work in- hmm that sounds really mean, because of course they do, they go out and they audition instead of interviews and things like that, but it is a different sort of...

**SH:** But there is a bubble of protection.

**CDE:** There is a bubble, that is a really good way to describe it, yes. So I think from a practical point of view, they have never had to speak, for example. It is not an art form that requires you to speak, to actually have to come in and be interviewed by somebody and present yourself that way, rather than artistically, I think is practically difficult. Because, as I said before, they don't tend to want to do other things, they don't necessarily have those tools in their toolbox that they can just readily say, 'ok, well I'm just going to go and do something else now', so that is a practical difficulty. If they leave it too late then there has got to be that gap where, 'oh god, I haven't got an income now and I have got to learn something and I can't afford not to be earning'. That is another practical difficulty, I think, that they don't look at it soon enough. So definitely I think it comes into those two areas, emotional and practical.

**SH:** Brilliant. So who do you think should be responsible for the transition preparation support of a dancer leaving the performing side of their career?

**CDE:** I think the easy answer is to say that they should. They should really take responsibility for themselves but, again going back to what I said in the previous response, I think that dance schools really need to instil in the young people when they are going through school, 'look, this is it- however good you are, however wonderful you are going to be, there are not many of you that are going to be able to dance beyond 35, 40, pushing it really. And certainly the way things are going now in terms of the pensionable age going back and back and back, even as things stand at the moment, you have got another 25 years that you are going to need to work and get some income'. So I think that needs to be instilled from an early age, so the dance schools, the individual and I think the employer has a responsibility, a moral responsibility if nothing else, to try and engage dancers and support those dancers who want to learn to do other things.

**SH:** Can you describe the services that the organisation offers to retiring dancers?

**CDE:** I think if we go back to the answer to question three really; there are the Open University courses, DCD, training weeks if they are interested. I think that is it really.

**SH:** You have talked a little bit about the response and uptake to the support offered and you have made me understand really clearly about the difficulties really. I feel like you have answered that one.

**CDE:** That's it. The uptake of training weeks this time – [*colleague's name*] has actually been asking dancers as they have come in and literally there has been nil up-take. They are just not interested in being part of it, unfortunately. And the DCD is confidential so I only know those who have actually chosen to share it with me.

**SH:** OK. Does your organisation keep in touch with former company dancers in order to follow their transition experiences?

**CDE:** I don't, not formally anyway. There are one or two that will come back and we have kept in touch because I have had more to do with their departure than others but I don't have a formal link. That is just me. I am sure that the ballet staff or those that are much closer to the dancers will have that enduring relationship.

**SH:** Are there any future plans to provide more career transition support for retiring dancers?

**CDE:** I can't actually think of anything else that we could do. If you come across anything in your research then do let me know. I will happily have a look at it.

**SH:** Is there anything else you would like to add about dancers' career transition and their support post performance years?

**CDE:** I haven't thought of anything else but if I do I will let you know.

**SH:** Brilliant, thank you.

**Appendix 3L – Sample interview transcript – Independent Dancer Employer (IDE) -  
answers provided electronically**

**SH:** Can you tell me about your job and the organisation you are employed by?

**IDE:** Company Manager on [*production name provided*] in London. Employed by  
[*Organisation B - producer's name provided*]

**SH:** Do you consider that dancers (Ballet or Independent) contribute to a successful (Ballet or West End) industry?

**IDE:** I do consider that dancers contribute considerably to a successful West End

**SH:** Can you tell me about the Career Professional Development (CPD) opportunities you offer to dancers?

*Examples/prompts: Teaching opportunities  
Participation with Education / Outreach projects  
Company Management job-share*

**IDE:** As a commercial enterprise we do not offer any CPD opportunities to dancers.

**SH:** What issues do you think a dancer (Ballet Company or West End independent dancer) might face when they retire from performance?

*Prompts: Financial, Educational and Psychological*

**IDE:** They are faced with deciding whether to completely change their career or try and develop one connected to their industry. A lot of dancers don't earn a lot of money so it's not necessarily a change that will see them worse off financially. Psychologically I would assume that they would have known from a very early point in their career that it would be limited in time so I'm not sure exactly how much they would be affected. I would suspect dancers who have to retire earlier than anticipated - maybe through injury or pregnancy - might find the situation harder.

**SH:** Who do you think should be responsible for the transition preparation and support of a dancer leaving the performing side of their career?

*Prompts: Dance school*

*Employer*

*Self*

*Family*

*Friends*

*Dance support agency*

**IDE:** Dancers, like sportsmen, know that the career they have chosen is potentially limited. They have to take a large amount of the responsibility for this on themselves. Larger dance companies such as the royal ballet/ENB can presumably offer a lot more assistance but these are subsidised companies so the tax payer is ultimately footing this bill. Anyone in any profession can find themselves for a variety of reasons not being able to continue their chosen

career. In these circumstances most people can only fall back on any personal insurance plan that they have in place. My feeling is that dancers should do the same thing as a matter of course.

**SH:** Can you describe the services you offer to retiring dancers?

*Prompts: Pre-transition: Financial, Educational and Psychological*

*Post-transition: Financial, Educational and Psychological*

*Your organisation's relationship with Dancers' Career Development*

**IDE:** As a commercial West End show we offer no service to any retiring employee.

**SH:** What has been the response and uptake to the support offered?

**IDE:** Not relevant

**SH:** Does your organisation keep in touch with former company dancers in order to follow their transition experiences?

**IDE:** Not relevant

**SH:** Are there any future plans to provide more career transition support for retiring dancers?

**IDE:** No

**SH:** Is there anything you would like to add about dancers' career transition and their support post-performance years?

**IDE:** Only what I've added above really.



**Appendix 3M – Interview transcript – Dancer Support Agency (DSA1) – answers  
provided electronically.**

**SH:** Can you tell me about your job within the Dance Sector and the organisation you are employed by?

**DSA1:** I am [*job title provided*] of DCD and an independent member of the Board (previously the representative for *Organisation B*). Incidentally I am also Vice Chairman [*another English ballet company name provided*], which has a close relationship with DCD.

**SH:** What issues do you think a dancer might face when they retire from the performing part of their dance career?

**DSA1:** The issues dancers face on retirement are financial, educational and psychological. Either professional or academic courses they may need to take are now very expensive, particularly given the rise in university fees, so that ex dancers will almost certainly need substantial financial assistance. Only in exceptional cases will they have accumulated enough funds in their dancing career to cope with these demands, though there are many who have devoted their own money to courses while they are still dancing.

Obviously a majority of dancers will not have gone through higher education before dancing, so educational qualifications may well be required for their future employment. Some companies like [*Organisation A*] run excellent schemes to give them university degrees before they leave the Company. But there are, I think, few of these. Even dancers who choose to go into practical jobs, like carpentry, interior design, gardening, will mostly need to take a course, some of which are quite dear.

It is also almost inevitable that there are psychological problems when leaving the world of dance. It is an all-consuming profession, a way of life, a sense of belonging to a family, and to be cut off from that is sometimes traumatic. On the other hand our experience shows that dancers who have taken up careers outside, or inside, the dance world do succeed through the ingrained dedication and self-discipline they have acquired in dancing. And the professions they may have adopted, accountancy, the law, administration, can be demanding ones. A recent survey showed 89% of DCD retrained dancers are still in the profession they trained for, and 95% thought their retraining helped in their current career. But it is sometimes a hard transition and we have had a few examples of people who just can't make it, or find themselves only after several attempts and a long time.

**SH:** Do you consider that dancers from both Ballet and West End arenas contribute to a successful industry and so are entitled to support post performance?

**DSA1:** There is no doubt that dancers from ballet companies and the West End might all need support after they retire. Presumably some who have had particularly starry careers will not need that, and we know of many distinguished dancers who have not had to turn to DCD for help, though that help is open to everyone, irrespective of their distinction, and for years after their retirement. Few are those cases though.

In respect to DCD, as I will explain later, the scheme for helping West End dancers, and incidentally "arts dancers" from small modern groups or soloists has far fewer resources for helping. This means they will receive far less financially than dancers from the main Arts Council funded companies (again to be explained later).

**SH:** Who do you think should be responsible for the transition preparation and support of a dancer leaving the performing side of their career? *Employers, Self, Family, Friends, Dance support agencies*

**DSA1:** All your listed categories can or should be at least supportive of a dancer's transition. Their employers are more and more likely, like [*Organisation A*] to arrange educational help for their dancers, or to propel them through their organisations to senior positions within their companies, which may lead to great achievement elsewhere. Take the example of [*former Principal Dancer with Organisation A*] who was helped by [*Organisation A*] to take on responsibility in the company, then was helped by DCD and worked in various theatrical and dance companies, and has just been made Director of [*another English ballet company name provided*].

There is of course one problem. That is that dancers who want to retire may feel they need to keep their intentions unknown to their company's administration. That is because it may be felt that this knowledge could lead to his or her being passed over in casting, or promotion. That is why the members of DCD Board who represent the contributing companies (more of this later) ought not to be employees of their company but outside company board members. It is also an argument for the prime importance of DCD, since often dancers move from one company to another, and a dance company is hardly likely to support someone who has left for another organisation. DCD has an overall view of the career of a dancer and the length of that career. That is why transition support cannot be left to dance companies alone. (Again more of this later)

Naturally 'self' matters. You have to have the will to make good in adopting a new career. And it is all to the good when dancers can and do prepare themselves for this - and especially good when they can devote their own earnings to take on preliminary courses. But that isn't always possible. So their help must come from elsewhere.

Maybe family and friends can also support them. But they surely can't always be expected to. Naturally some do have family support.

4. (cont.) ...as you already know I believe that DCD as a dance support agency is the main organisation to help in the transition of dancers. I do not know whether any of the other agencies are particularly specialised in this, but I doubt it. There are other charities that have helped like Equity Charitable Trust, Acting for Others, The Royal Theatrical Fund, Royal Ballet Benevolent Fund, but as it were marginally. They will refer people to DCD in the main, or they may make grants to supplement the funds that DCD disburses. (Please refer later to the section on DCD work for the way other organisations provide DCD with funds)

Then finally the schools. Although most dance students don't want to think of retirement, many of them, certainly the main ones, host visits from DCD Executive Director, for her to explain what is on offer when a dance career comes to an end. This is important also for

students' parents who need to know that a necessarily shortish career can end with help for transition into new employment. More and more these visits are successful and welcomed. The schools themselves cannot necessarily directly help with later transition. But they can ensure students are aware.

**SH:** Can you describe the services your organisation offers to retiring dancers?  
*Pre-transition, Post-transition, Financial, Educational, Psychological*

**DSA1:** DCD Apart from publicising the work of DCD at the schools there are regular visits to all the main dance companies and to any possible gatherings of West End dancers to explain how DCD can help. Nearly all of these lead to one-to-one conversations with the Executive Director and to subsequent applications for help. She counsels people who need advice, she refers dancers to others who have been successfully retrained in the profession a dancer wants to enter, she counsels for psychological problems. This period of advice can go on for several months or years until an actual application for financial help is made. Equally a dancer may be referred to other welfare, private or government support providers (advice say on Arts Council support schemes, bursaries available etc.)

But before going on to the process whereby dancers qualify for retraining grants a word about the origin of DCD.

DCD was founded on the instigation of the Arts Council in 1974 as the "Dancers' Resettlement Fund", the name being changed later to "Career Development" as a more appropriate and more positive name than the word "resettlement".

Initially it was set up with the agreement of all the then major revenue funded dance companies, who undertook to pay an annual amount equal to 5% of their combined dancers' salaries to allow the organisation to give transition grants to retiring dancers. It should be stressed that the dancers do NOT contribute themselves directly to the Fund. But to qualify for help, dancers did and still do have to complete five years out of a professional career of eight years total with one or more of the participating companies. However if they had to retire through injury, then these time conditions didn't apply. A Board was set up with representatives from the Arts Council, Equity, representatives (Board members and not paid staff of the participating companies), and certain independent members.

In the 80's a Trust was also formed to grant funds to independent arts dancers (there were increasingly many who might belong to small groups who maybe got Arts Council project grants, but no revenue support). There were also independent dancers who performed on their own. Also, and equally important were the dancers from musicals, television, cruise ships. All of these could qualify under the same conditions: an eight year career with at least five years in the UK, unless of course they had been injured.

Subsequent to this the whole organisation obtained valuable charity status.

The funds available to that Trust, however, were very limited: contributions annually from Equity, from the Society of London Theatres, the Nureyev Foundation, the Macintosh Foundation, Acting for Others bucket collection and money raised by fund raising and fund raising events.

But that nevertheless meant that the grants available under the Trust scheme were literally a fraction of what the Fund Company dancers could expect.

Dancers have to apply formally by writing a letter and giving their career details once they have consulted and been advised by DCD staff and once they are certain what they want to do. These applications are sorted and then presented regularly to the main Board (Fund applications) and to the "Development Committee" (Trust applications) (the name "development" is used because in principle this group should work towards raising the much needed extra funds for non-fund dancers), Each section meets four times a year.

By the time applications reach these committees, nearly all are robust requests and receive grants. Only the non-fund dancers may be unable at the time to be helped because money is just not available, but the deserving are encouraged to apply again. There are also some special Trust bursaries set up in the name of people who have left legacies or regular contributors to Trust funds.

In exercising judgement about these applications...members of both committees do consider the practicality of future careers. But it must be said very strongly that there is no sense of prescription and very rarely is an application turned down for its impracticability. The extraordinary wide range of careers taken up is proof of this, though a high proportion of applicants opt for continuing in the dance world as teachers or the therapy professions: pilates, massage, osteopathy.

Often monies are given for business start-up expenses, not courses. In this case there are members of the board who are experts on commercial matters and help the applicants with their business plans.

Sometimes the grants can be spread over several years. Sometimes people return for a second or indeed third grant for another career. In these cases, and indeed in all, there is an understood maximum grant available. As I said the Trust dancers can, alas, normally expect only a contribution towards their real needs.

After transition DCD keeps as close as possible contact with retrained dancers. There is a "Facebook" scheme. There will be an index of retrained dancers and their professions. We often receive news of academic or other successes from them. And there is a DCD newsletter as well of course as our website.

This year, owing to the reduction in Arts council grants, the Fund companies have been given a one-off reduction of their contributions to 2.5% of the sum total of dancers' salaries. But DCD needs to maintain its resources, dancers may apply well after they leave their companies, and DCD covers dancers who move from company to company. So though the companies are now more reluctant to subscribe and have made their arguments forcefully (all because of their straightened circumstances) we can only hope that the previous arrangements survive, and that the annual contribution of 5% will be resumed.

One final point about DCD: we are affiliated to other dance transition organisations throughout the world, through an organisation called the IOPTD. The main members are the

Dutch, Stichting Omscholingerregeling Dansers, the Americans, Career Transition for Dancers, the Canadians, Dancer Transition Resource Centre, and a newly formed organisation in South Korea. *[name provided]* our Executive Director has just been appointed Vice chairman of OITPD.

With the Dutch we sometimes share the cost of grant giving to dancers who have had careers in Holland as well as the UK.

One final, final point: in the last year or so we have encouraged smaller dance companies *[company name provided]* to join the Fund scheme on a lower subscription basis since they do not normally perform for a whole year. Their dancers would then receive a lower grant on retirement.

**SH:** What has been the response to the support offered to ballet company dancers?

**DSA1:** I have no figures but the level of uptake from dance and ballet Fund companies is very high, and still increasing thanks to the current efforts to publicise DCD and its work. Certainly it is much, much higher than a few years ago.

**SH:** What has been the response to the support offered to West End independent dancers?

**DSA1:** As for the West End dancers and the independent arts dancers these categories are also increasing apace. To the extent that much more time is taken in counselling and advising these people by the DCD administration. And the applications that come to the Trust committee increase at almost every meeting. This is particularly the case when a meeting has to judge on applications for our bursaries after they have been advertised. Apart from the bursary winners, it is sad that so many others have had to be disappointed given the limitation on the regular funds also allocated at those meetings. But as I said most are able to apply again.

**SH:** In your opinion, what are the differences your organisation is faced with when reaching ballet and West End dancers with the information about the services you offer?

**DSA1:** Yes, there is more difficulty in getting information to West End and independent dancers than to the ballet and dance companies. Though the efforts are being made to do this, and more and more show dancers come to us through articles in the dance press or through word of mouth.

As for the Companies as I said there are regular meetings with their dancers and also with the major dance schools.

Contacts with the employers have been through the regular payment of subscriptions and through the Board members who represent the companies on DCD Board. The companies are however, given their financial difficulties, now wanting more reporting directly from DCD.

8 (part two) Up to now the main direct communication with the ballet and dance funded companies was through their annual subscriptions, requests for new representatives from their boards and the contacts with members of companies' staff who arranged the regular meetings between DCD staff and potential applicants among the dancers (though it was always hoped

that all the dancers would come, not just the near retirement ones). It was always understood that company board members who represented their company on DCD board would convey information etc about DCD to their company. However the experience of many of us who are or were company representatives, is that an item might be added to a company board agenda but mostly at the end and when it came up most of the board had left the meeting!

This year the Companies, being pushed for finance, and questioning the DCD operation, have requested regular financial reports from DCD, and these they will receive. We are reviewing our entire operation, setting up a Code of Practice, and establishing regular reporting to the companies. But it is imperative that we do not betray confidentiality in relation to company members' applications. If I have not stressed this before, I do so now. All applications to DCD are treated in complete confidence, be they from company dancers or independent or West End dancers. This is vital, as I have mentioned before, since Artistic Directors knowing an intention to retire might disregard a dancer when casting or promoting.

As for reaching West End managements, great efforts are made to do so. The same issue of confidentiality might well apply of course. But we have actively courted managements to ask them in particular to participate in our work, by offering them places on the Trust committee which looks at independent and show dancer applications. So far, though we did have one member, pressure of work made it impossible for him to come to meetings.

**SH:** Are there any future plans to provide more career transition support for retiring dancers from both arenas?

**DSA1:** Well yes. Always supposing we maintain our sources of funding and increase them for the non-company dancers. Already smaller ballet and dance companies who don't perform a full year are being encouraged to join the Fund. We would like to increase our maximum grant level, which hasn't changed for many years, while maintenance costs and course costs have increased enormously. We would dearly like to be able to increase our help to independent and show dancers, and there are moves to increase our fundraising efforts.

The answer to all these hopes is of course money!

### **Appendix 3N - Interview transcript – Dance Support Agency (DSA2)**

**SH:** This is an interview with [DSA2] and the date is Friday July 15<sup>th</sup>. Can you tell me about your job within the dance sector and the organisation you are employed by?

**DSA2:** Yes, certainly. I work for the RAD, specifically for the Faculty of Education which is the Higher Education arm of the RAD. We deliver teacher education programmes for a variety of different students or kids, one of which is the professional dancer who is looking, perhaps, towards retiring from performing and wanting to become a teacher. So we have a specific programme, a Professional Dancer's Teaching Diploma, which I think we started in the 70s, so it has been running for a long time, in recognition of the particular needs of the professional dancer but also the particular advantages of the professional dancer in terms of teacher education. So we wanted something that would recognise what they bring to the training as opposed to perhaps a traditional student who has done a degree or finished A Levels, coming from a very different angle. So that is our main contribution if you like, to the transition between dancer to teacher.

We also have a new scheme of continuing professional development, and that is for teachers already out there, at whatever stage of their teaching career, because, as we know, teachers, we are always looking, we always need to learn something new, we get a job where we are required to cover different kinds of material or with different kinds of students. So we have recognised that that is an ongoing need for our teachers and we are going to introduce in stages different distance learning, weekend workshops, one day workshops, revision. So our idea is that we have got a whole pathway from the dancer who has literally just stepped off the stage to well into their career as dance teacher.

**SH:** Yes I was reading all the information from the website that I printed off and I thought the distance learning was really useful.

**DSA2:** We are, I think, the only place that does the range of distance learning that we do. We have certificates, diplomas, degrees and a Masters programme.

**SH:** And it also means that having those opportunities when you are dancing and performing, it is having those opportunities out there that people can do whilst they are still performing and in preparation. So thank you.

**DSA2:** It is very important.

**SH:** So what issues do you think a dancer might face when they retire from the performing part of their career?

**DSA2:** I think there are several but probably some of the ones I have noticed the most having worked on the PDTD course is 1) that they want to remain in dance, and I think that is very understandable when you consider the amount of training and years spent, perhaps from the age of four or five, where ballet or dance has been their passion, through a performing career.

The retirement age for dancers is very low comparatively, you know whether it is 35 or 40, certainly too early to retire. So I think there are many dancers who want to remain and continue an involvement with dance or they go in a completely different direction and do something they have always dreamed of doing, whether it is opening a florist or, you know, going into some kind of business management. And I think that all circles, part of this desire is to hand on what they have learned and their experience to future generations, and I think this is where the aspiration to teach is so attractive to many dancers.

There are all sorts of employment issues obviously, it is much more professional, much more regulated now than it used to be. The idea that you can get a teaching job or work as a teacher without any kind of qualification is just not the way it is and I think that is right. I think the days when a dancer was just accepted that they would be a good teacher, many of them were, some of them weren't, so I think it is right that they go through some kind of teacher training. The other option of course, is that there are so many different kinds of dance teaching jobs available, that they might not always know the range, so they might be thinking in terms of their own training, which probably was at a vocational school of some kind. But it is much more diverse out there now, there is much more to do in terms of community dance, the vocational sector is there of course, or running your own private classes is another option, teaching in higher education, performance technique is another option. So I can imagine they do get quite confused.

**SH:** That is really interesting because I think just having an organisation that shows dancers the different avenues that are out there, because we can all become tunnel-visioned in one area.

**DSA2:** That is an important part of the programme. We have a module that is about professional studies, and it is that transition from knowing about the performance profession to knowing about the teaching profession, which is very different and we start with breadth across the range of possibilities, with the view that actually everything is possible if you want it, it just means that you choose different pathways. Our PDTD, as you probably know, is a three month intensive, it is a starter kit basically, it is the basics to get them out there, but it will then depend on where they see themselves longer-term as to some kind of continuing professional development additional things that we can provide for them. And I think that some are quite clear that they definitely want to teach in the vocational sector, which is fine, some very specifically want to work with very young children, which I think is a particular calling, it is not everyone's cup of tea. We make them teach young children here because our argument is that if you can teach very young children you can more or less teach anybody.

**SH:** So will you bring children in from a local school?

**DSA2:** We bring them in from a range of RAD associated schools that obviously are known to us and we mix them up. We don't hand-pick only high-achieving students, we think it is important that they teach a range of ability in the way that every dance teacher has to these



days. They are terrified, they would much rather teach advanced tier, but it is a really important step that they can cope with that really.

**SH:** Brilliant. So do you consider dancers from both professional and West End arenas contribute to successful industries and are entitled to support post-?

**DSA2:** Absolutely, and one of the things in the last four years since I have been managing the programme is that we have looked very carefully at recruitment and I have specifically looked for a broader range of dancers from the West End and ballet dance companies, because the commercial theatre is a huge employer but, more importantly, it is also huge in needing teachers. The number now of musical theatre colleges has really expanded in the last 15 years and they want good quality teachers, and again, you can employ any number of performers but they may not necessarily have the skills to teach week in, week out and develop vocational students.

**SH:** That is a really interesting answer, that is great.

**DSA2:** We have a range and we have got people who have literally, one who has just spent 15 years in Phantom, we have people from The Lion King quite regularly, quite a few of them. And they are very fast learners, if they have been a dance captain or a swing they are really, really quick at picking things up. They almost have a natural teaching management ability because of the type of the role they have put their mind to in the past.

**SH:** So do you think there is a difference in confidence and a different way in expression of self that works to their advantage?

**DSA2:** I think it does. I think they are very savvy, I think they are perhaps less- sometimes in a dance company you can become quite enclosed, almost like a sort of family unit, with quite rare opportunities to go beyond that. I think in the West End, when people work in productions they work with a huge cast, they move from one production to another and I just think there is something that builds confidence and that ability to pick things up because of the diversity of the choreography as well in the West End.

**SH:** Brilliant, thank you. So who do you think should be responsible for the transition preparation and support of a dancer leaving that performing side of their career?

**DSA2:** Well that is a really interesting question. I think employers certainly have a vested interest and I know that some of our students have some kind of contribution from either their current or future employers, not enough unfortunately, but it is good to see that it is beginning to happen. And, of course, the DCD Agency have been very good to us, we have always been one of the programmes that they have recognised. Initially the responsibility has to be with the professional dancer themselves, it is a career choice. And then I think as with anybody, they are responsible for getting the training and the qualifications that they need. I do think that we need specifically teacher training programmes for professional dancers. I think there is something specific, they need to be tailored. It is not so much that the duration may be

shortened, it is the pace at which you can teach the material is just that much quicker. They pick things up, we can fly through some of the material in one week with professional dancers that would take a lot longer with students or others. They are all supported by family in one way or another to give up everything and come here for three months, give up earning. Many of our professional dancers have got family commitments, children, husbands, partners, and of course they live from all parts of the UK and elsewhere. So it is a big commitment and it has to be led by the professional dancers themselves.

**SH:** Can you describe the services? I think you have kind of described those anyway. So I think that is absolutely fine, I think we'll leave that question. What has been the response and the level of uptake to the support offered to professional ballet company dancers?

**DSA2:** Recruitment to our PDTD is excellent, as I said we have taken 22 this year but I had, probably 35 applications. We have more applicants than we can possibly fulfil at the moment because there are so few. I believe that [*English ballet company name provided*] has one but I think it is very internal, I think that you are invited and from what I understand it is only for [*English ballet company name provided*] dancers as it is, whatever. So at the moment certainly there is that need there and we regularly get dancers from the big UK companies.

**SH:** And then what has been the response and the level of uptake to the support offered to professional West End independent dancers?

**DSA2:** Absolutely the same, absolutely the same. I think we are almost at a stage where we are sort of 40% West End dancers, it has really come up and also we are getting dancers who are undertaking our distance learning degree, our BA Hons Dance Education, because they can do those modules while they are performing, while they are touring, it is all distance learning. And that actually is a really good move because if you have a degree there are more opportunities as a teacher specifically to work in the public sector if you wanted you. Teaching is perceived, certainly by the government, as a graduate profession and, as we know, not everybody has a chance to do a degree at vocational training although, more increasingly, people's vocational training has become a degree programme, which is a real plus because it is more difficult for dancers without degrees to broaden their employment opportunities. So we open our distance learning degrees, they don't come in at the bottom, we can accredit prior learning, they might pick up a diploma level, for example.

**SH:** In your view are there any differences that your organisation is faced with when disseminating the information about the services that you offer between ballet and West End dancers?

**DSA2:** No we don't perceive dancers as any genre-specific or content-specific, and that is throughout everything we do. We do have some programmes that are specific to ballet, to the RAD syllabus, but beyond that we see dancers as dancers and certainly we don't, there is no hierarchy at all. And that is one of the things I really love about our programme now is that you've got Soloists from [*UK ballet company name provided*] working alongside West End

dancers with no kind of snobbery or hierarchy or feeling one is superior, quite apart from the fact that quite often West End dancers are ballet-trained, [UK ballet company name provided] included. So I think because they work together there is the mutual recognition of the different areas of strength and the different repertoires.

**SH:** So helping each other really?

**DSA2:** I think absolutely, and some of the young West End dancers who, either through injury or just lack of employment, want to go into teaching, they are highly ambitious, highly motivated, they have had a full professional dancer training, okay they haven't had a 20 year career, but they still can make really, really good teachers.

**SH:** It is interesting working for [Organisation A] and seeing *Director's name provided* work and how diverse that is between classical, jazz, tap, contemporary and it is that ability now in training and for dancers, as you say it is not necessarily genre-specific now.

**DSA1:** I think that as a teacher there are different types of dancing that you can teach, widening your employment opportunities again. In my day it was always ballet or modern dance, so you did RAD ballet and ISTD modern dance, and if you could do tap that was an extra sort of thing. And you needed those to make a living really and I think today is no different. To only be able to teach ballet is fine, and we need specialist ballet teachers, especially in the vocational sector, but if you want to run your own school it means you have got to employ other teachers to teach the modern or the tap or whatever else. So I think the broadening of that plan is better.

**SH:** Brilliant, thank you. Are there any other plans to provide more transition support for retiring dancers from both arenas?

**DSA2:** As I mentioned, continuing professional development. One of the things we look at there are things like managing a freelance teaching portfolio. Those are very specific skills needed to create a freelance career as a dance teacher. Certainly you need to know the profession and who the big employers are and how to put- on this programme they do a CV and a career action plan for the first three years of their career so that we know that they know where to look for jobs, how to go to an interview, how to present themselves. So they are the professional side of things. And those would be open, it doesn't matter if they are from the West End or a ballet company, the needs are the same really.

**SH:** Brilliant. Final question, is there anything else you would like to add about dancers' career transitions and the support offered to retiring dancers?

**DSA2:** No I think in some ways we are rather lucky because we do have a bit of a monopoly on the whole thing. On the other hand, I sometimes wish there were more providers and could provide differently. We can only offer once a year a three-month intensive and that suits a lot of dancers because of the contracts, space between. But there are others who might want to do

it on a less intensive, module by module, some distance learning and some weekend workshops or whatever. So part of me really wishes there was something like that.

I think the other thing is to find ways for the companies to be more informed so that the companies almost have a career transition input, like information particularly. And I have to say they are very good, certainly about directing dancers to us. And I think it would be really interesting as well to see if we can get some of these artists who have retrained as teachers teaching in schools, because kids really love it. It is only the government's qualifications and all sorts of bureaucratic things that prevent it from happening. But I think one of the things with the change in schools and higher education funding and teacher training is that maybe schools will realise that there is a whole workforce out there of wonderful artists and professional dancers who would be the best people to go in and teach workshops to kids that are repertory-based, a bit like some of the companies do, but they don't want to work full-time teaching in a state school, but it just seems such a waste.

**SH:** Sorry, you don't have to answer this because it is not a question, but it was just something that you said about company dancers, that companies often send dancers to you. Is that very much professional ballet and modern companies rather than an employer, say Cameron or Lloyd-Webber that would send dancers to you?

**DSA2:** Yes. No it is definitely the companies.

**SH:** West End dancers would come to you out of their own accord?

**DSA2:** Yes, as far as I am aware, and a lot of it is by word of mouth, of course. We regularly have five or six every year and they go back and they mention it and then of course you get more. We have a direct line, if you like, with [*Organisation A*] and [*UK ballet company names provided*] and some of the top vocational schools who have students who may or may not make it in the performance profession but would certainly make a good teacher. I would love to see the West End or commercial and some of the musical theatre colleges, but I think it is partly because we are still perceived as being only for ballet teachers. And at the moment we have not worried about that too much because recruitment is so buoyant but I think in the next two to three years we might look at making it- it is a Professional Dancers' Teaching Diploma, not ballet dancers. I think the problem is that if you take everybody, you can't teach all types of dance, so at the moment it is very much that everybody studies ballet vocabulary. Whether we might change that, I don't know, but I don't think we could have a Professional Dancers' Teaching Diploma for ballet, for musical theatre, you couldn't. And there is too much that is shared between them anyway, but I think generally speaking, the musical theatre and West End sectors haven't yet realised that we are perfectly able to provide for them. There are very few musical theatre performers who haven't done ballet before and whilst you do your teacher training in ballet you just apply the same teaching concepts and skills and strategies about managing a class, including every student, how to communicate, to whatever you teach, whether it is street dance or ballet, it doesn't really matter.

**SH:** Wonderful I think that is perfect to finish there. Thank you.

**Appendix 3P – SAMPLE interview transcript – Company Dancer (CD3)**

**Analysis process**

| INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT   | CODE FOR ANALYSIS                           |
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| <p><b>SH:</b> An interview with CD3 [<i>dancer's code used</i>] on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June. Can I start by asking you question one? Can you begin by telling me about yourself as a dancer - for example, when did you start dancing professionally and when did you stop dancing?</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> OK, I started dancing professionally at the age of 17. I finished up with high school and moved over to Atlanta, Georgia to join the Atlanta Ballet. That was in 1987. Previously to that I studied ballet just in a regional ballet school in St. Louis, Missouri, trained in New York every summer on our summer holidays at the Joffrey Ballet School and then at 17 was asked to join the Atlanta Ballet after being seen at a regional ballet festival. I danced in Atlanta for five years and at the end of the fifth year- well, just before the end of the fifth season there- my dad was speaking to me, saying that he thought I could dance in a company, get bigger and better roles and just more experiences in general. They were coming over to England at the time for a holiday (because my parents are English), so they said, 'why don't you come over to England and audition for some companies in England?' And the reason why they said that, going back to Atlanta, there was a lady from New York City Ballet setting a piece, a Balanchine piece, and she had just been at [<i>Organisation A</i>]. I was doing the lead role in Atlanta in <i>Theme and Variations</i> and she said, 'you could go to a bigger company. I think you have probably done enough in this company.' Even though it was a great company, it was a small regional company in the States, great for getting experience, but I knew I could do better. And she said, 'I have just been to [<i>Organisation A</i>], [<i>name provided</i>] is the director there, he is an amazing, very theatrical director. I think the style would really suit your dancing'. So she put the idea in my head and then my parents encouraged me and pushed me. So I came to England, auditioned for a few companies, but eventually decided on [<i>Organisation A</i>] just because of the feeling I got from the company, from the dancers. The atmosphere was very different from London-based companies and I thought it would suit my personality more. So I moved over in 1992 to join [<i>Organisation A</i>] and I danced there until 2005. I was coming up to 36 and thought it was a</p> | <p><b>KT</b></p> <p><b>KT<br/>AR TP</b></p> |

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| <p>good time to end my career. I felt I was still on a little bit of roll there but I thought I would get out of the profession before I started going downhill.</p> <p><b>SH:</b> So you have told me a little bit about the area of dance that you worked in and obviously that was the ballet world. Can you tell me a little bit more about that area of ballet and what it meant to you? How did that particular sector of the dance profession make you feel?</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> Well really ballet was the only thing I knew because I started off at the age of 5- I think I was 5- in a very classical ballet school in St. Louis. So I wasn't- I was exposed occasionally to things like jazz and modern, but it was always when we went to different ballet festivals, so I was in strictly classical mode from the very start. And it wasn't until the age of 13, when I was asked to go to Mr Joffrey's workshop in San Antonio, Texas that I really thought, 'right, this is what I want to do'. So I started going down to do workshop with him, which consisted of 30 young dancers from all around the States. Mr Joffrey ran the show there and took all the classes and we gave a performance at the end and he brought his dancers down from New York to inspire us and give different performances for us. So I was exposed to very classical ballerinas and male dancers from an early age. So the ballet world is really all I ever kind of wanted to be involved in because really I was in that bubble from a very early age.</p> <p><b>SH:</b> Great, thank you. Obviously these questions are about career transition, so how did you come to the decision of retiring from performance? I can give you some examples of de-selection, age, injury, free choice, security, you wanted to pursue other goals, careers, family.</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> I think it is a bit of everything you said. I always knew in the back of my mind that once dancers reached a certain age sometimes they were looked at differently, maybe the director- you know I had heard things that certain dancers of a certain age were being called in and asked what their plans were for the future, you know, hinting that maybe it was time to make a move. I never, I think for my own self-esteem, I never wanted to be kind of put in that position. Also, when I hit 30 I decided to do the dancers' degree and I think it was in those three years I started to kind of move away and open my mind, I would say, and see things outside this ballet bubble. From the go</p> | <p><b>Self EPT Ps</b></p> <p><b>Ps</b></p> <p><b>Self</b></p> <p><b>Peer Knowledge</b></p> <p><b>Ps Situation Age</b></p> <p><b>AR Ps</b></p> <p><b>AR ES Ps</b></p> <p><b>KT Ps</b><br/> <b>Ed PTP ES</b><br/> <b>EPT Ed Ps</b><br/> <b>Ps Ed</b></p> |
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| <p>of being a professional dancer I was seriously involved in ballet. You know, that was my life, I was what they call a bit of a ‘bun-head’- very disciplined and dedicated. It wasn’t until I got a little bit older and hit 30, started this degree that was opening my eyes to other things, and I just thought I began to become a bit, not tired of the profession, but maybe a bit tired of the routine, tired of the stress- I put myself under a lot of unnecessary stress my whole career, a very nervous dancer. I started to get a bit tired of all that, started to get a bit tired of what went on in a ballet company and just saw it for what it was. And then in my personal life I had met my husband who wasn’t my husband at the time ,but I knew we were serious and we had talked about our future and as a woman I wanted children. I didn’t want to do that as a ballet dancer, I wanted to become a mum and not have to work like that. So it was a combination of age, yes I wanted to end on a high, not have people looking at me in kind of disgust, I wanted to have children, I wanted to get married, I wanted to do something else, I wanted a life change, so it was a whole combination. I was ready, really ready.</p> <p><b>SH:</b> OK, thank you. I think you have kind of answered it really, but my next question is how did you feel when the dance performing part of your career was coming to an end and you were faced with a career transition? And did you feel it was sudden?</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> I don’t feel it was sudden because I am a super organised person. I am a planner, I had it all planned, I had my money saved, I had this real kind of plan of what was going to happen, so it wasn’t really sudden. I told [<i>Director</i>] a year ahead of time, you know I went into his office to discuss something else and said, ‘oh by the way, this is what I am going to do, I am going to one more year’. And I could see a little bit of that ‘phew I don’t have to give her the chat’, because you know, I could see that coming, so I thought I am going to tell him before he says anything to me. So I told him and he was probably very happy and very supportive and I think because I did that he made my last year incredibly special, gave me things that I wanted, you know first cast to Juliet, just made my year perfect. I was able to say do I have to do this? Can I not do Sugar Plum anymore? Can I not do that? So he made my year great. And I thought I was ready for that transition but the closer it got to the very, very end, think I was having- I could feel these emotions starting to run high. And then I ended my career in Hamburg doing</p> | <p><b>Self</b><br/><b>KT AR</b></p> <p><b>Ps EPT</b></p> <p><b>Ps Self</b></p> <p><b>MRT EPT VOL</b><br/><b>Self VOL</b><br/><b>AR KT</b></p> <p><b>MRT VOL</b></p> <p><b>EPT MRT</b></p> <p><b>Self PTP VOL</b><br/><b>Fi PTP</b></p> <p><b>ES</b></p> <p><b>Ps EPT Self</b></p> |
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| <p>Enigma Variations, which again was one of my- I have been doing that since I joined, beautiful role, beautiful music, very emotional.</p> <p><b>SH:</b> So do you think a lot of directors for lead dancers in the ballet world would really try and- do you think that happens for a lot of dancers? That the director might try and make their final year kind of special or do you think it just happened?</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> You would hope so. I think [<i>the Director</i>] was very nice to me and I think he did, not sounding funny, but I think he did respect me as a dancer because- not really for my dancing because I probably wasn't one of his favourites- but I was always professional and he made me very aware of that. And I think because of my years of service as a professional dancer, you know always doing what I was told and he knew I always worked hard and I think he rewarded me for that. You would hope it would happen for other dancers but no, I am sure it doesn't, I am sure there are a lot of directors who don't care. But when it came to Hamburg and it was my final performance and it was my leaving speech, Simon if you would have seen me, I was a mess, I was a big mess. So no matter how prepared you are for it, when it comes down to the very, very bitter end, it was extremely emotional.</p> <p><b>SH:</b> I bet. So you have talked a bit about your being a planner and details, so do you feel because of that, because of yourself and your personal characteristics that you personally had control of the career transition situation?</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> Yes I definitely had control and I think that is just kind of in my nature. You know I like to have control over things, I am very obsessive, very organised, if I am not I just can't function like that. So as soon as I made the decision that that was going to be my last year, that was it, I was right away making my plan, down to [<i>Director</i>] at DCD, had already been saving money for years because I knew. And at the time, even though [<i>partner</i>] and I were serious, I was still single and bringing in my own money and wasn't relying on him and, in the back of my mind, I never knew what was going to happen in the future really, so I made sure that I was secure financially on my own to get me through whatever I needed to get through that first couple of years and had the Dancers' Settlement all lined up ready to go way ahead of time.</p> | <p><b>Self ES</b></p> <p><b>ES Self</b></p> <p><b>ES</b></p> <p><b>ES</b></p> <p><b>Self Ps PTP</b></p> <p><b>EPT Ps</b></p> <p><b>Self PTP</b></p> <p><b>Self</b></p> <p><b>PTP</b></p> <p><b>AS ES CTSS</b></p> <p><b>Fi Self Situation</b></p> <p><b>PTP</b></p> <p><b>Fi</b></p> <p><b>PTP Fi AS</b></p> |
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| <p><b>SH:</b> So you feel that you had enough external support around you? So I am thinking about certain prompts- external support, advice during dance training, advice and support from your employer, advice from DCD for example, and then family and friends- do feel that was all there?</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> Family and friends- definitely. [<i>Organisation A</i>] I wouldn't say they gave me that much- of course they gave me support because everybody was so encouraging. I knew I wanted to be a Pilates teacher, I made that decision, everybody was very supportive. I wouldn't say there was any advice given from [<i>Organisation A</i>] but I wasn't really looking for that. I knew, I didn't really need their advice, I was ready to go out and finally branch out on my own anyway, but DCD was incredible.</p> <p><b>SH:</b> Did you know about DCD because of working with [<i>Organisation A</i>]? </p> <p><b>CD3:</b> Yes.</p> <p><b>SH:</b> Right.</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> And former dancers. But from the moment I went down to London and had meetings with them, wow that was a pretty amazing organisation.</p> <p><b>SH:</b> Do you think to you it was important having stories of former colleagues that had been through the same process as well and being aware of their experiences? Do you think that helped?</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> Yes I already knew that being in [<i>Organisation A</i>], Royal, how lucky we were, they are still, to have this organisation, which, coming from America and American companies, dancers just aren't looked after there at all, salary-wise or- I think it is starting to happen more, they are starting to help dancers with career transition, but I knew from all these stories that I was going to be looked after.</p> <p><b>SH:</b> So how do you feel towards your colleagues that were or are still dancing now? Do you miss performing?</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> Strangely enough, no. As emotional - I was sobbing like you wouldn't believe leaving that company saying my goodbye speech, couldn't even speak really, it was that</p> | <p><b>ES Peer Knowledge</b><br/><b>ES Ed</b></p> <p><b>Self AS CTSS</b></p> <p><b>AS ES</b></p> <p><b>Peer Knowledge Situation</b><br/><b>AS CTSS</b></p> <p><b>ES Situation</b></p> <p><b>Fi</b></p> <p><b>CTSS Peer knowledge</b></p> |
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| <p>bad. And I thought, ‘oh what is happening to me?’ I was all prepared and then on my last day I was uncontrollably sobbing. I flew back to England and I was flying out to America the next day and I do remember specifically that next morning leaving for the airport for America, I felt like a whole weight had been lifted off my shoulders. So I went from incredibly sad to feeling incredibly, just free-not from a terrible world I had been in but I was ready. The world was my oyster now.</p>  | <p><b>EPT</b></p>  |
| <p><b>SH:</b> That takes me on to my next question. So how do you feel about the future now, post-performance? And tell me a little bit about your new career.</p>   | <p><b>EPT</b></p>  |
| <p><b>CD3:</b> I feel, ever since I started retraining- I was quite scared to go and retrain in London as a Pilates teacher because I was so used to being in this family environment and being in this bubble where you were just safe. And, surprisingly I was in a group of 12 other trainees at Alan Herdman’s studio in London and it became, because a lot of them were ex-dancers, it became a new little family environment. Alan Herdman was amazing and we were in every day and it became very close-knit, and again, because a lot of them were dancers, they had that open kind of openness that dancers do, so I made friends instantly and I felt again very safe in that environment.</p>  | <p><b>PTP</b><br/><b>Ed</b><br/><b>Ps</b></p>  |
| <p><b>SH:</b> So looking retrospectively at the transition, what do you think the most positive aspects of the transition were for you?</p>  | <p><b>EPT Self</b></p>   |
| <p><b>CD3:</b> Well, financially, the help from DCD. That was absolutely amazing, even though I had saved money, because of my years of service with the company they gave me the full amount, so I didn’t have any stresses financially. Obviously I had [<i>partner</i>] backing me, so I know a lot of other dancers are never going to be in that position. I knew if I was in serious trouble, [<i>partner</i>] would be there to fall back on and by that point he had asked me to marry him so we were engaged. I think also just getting out into the normal world, meeting new people. I am energised now by meeting new people whereas when I was a ballet dancer, when new people came in I was probably quite reserved, like I see dancers now. Going back to your question about how I feel about my ex-colleagues and people who are still dancing, I am still friends with many of them, but I am very aware that when I go back down there that there is a little bit of something</p> | <p><b>AS MPA</b><br/><b>Fi Self PTP</b></p> <p><b>AS Fi Ps</b></p> <p><b>EPT</b><br/><b>EPT</b><br/><b>Ps Self Situation</b></p> |

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| <p>between us now, almost as if they can't communicate with me the way they used to, which is a bit weird.</p> <p><b>SH:</b> So you mentioned your Masters, do you think your Masters has really helped give you a voice as well? Do you think doing that further education, has then helped with the transition, having that opportunity?</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> Definitely. Oh yes, and I think doing the Masters made me a much more confident person because I noticed the more I did that- obviously I was getting older, I was 30, 31, 32- I noticed I was much more confident as a dancer. I didn't care as much what people thought of me, whereas before I would be crying after performances, being pathetic, worrying what people thought, if I was too fat, wasn't good enough, just that kind of ridiculous mentality that a lot of dancers have. So definitely the Masters changed me as a person.</p> <p><b>SH:</b> Retrospectively again, looking back at the career transition, what were the most negative aspects, if there were any?</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> I would say there weren't many. I think I went maybe through a period, after I left the ballet, a little bit of identity an crisis, maybe a tad. My body- I went from extreme, extreme exercise to really chilling out and enjoying life in London and putting on a bit of weight. I had a bit of a freak out about that because I thought, 'ooh my clothes are all tight and I'm looking a bit different'. I had a bit of a moment there, but brought back down to reality by my husband and myself really. And things all worked out and I realised that, again, that is a dancer's mentality. But, no, there weren't many negative aspects at all for me, fortunately.</p> <p><b>SH:</b> So do you have any suggestions or ideas for things that may improve support systems for dancers facing a career transition?</p> <p><b>CD3:</b> I just say to any dancer, like I say to people now, just make sure you are prepared. I think a lot of dancers take for granted the fortunate situation they are in down there, the salaries, the security and I think they forget that the career is actually short and sometimes your retirement happens before you think it is going to happen, through injury or whatever. So I always like to say to people, 'you had better be prepared, mentally, financially of course and</p> | <p><b>EPT</b></p> <p><b>KT Ps</b><br/><b>Ed Self EPT</b></p> <p><b>Ps Self</b><br/><b>Ed Self</b></p> <p><b>Ps Self EPT MNA</b><br/><b>Ps EPT</b><br/><b>EPT</b><br/><b>Ps</b><br/><b>MNA</b></p> <p><b>PTP CTSS</b><br/><b>AR INV VOL</b></p> |
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