

The arts, social inclusion and social class: the case of dance

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This article places the results of an empirical research study on the relationship between the social class factor and young people's perceptions of dance within the context of recent British government initiatives promoting social and educational inclusion through the arts. Four Likert-type dance attitude scales that were developed from pupil opinion expressed during prior discussions were included in a survey questionnaire and responses sought from a nation-wide representative sample of 1298 11–16-year-old boys and girls. Analyses of the data showed that attitudes to aspects of dance varied with social class and that there was an interaction between gender and social class in just one instance. A major implication of the research is that dance and the arts should be more widely available in schools so that *all* children and young people can have access to aesthetic experiences that have the potential to improve quality of life. It is concluded that the current limited provision within the National Curriculum may be contributing to the social and educational exclusion of some pupils.

Introduction

An interesting, relatively recent initiative on the part of the British government is the promotion of social and educational inclusion by means of involvement in the arts. To this end enterprises have focused predominantly on the major art forms (music, visual arts, drama and dance), encouraging participation particularly of young people, as audience members, creators or performers in the arts and other creative activities. The aims of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), for instance, include reference to 'an improved quality of life through the arts' and by using the arts, a reduction in 'the number of those that feel excluded from society' (DCMS, 2004). An earlier report (DCMS, 1999) states that 'arts [and sports] can tackle not only symptoms of social exclusion but also its causes' (p. 28), while

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Miliband (2003) sees artists and musicians as part of the 'support staff' to promote creativity in education and underlines the 'key links' that creativity has with social inclusion.

Among the government policy initiatives promoting social and educational inclusion through the arts are Creative Partnerships programmes launched in 2001. Long-term partnerships between all types of schools and the cultural and creative industries are funded predominantly by the DCMS (2004) and according to the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER, 2004, 2005), are currently active in 16 areas of England that score highly on indices of social and economic deprivation. The NFER (2005) is conducting an evaluation of these partnerships (2002–2005) to ascertain if there has been any increase in voluntary participation in creative and cultural activities among participants, as well as the overall impact of the programme on key groups. A search of the NFER website shows that as yet no evaluation report is publicly available but that regular confidential progress reports are submitted to the evaluation Steering Group and a draft final report to Creative Partnerships in January 2005.

Although Creative Partnership programmes extend across all DCMS sectors, not just the traditional arts, various artistic agencies also have a significant role. A report by Doherty and Harland (2001), for instance, examines the implementation of 23 creative arts partnerships in education by CapeUK. The latter receives core funding from the Arts Council of England and contributes to the DCMS/DfES Creative Partnerships (CapeUK, 2003). It includes as part of its research and development 'Creativity and Social Inclusion', particularly in relation to young people in the 14–19 age group. Creative Learning Partnerships in Manchester works with young people at risk of exclusion from Manchester schools through creative activities in collaboration with a network of creative organisations, schools and community groups. It supports creative practitioners to work through the arts in schools and social exclusion contexts in partnerships with over 30 agencies in the UK and is currently working with a network of European partners to develop forum theatre techniques in supporting activities with socially excluded young people (CapeUK, 2003).

Literature currently available on initiatives to promote social and educational inclusion through the arts includes a number of small case studies on the use of the arts to remotivate and re-integrate pupils into school (e.g. Tranter & Palin, 2004) or encourage learning in core curriculum subjects (e.g. Wetz, 2004). Additionally, charitable organisations such as the Gulbenkian Foundation are funding a number of arts activities in pupil referral units and learning support units, for instance that described by Pigneguy (2004), and research including a longitudinal element, exploring the perceptions of all participants is in progress (NFER 2004). The conviction that arts involvement can motivate children and young people to engage in learning also underlies the current Scottish Arts Council's (2005) Arts Across the Curriculum project.

A more therapeutic role for the arts in schools, promoting social and educational inclusion via 'emotional well being', is also suggested (e.g. Karkou & Glaser, 2004),

a proposal that raises issues concerning the relationships and distinctions between arts education and arts therapies (e.g. Sanderson, 1996; Karkou & Sanderson, 2000, 2006) and the 'Arts for Health' initiatives (e.g. Arts Council of England/Department of Health, 2005).

An aspect of inclusion and the arts that seems to have received relatively little attention from researchers is the influence of the social class factor. Furthermore, young people's perceptions of the arts and how these might vary with social class is also neglected, as Lord's (2002) research review for the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority illustrates. In both cases dance is particularly poorly served. Yet this kind of information could be regarded as fundamental in the promotion of social and educational inclusion via arts participation, not only in terms of: remotivating and re-integrating pupils into school, enabling learning in other curriculum areas or providing opportunities for emotional expression, but also in terms of reducing social stratification. In raising these matters the educational value of arts experience in its own right is also pertinent. This article seeks to address these issues with particular reference to dance by reviewing relevant literature, reporting the findings of an empirical research study focusing on the social class factor and young people's attitudes to dance and discussing in the light of those results the implications for government policy concerning the role of the arts in promoting social and educational inclusion. A critical reflection on the research and methodology forms part of the conclusion to the article. The research and the article were motivated by the writer's long-standing teaching and research interests, and enthusiasm for all styles and types of dance, especially within an educational context.

The arts and social class

The prevailing view of the arts as pursuits enjoyed predominantly by the middle and upper social classes has support from empirical evidence, albeit most of the research is restricted to adults. Crozier and Chapman (1981), for instance, conclude from cross-cultural research that there is greater variability in aesthetic preferences *within* rather than *between* societies. Vervev (1989) shows that in Britain attendance at ballet and other 'high arts' venues declines with social class, while Dimaggio and Useem (1982) report comparable figures from the USA, Canada, France and the Netherlands for ballet, modern dance and other art forms. These investigators also demonstrate that by contrast, the differences in social class attendance at popular concerts and films is considerably smaller. Audience research involving adults aged 16 and above undertaken by the Arts Council of England (ACE) (2001), reveals that those from the managerial and professional classes are most likely to have attended plays, concerts, art exhibitions and operas. Prior (2005) suggests that there is little, if any, change in the social composition of visitors to art museums who continue to be drawn predominantly from the professional middle classes with high levels of 'cultural capital'. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital has been influential over several decades, stimulating debate on the implication of cultural processes and practices (such as artistic interests) in the reproduction of social division as well as

developing understanding of the relationship between social class and educational equality (Savage & Bennett, 2005). Interim results from the national survey component of an ESRC-supported study focusing on the relations of culture and class in contemporary Britain and involving art, music, literary and media fields, broadly confirm the trends reported by Prior and others (Bennett *et al.*, 2005). O'Brien (1996) and Harland, Kinder and Hartley (1995) drew similar conclusions from their samples of young people among theatre dance audiences.

ACE (2004) provides details of its 'New Audiences' initiatives whereby arts companies are funded for specific projects intended to encourage those from lower social groupings to develop an interest in the art form. The web page lists 102 such initiatives for dance, involving a wide range of types and styles from Asian dance to ballet; the evaluative reports of the dance companies involved are also posted. These projects are often innovative and varying degrees of success are recorded. The level of actual increases in audiences from specifically lower social groupings is, however, questioned in the dance companies' own research reports. The Birmingham Royal Ballet, for instance, comments that despite its best endeavours there was only a limited increase in the numbers of those from lower social groupings during their residency in Sunderland, a city in the north-east of England. The audiences increased in size but this was because greater numbers from the middle classes took advantage of the cheap tickets advertised, often travelling some distances from Sunderland in order to do so. Details on the gender composition of audiences were not recorded, although these would also have been of interest.

Arts in schools

Overall, the various government enterprises outlined earlier could be regarded as encouraging in that they appear to signal recognition of the value of arts experiences, facilitating 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 2005) by involving artists and others from outside the school environment. These initiatives, however, contrast significantly with the provision for the arts in the National Curriculum (QCA, 2005). The recent *Excellence and Enjoyment* strategy document (DfES, 2003) for primary schools and the QCA (2004) supporting guidelines promote creativity across the curriculum which is laudable, but artistic activity as valuable *in its own right* receives only limited recognition. Furthermore, government initiatives and support for the arts through agencies such as CapeUK, while apparently affirmations of the *intrinsic* value of artistic experience (Reid, 1969; Meakin & Sanderson, 1983) are fundamentally means toward ends that are primarily *extrinsic* (DCMS, 1999, 2001). The arts within the National Curriculum remain minority subjects at all levels for most children, and therefore despite the various government-funded arts initiatives, the limited experience of the arts in schools is likely to contribute to the social exclusion of some pupils: in effect they are being denied the opportunity to benefit fully from a range of cultural forms. The latter include the various styles and types of dance flourishing in Britain and are not limited to those currently accorded high legitimacy in society (Bourdieu, 1984). The National Campaign for the Arts

(NCA, 2004) sums up the situation: 'at present there is a deepening concern that arts within a formal educational context are being increasingly marginalised' and 'Members also expressed their concern about the continuing lack of provision for the arts in schools'. Brehony (2005) concludes that despite the 'Excellence and Enjoyment' strategy, the limited opportunity for arts experience is particularly apparent at primary school level where the emphasis is on literacy and numeracy and there is little evidence of any serious intent on the part of the government to place creativity at the heart of the primary school curriculum. Brehony also points out that any government emphasis on creativity seems to be directed at secondary schools, a view supported by an examination of the literature on creative partnerships referred to earlier. Downing *et al.* (2003) report head teachers' and teachers' expressed view that they perceived pressure from national and local government to 'downgrade the importance of the arts' (p. viii); they also comment on the rare incidence of specialist arts teachers at the primary level and that most teachers of this age group have experienced at best only a very rudimentary acquaintance with any of the arts during their pre-service training. It seems from the evidence that aesthetic knowledge and understanding is insufficiently valued by policy makers at all levels of education.

Among the arts in schools, dance is particularly poorly served (Sanderson, 1996, 2001). In both the National Curriculum (QCA, 2005) and the *Excellence and Enjoyment* strategy document (DfES, 2003) it is designated a constituent of physical education in primary schools, but receives scant acknowledgement in either publication. In secondary schools the situation is scarcely improved by its status as an optional activity. It is paradoxical that, although dance is regarded as a creative art within all of the government's recent initiatives, within the National Curriculum it is a part of PE where objectives seem to militate against a focus on the intrinsic value of dance as aesthetic education (Meakin & Sanderson, 1983; Sanderson, 1996; Eisner, 1999; Bannon & Sanderson, 2000; Sanderson, 2001). There are few qualified specialist dance teachers in schools and unsurprisingly therefore, Harland *et al.* (1995) report that the numbers studying dance during school years are very small (between 1% and 7%). Harland *et al.* (2000) found that dance was offered by just 32% of secondary schools for 11–13-year-olds and 23% for the 14–16 age group, in 22 secondary schools surveyed; comparable figures for art and music were 91% and 100%, and for drama 64% and 68%. This restricted provision is reflected in GCSE dance examination entries (Sanderson, 2001).

Attitudes to dance

Sanderson (2001) presents a fairly comprehensive review of dance attitude research, revealing in the process the relatively limited quantity of work available; school-based studies, especially those including the social class factor, are particularly scarce. Yet knowledge of children's perceptions is important, for positive attitudes are necessary for learning to take place. Attitudes are not innate but acquired and schools have a role to play in their development, including the nurturing of a positive approach to the aesthetic dimension of dance.

Dance, interpreted in its broadest sense to include all styles and types, is evidently an immensely popular leisure-time activity with members of all social classes (Hendry *et al.*, 1993; Harland *et al.*, 1995). Richey (1996, 2004) argues that such involvement in 'popular culture' should be complemented by experience of 'high culture' (and vice-versa) and in order to facilitate this both cultures should adapt and adjust, 'borrowing' practice. His vision is of a 'two-way process' and a 'two-way culture' and it may be the case that the recent government initiatives outlined earlier provide opportunities for promoting this idea. Prior (2005), as reported by Savage and Bennett (2005, p. 6), argues that 'the operation of contemporary commercial cultural markets has undermined the rigid high/popular culture polarity that characterized Bourdieu's account in *Distinction* [1984]'. Thomas (1995) also suggests a 'blurring' of the traditional high culture/popular culture boundaries in recent dance forms, especially those labelled 'post-modern'. The need for a more flexible approach seems to be supported by the research of both Pool (1988) and Ross and Kamba (1997), who report negative attitudes to dance *in school*, with boys in particular expressing disappointment in the type of dance experiences provided. Freedman's (1988) view that 'popular arts' should be valued equally with 'high arts' adds support and Ross (1984) argues that aesthetic education should not be an induction into the 'artistic predilections of a privileged social minority' (p. 28), thereby questioning the assumption that the so-called 'high arts' are always the best or most appropriate sources of artistic knowledge and understanding. Eisner (1999) agrees that students' experiences should not be limited to the 'fine arts', adding 'arts education is about helping students to become alive to the aesthetic qualities of art and life in the worlds in which they live' (p. 156), that is, developing an aesthetic attitude. Willis (1990) also challenges the narrow interpretation by policy makers and teachers of the arts in schools that excludes to a large extent the creative dance styles developed during recreational activities. On the other hand there are educational philosophers, including Greger (1972) who argue that the acknowledged 'classic' arts in all their forms (literary, visual and performing) offer the greatest opportunities for depth and richness of aesthetic experience, because of their 'layers of meaning'. The realisation of potential aesthetic experience does, however, depend on opportunities for sustained acquaintance, whatever the style or type of the artistic expressive form and regardless of categorisation as a 'high' or 'popular' art. Most young people perceive the arts as irrelevant, according to Harland *et al.* (1995), and these negative attitudes could be due to inadequate opportunities offered in schools for arts experiences within the National Curriculum. This finding, however, also raises further questions surrounding concepts of 'the arts' that may be held by young people.

It seems from the literature that some forms of theatre dance, especially ballet, provoke strong reactions of either a positive or negative nature. Sanderson (2001), for instance, reports on the influence of age and gender, on adolescent aesthetic attitudes to different styles and types of dance, using a large sample of adolescents. It was found that girls displayed more positive attitudes than boys towards both ballet and the male dance artist (including contemporary and theatre dance performers as

well as ballet dancers), but in contrast, there were no differences in attitudes to dance in general. Burt (1995) perceives widespread negative attitudes to the male dance artist, and argues that if the art form as a whole is to acquire audiences more representative of the population, then changing such attitudes is of crucial importance. Harland and Kinder (1999) found that the idea of watching ballet did not appeal to 14–18-year-olds, although the sample of just 20 was too small to draw firm conclusions. However, typical comments of teenage girls included: ‘ballet will probably be for girls, really girl types and posh’, while an 18-year-old male remarked that he would be ‘quite embarrassed to be sitting in an audience’ (p. 73). These and other reported responses are in line with those encountered by Sanderson (2000) in her discussions with groups of 11–16-year-olds, namely that ballet is ‘boring’, ‘pointless’, and a ‘high-class activity’.

Wartenburg (1981) has argued that the very movement of classical ballet is elitist, with ‘a sense of refinement’ one associates with the upper classes of society and with nothing of relevance to other social classes. There is some historical support for this argument, in that ballet is rooted in the courtly gestures of sixteenth-century France. Wartenburg seems to restrict the point specifically to the ‘classical’ ballet form, and according to Thomas (1995), contemporary ballet choreography incorporates various dance influences including theatre and popular dance ideas and movement styles. Research involving British audiences referred to earlier shows that ballet—and especially classical ballet—does seem to be valued predominantly by the upper social classes, in contrast to other countries such as Russia, where appreciation of the ballet aesthetic seems to be embedded within the culture and, as the composition of audiences reveal, the art form enjoys wide popularity (Sanderson, 1984).

However, it seems that the limited appeal to young people of dance as a performing theatre art is not confined to ballet, for contemporary dance choreography has also been subject to criticism, albeit for different reasons. Although Sharp and Dust (1997) emphasise the benefits of bringing professional dance companies into schools in overcoming barriers such as unfamiliarity and helping to change negative perceptions, both Sanderson (2001) and Woolf (1983) also raise the crucial issue of the *nature* of the work presented in both theatres and schools. Castle *et al.* (2002), following interviews with members of ten dance companies involved in education work, report that many companies had concentrated on an ‘*experimental*’ or ‘*elitist*’ repertoire which could alienate audiences by being less accessible. Castle *et al.* (2002) also underline the importance of sustained dance experience if the ‘more esoteric aesthetic, intellectual and spiritual dimensions are to be grasped’ (p. 4), supporting to some extent the point made earlier on the necessity of long-term involvement in order to explore the ‘layers of meaning’ of an art work (Greger, 1982) but also raising questions regarding the suitability of some professional dance companies’ work in schools. Sanderson and Savva (2004) further discuss the role of artists working in the school environment.

In its strategy document, *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2003), the British government seems to acknowledge the importance of parental influence on children. Because attitudes are not innate but learned (Ajzen, 1984), the influence of family

background on young people's attitudes and perceptions of the arts is likely to be significant, even more so given the overall low level of arts provision in schools referred to earlier. Drawing on the Mass Observation Survey completed in London in 1990, both O'Brien (1996) and Harland and Kinder (1999) report that adult respondents' own attitudes towards individual art forms related predominantly to those of their parents. Harland *et al.* (2000) add that pupils who perceived their parents to be interested in dance were more likely to be involved in that art form and according to Harland *et al.* (1995) many respondents, especially those from professional families, report a 'family osmosis' effect in developing their interest in the arts, with the mother cited as particularly influential. Harland *et al.* (2000) also report from a sample of 278 young adults that parents in Social Classes I and II were more likely to be perceived by their children to have an interest in the arts across all art forms. Such evidence reinforces the need for increased dance provision within the National Curriculum, for continued neglect of this area could contribute to social class inequalities.

In view of the severely limited empirical research available of either a qualitative or a quantitative nature on aesthetic attitudes to dance of adolescents, and especially that investigating any influence of the social class factor, the following study was completed. The overall motivation was to add to the current meagre information available on what the literature has revealed as an important, yet hitherto neglected, aspect of education.

Research design and methods

Aim

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of social class on secondary school pupils' aesthetic attitudes to dance, including any interactive effect of the gender variable.

Sample

The sample for analysis comprised a total of 1298 pupils, aged between 11 and 16 years, 44% males, 56% females, drawn from 19 mixed secondary schools located in the five main geographical areas of England. Each area included inner city, suburban and semi-rural schools. Sampling was purposive in that efforts were also made to include schools that offered GCSE dance (signalling some interest in the subject) among the 19, as well as those schools with a particular focus on the arts. The aim was to try to achieve a representative sample of the age group in terms of dance experience, awareness and interest, as well as gender and social class. Although ethnicity was not included as a variable, the procedures followed in the selection of the schools ensured that the final sample included children from various ethnic backgrounds. Social class was determined by pupils' descriptions of both their male and female parents' or guardians' occupations (if unemployed the most recent occupation), with the higher of the social ranking used. Pupils from Social Class group I (i.e. professional

backgrounds) constituted 28.6% of the sample; 30.5% were from Social Class II (i.e. managerial backgrounds); 12.3% from Social Class III NM (i.e. skilled non-manual backgrounds); 13.6% from Social Class III M (i.e. skilled manual backgrounds); the numbers from Social Classes IV and V (i.e. semi-skilled and unskilled backgrounds) were combined to make a total viable for analysis of 15%.

Method

Attitude is usually described as a predisposition to respond to an object in a positive or a negative manner. In this article attitude is defined as ‘the amount of *affect* for or against an object’, in accordance with Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), who argue that affect is determined by a person’s beliefs and behavioural intentions and so attitude is sensory-cognitive in character. All attitude scales, including the Likert-type response scales used in this study, are therefore measures of affect, according to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980).

In the research reported here, the interpretation of the term ‘aesthetic’ is based on that of Reid (1969), whereby dance is valued ‘for its own sake’ and not *primarily* as a means of entertainment, keeping fit or conveying a story. The intrinsic qualities of the dance constitute the major focus of perception: the rhythm, line, shape of the movement; and the overall structure and form. Attitudes to the aesthetic dimension of dance can therefore be either positive or negative, in varying degrees of intensity.

The study employed dance attitude scales developed by Sanderson (2000). These 5-point (Strongly Agree—Strongly Disagree) response scales enabled pupils to be judges of statements that had been generated from prior discussions between the writer and small groups of adolescents who had varying dance education, social and ethnic backgrounds, in six schools in the main geographical areas of England; these schools were not included in the subsequent survey sample. Discussion was stimulated by a short videotape compiled by the researcher that comprised excerpts of a wide range of types and styles of dance. The scales were developed from this theoretical base and were also influenced by the arguments of Glaser and Strauss (1968) and Strauss and Corbin (1990), whereby theory is developed from data rather than imposed, reflecting what is *actually* going on rather than what *ought* to go on.

Content analysis by the researcher of the transcribed discussions produced an initial bank of 70 items reflecting adolescent opinions. These 70 statements with the addition of a 5-point scale were included in a questionnaire that was completed by an initial sample of 368 adolescents, from four inner-city and suburban mixed secondary schools with varying dance provision and pupil backgrounds in the north-west of England. Four attitude scales emerged from the factor analysis of the data and were given titles reflective of content by the researcher. Factor analysis is a statistical technique that uses positive and negative correlations between the variables (in this case the responses to the 70 statements) to develop a smaller set of components, thereby producing an empirical summary of the main underlying factors. Illustrative examples of the attitude statements comprising the four dance factors or scales are given below.

- Ballet (ten attitude statements), e.g. 'ballet is just jumping around in a pair of tights'; 'ballet can look so beautiful'.
- Dance in General (six attitude statements), e.g. 'some kind of expression and communication is very important in dance'; 'a dance is better to watch with a story behind it'.
- Male Dance Artist (seven attitude statements), e.g. 'If you saw a man dancing to really soft music it would look stupid'; 'I don't like to see boys doing expressive movement'.
- Dance Performance (six attitude statements), e.g. 'costumes in dance should be bright and cheerful'; 'a dance must be done properly with the music, costumes and set in order to enjoy it'.

Various statistical procedures were completed in order to determine the level of confidence that could be placed in the scales as measures of adolescent aesthetic attitudes.

Reliabilities and validities were calculated initially using this sample and were confirmed subsequently with a nationwide sample of 1668. Cronbach's alpha (a measure of reliability) for each of the scales was found to be satisfactory: Ballet = 0.78; Dance in General = 0.67; Male Dance Artist = 0.80; Dance Performance = 0.69. Product moment correlations provided evidence of the validity of the scales as distinct measures of aesthetic attitudes, with inter-correlations of between - 0.07 (Ballet–Dance in General) and 0.46 (Male Dance Artist–Dance Performance). Confirmation of the factor structure was forthcoming by the recovery of the scales virtually intact from the factor analyses performed on the responses to all 32 statements comprising the four scales. Construct and content validities may therefore also be claimed, and as the scales were developed from the pupils' own statements, internal validity. The complete scales and a critical account of their development are available in Sanderson (2000, 2001).

This inventory, along with a number of measures including social class and gender, comprised a postal closed questionnaire survey. Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the completion of the research. The teachers administered the questionnaire in accordance with written instructions from the researcher. Positive aesthetic attitude statements were scored 5–1, SA–SD respectively and the reverse for those statements expressing a negative aesthetic attitude. Scores were calculated for each scale and constituted the four dependent variables; social class and gender were the independent variables. The data were analysed by means of four two-way ANOVAs (Analysis of Variance) using the SPSS-X computer program.

Analysis of Variance is a powerful analytic tool that is widely employed in educational research. It is used to compare two or more means to see if there are any reliable differences among them, for instance the mean Ballet scale score of male and female adolescents or any differences in the means according to social class of the scores on the Dance Performance scale. The variance of a set of scores is a measure of their dispersion. When several samples are taken, as in this research, the variance *within* each sample can be separated from the variance *between* the samples. When the separate sources of variance *between* samples are compared to those *within* samples,

then the F-ratio can be used to determine whether they are statistically significantly different from one. This process is known as ANOVA (Youngman, 1979).

Results

The complete ANOVA tables are collected together as Table 1. The major focus in this article is on any influence of the social class variable on four scale scores, and

Table 1. Analysis of variance in scale means by social class and sex

Source of variation	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F value
Scale 1. Ballet			
Sex	1	8229.94	142.39**
Social Class	4	662.49	11.46**
Social Class & Sex	4	334.95	5.8**
Individuals within Social Class&Sex	1289	57.80	
Total	1298		
Scale 2. Dance			
Sex	1	477.67	30.34**
Social Class	4	73.22	4.65**
Social Class & Sex	4	21.44	1.36
Individuals within Social Class&Sex	1289	15.74	
Total	1298		
Scale 3. Male Dancers			
Sex	1	4715.17	114.59**
Social Class	4	728.08	17.69**
Social Class & Sex	4	23.93	<1
Individuals within Social Class&Sex	1289	41.15	
Total	1298		
Scale 4. Dance Performance			
Sex	1	34.41	2.33**
Social Class	4	139.52	9.43**
Social Class & Sex	4	14.41	<1
Individuals within Social Class&Sex	1289	14.79	
Total	1298		

Notes: Degrees of Freedom (df) is always one less than the total number of categories within a group e.g. sex =2-1, giving 1 df.

The Mean Square (MS) is calculated by dividing the appropriate Sums of Squares of deviations from the mean, by the df.

F is the most important value. The F-value is calculated by dividing each MS (the variance between groups) by the variance within groups. The significance of the F value is determined by comparison with the critical value in accordance with the Degrees of Freedom of the variables involved. Significance can be calculated from ‘Critical Value Tables’ but is also included as part of the ANOVA calculations by a computer programme such as SPSS-X.

** indicates significance of the F value at the .01 level. This is sometimes written as a probability i.e. p<.01, a fairly high level of confidence.

* indicates significance at the lesser .05 level (p<.05) placing acceptance at a lower level of confidence.

Table 2. Mean scale scores and standard deviations (SD) according to social class

	SOCIAL CLASS				
	I	II	IIINM	IIIM	IV&V
SCALE					
Ballet	30.47	29.30	29.39	27.58	26.29
SD	7.66	8.60	7.98	8.00	7.68
Dance	16.33	16.64	16.62	16.73	17.82
SD	3.79	4.16	3.71	4.15	4.19
Male Dancers	24.91	23.61	24.01	21.89	20.54
SD	6.38	7.03	6.57	6.65	6.60
Dance Performance	13.50	12.96	12.59	12.00	11.68
SD	3.97	4.07	3.59	3.59	3.50

Notes: The mean is the arithmetic average score on each scale, of the samples in each social class categorised according to parents' or guardians' current or most recent occupation.

I = professional; II = managerial; IIINM = skilled non-manual; IIIM = skilled manual; IV and V = semi-skilled and unskilled (combined category).

Standard Deviation (SD) is a measure of the spread of scores around the mean, e.g. a mean of 11.68 +/- 3.50 reveals that the majority of the scores in this instance lie between 15.18 and 8.18.

Table 1 shows that there are main effects (significant at the .01 level) in the case of each scale. The interest in the sex variable lies in any link it may have with social class in influencing attitudes, and the table indicates that although there are no such interactions in the case of the Dance, Male Dancers and Dance Performance scales, there is in the case of Ballet.

The distinct main effect of the sex variable on attitudes has been explored by the author elsewhere (Sanderson, 2001).

In order to ascertain more precisely the nature of the differences responsible for the main effects of social class, the mean scale scores were examined; Table 2 shows that the influence of the social class factor varies in the case of each scale.

Table 3. Mean scale scores for ballet for boys and girls in each social class

	SOCIAL CLASS				
	I	II	III NM	III M	IV and V
SEX					
Girls (G)	33.05	31.17	31.33	28.84	26.69
Boys (B)	25.31	25.55	25.51	25.05	25.51
Differences in mean scores (G-B)	7.74	6.62	5.82	3.79	1.18

Notes: The mean is the arithmetic average score on the Ballet scale, of the samples of girls and boys in each social class category according to parents' or guardians' current or most recent occupation. I = professional; II = managerial; IIINM = skilled non-manual; IIIM = skilled manual; IV and V = semi-skilled and unskilled (combined category).

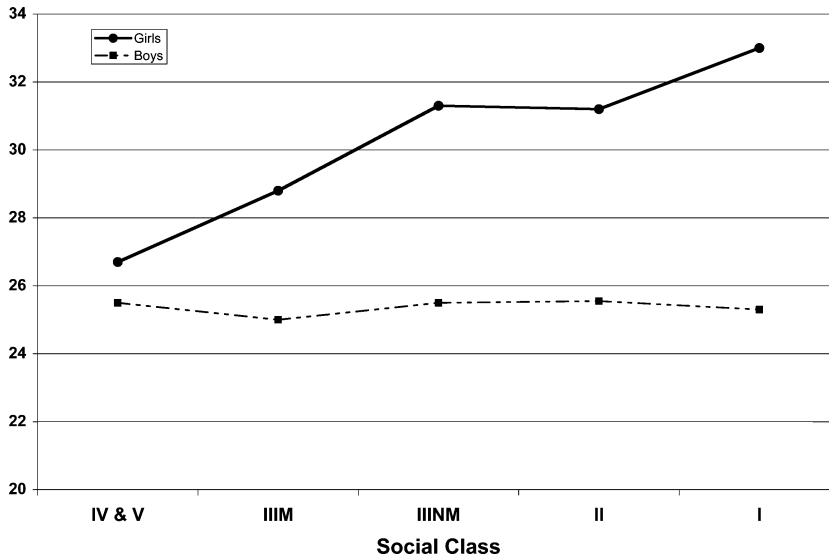


Figure 1. Mean scores by gender and social class

Results for the *Dance* scale reveal an overall increase in scale scores between Social Class 1 and Social Class IV/V, with the clearest evidence of positive attitudes displayed by the latter group. The incidence of any statistically significant differences between the means of each of the categories was explored using t-tests. These tests showed differences at the .01 or .05 level between the attitude scores of the Social Class IV/V group and each of the other groups. No significant differences, however, were found between the mean scale scores of any of the other social class groups, indicating that the trend otherwise is quite 'flat'.

According to the results of t-tests there are statistically significant differences at the .01 and .05 levels, in the Social Class means of the *Male Dancers* scale with two exceptions: no such differences were detected between the mean of category IIINM and those of Social Classes I and II. Overall, the means show a clear decrease between groups I, II, IIINM on the one hand and IIIM, IV/V on the other.

Although the mean attitude scores for the *Dance Performance* scale show an overall mean decrease between Social Classes I and IV/V scale scores, t-tests indicate that there are no significant differences in the means of adjacent Social Class groups. Significant differences, however, occur between the means of any other social class pairing.

Aesthetic attitude scores on the *Ballet* scale decrease overall between Social Classes I and IV/V, although t-tests show no significant differences between groups I, II, IIINM, while there are such differences between members of that group and IIIM, IV/V.

Table 1 shows that while there are separate main effects of social class and sex, there is a statistically significant interaction between these two independent variables in just one instance. Only in the case of the *Ballet* scale is there a combined effect of

these two variables on the attitude scores. While Table 2 shows an overall decrease in *Ballet* scale scores between Social Classes I and IV/V, more detail is revealed in Table 3 where results are presented in accordance with both the sex and social class variables. The pattern of the scale scores is illustrated in Figure 1. It can be seen that the sex differences decrease with social class, and it is this which underlies the social class and sex interaction. There is little change in the attitudes towards ballet of boys from the different social classes as the mean values remain virtually the same, whereas for girls the change is pronounced, with the most positive attitudes coming from those in Social Class I and the least positive from girls in Social Classes IV/V. Within each social class, the results of t-tests show that there are statistically significant differences ($p < .01$) in the mean scale scores of girls and boys with the exception of Social Classes IV/V where there are no significant differences in the means.

Discussion

This discussion is organised into two sections. Initially the focus will be on an interpretation of the results in accordance with each scale and in the light of the literature reviewed earlier. This will be followed by a consideration of overall issues raised by the study, the implications for government policy for dance and arts education, and the role of the arts in promoting social and educational inclusion.

Social class emerges from the study as an influential factor in determining adolescents' perceptions of dance, although its impact varies with each scale. In the case of the *Dance* scale there is a small, gradual increase in positive attitudes between Social Classes I and IV/V, with a statistically significant difference between the latter group and all other groupings. The constituent statements of this attitude scale are about dance and dancers in general and the results suggest a similar aesthetic interest among young people in a concept of dance that is wider than one limited to designated art forms such as ballet. Furthermore, as the sex variable does not interact with social class and so no differences in attitude have emerged due to the combined effect of these two variables, the results apply to all adolescents in the sample. Harland *et al.* (1995) and Hendry *et al.* (1993) have previously confirmed that dance is an immensely popular leisure-time interest with members of all social classes, but it is interesting that from the research reported here, members of Social Classes IV/V express the most positive aesthetic attitudes, appreciating the intrinsic value of dance itself, whether as a participant or an observer. Perhaps this group has a broader, more substantial experience of dance outside of school compared with their peers and they have 'become alive to the aesthetic qualities in art and life in the worlds in which they live' (Eisner, 1999, p. 156), giving a measure of support to Ross's (1984) questioning of the assumption that the so-called 'high arts' are always the best or the most appropriate sources of aesthetic understanding. It could also be speculated that this group has developed its own 'community of practice' (Wenger, 2005) of dance enthusiasts out-with the school environment. Freedman's (1988) advocacy of 'popular arts' and Richey's (1996, 2004) arguments for 'borrowing'

practice from both 'high' and 'popular' cultures within arts education should therefore be given serious consideration, more so in view of the negative attitudes to school dance experiences reported by both Pool (1988) and Ross and Kamba (1997). Prior's (2005) view that the high/popular culture polarity of Bourdieu is outdated, having been undermined by 'contemporary cultural markets', is also relevant.

A conclusion drawn from the review of literature was that that the theatre dance form of ballet seems to provoke strong reactions of both a positive and a negative nature and this is confirmed to some extent by the results of this research. For example, an interaction between the social class and sex variables occurs only on the *Ballet* scale, although an examination of the mean scale scores shows that this result is not straightforward. While it may be unsurprising that boys in this country hold more negative attitudes to ballet than girls (a supposition confirmed by Sanderson, 2001), the additional finding that this perception is held by adolescent males across all social classes is less predictable. The literature shows that ballet is generally regarded as a 'high art' and audience research studies (e.g. Vervey, 1989; O'Brien, 1996; ACE, 2001) regularly indicate that it is an upper and middle social class pursuit. However, as indicated earlier with reference to the Arts Council's 'New Audiences' initiative (ACE, 2004), the gender composition of audiences is less frequently reported.

It seems from the results of this research that the most positive attitudes to ballet are those of girls in Social Classes I, II and IIINM, reinforcing a perception reported by Harland and Kinder (1999) that ballet is only for girls, 'real girl types and posh' (or possibly those aspiring to be regarded in this way), and giving some support to Wartenburg's (1981) view that this dance form is of little relevance to the majority. It is also noteworthy that there are no significant differences between the opinions of girls in the lowest social groupings and those of the boys. Wartenburg argues that the very movements are elitist although a more basic explanation may be that most ballet gestures, costumes and subjects are strongly associated with a society and an era that appear incongruous to most young women and men, having little resonance with their own lives. The finding also raises issues regarding the place of ballet in our culture and whether or not it has a role in schools in promoting social and educational inclusion. It is also interesting that despite the claim of Thomas (1995) that today many ballet performances 'slip[s] across into the domain of popular (mass) appeal' (p. 2), this does not seem to be the prevailing image among adolescents.

The results of the *Dance Performance* scale show that, as with the *Dance* scale, the social class factor is operating independently of the sex variable. It is interesting that there are no statistical differences between *adjacent* scores and standard deviations confirm the very gradual reduction in average scale scores, indicating that although there are some differences between social groups these are small and adolescents of all social classes have broadly similar attitudes to dance performances. Dance performances occur in all kinds of venues: theatres, city streets, community centres, schools, clubs and work places (ACE, 2004) and involve the whole panoply of dance forms. It is worth noting, however, that the scale scores of all social classes are not

high, suggesting that perhaps a critical aesthetic appreciation of a *performance* in terms of a central interest in the dance itself, its intrinsic qualities such as the clarity of the movement, its rhythm, the structure and form, is not well developed among adolescents in general.

Although there are some similarities in the pattern of social class scores for the *Male Dancers* and the *Ballet* scales, there is an important distinction in that there is no interaction with the sex variable in the case of attitudes to *Male Dancers*. It is also interesting that, taking into account the number of statements in the scale, the mean aesthetic attitude scores are relatively high across all social classes indicating that despite the 'dip' in the means of members of Social Classes IIIM and IV/V, overall attitudes to the male dancer among young people are positive. These positive responses may be interpreted as reflections of the widespread interest in dance among all young people (Hendry *et al.*, 1993; Harland *et al.*, 1995). Dance is a socially inclusive aesthetic interest that is usually pursued for its intrinsic value during leisure time not least because of the limited opportunities for dance education within the National Curriculum. Meanwhile the arts experiences offered by recent initiatives are not *primarily* for the purposes of aesthetic development but rather for extrinsic ends.

Further considerations

The study suggests that the relationship between the social class factor and attitudes to dance of young people should be taken into account by policy makers as part of their avowed quest to promote social and educational inclusion. A major implication of the research is that dance should be more widely available in schools so that *all* children and young people are able to benefit from participation as creators, performers and informed observers. It is argued that the absence of a strong representation of the arts in general, and dance in particular, within the National Curriculum may be contributing to the social and educational exclusion of some young people.

The results of the empirical study have shown that among adolescents there is aesthetic interest in dance although the nature of that interest varies with social class, raising a number of questions centring on provision for dance education in schools. The arts do not feature to any great extent within the National Curriculum and, although critics including the NCA (2004) have campaigned against the marginalisation of the arts, the situation has not improved. Brehony (2005) illustrates the limited opportunity for creative arts experiences at primary level adding that in the year 2000 primary schools were told that they could cut back on subjects such as art, music and PE (including dance) to concentrate further on these areas. This concurs with Downing *et al.*'s (2003) report that head teachers and teachers perceived pressure to reduce any emphasis on the arts. Such directives have a particular impact on dance, which scarcely features in either the *Excellence and Enjoyment* document or indeed the National Curriculum. The primary stage of education is generally acknowledged as crucial in the development of concepts, knowledge, understanding

and attitudes that are fundamental to progress at later stages of education. This should apply to all subjects and areas, including the aesthetic form of understanding. Opportunities should be extended to all children, more so to those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and while government accepts this tenet regarding language and literacy it does not seem to do so as far as the creative arts are concerned.

The neglect of the arts in school is long-standing and government policy has exacerbated that neglect. A high value is placed on knowledge of a discursive nature in the National Curriculum whereas that gained from involvement in the arts, as creator, performer or informed observer, is accorded much less status. Government's interest in the arts and creativity as a means of social and educational inclusion does not seem to be based on a conviction of the intrinsic worth of creative arts experiences, but primarily as the means to other ends: to remotivate and re-integrate pupils, to improve language, literacy and mathematical attainment and increase emotional well-being. Greger (1972) believes that everyone is capable of aesthetic experience but that 'many have had this capacity rendered sterile by ... an education that lays all the stress on analytical reasoning' (p. 149). Reid (1983) has argued cogently for 'acquaintance' knowledge (the direct knowledge gained from contact with the arts) to be regarded as of equal importance within education as propositional knowledge. According to Reid (1969, 1983), aesthetic education is about learning to experience different kinds of feelings and emotions through involvement in the arts. Reid, along with Best (1985), Redfern (1983, 2003), Sparshott (1982), McFee (1992) and others, is referring to 'cognitive feelings', that is, conscious affective experiences that contribute to the development of the whole person, not just the rational being that seems to be the prime purpose of the current National Curriculum and the government initiatives. The development of positive aesthetic attitudes may be regarded as part of this educational process, for attitudes are sensory-cognitive in character.

Expression and communication of feelings and emotions within the artistic form should, however, be distinguished from emotional release; Sanderson (1996) argues that the latter has clearer links with the developing field of arts therapies. Within the therapeutic situation, self-expression, self-reflection and creative activity are encouraged for the purposes of self-healing, not developing aesthetic awareness, knowledge and understanding which are major objectives of arts education. The distinctions and links between therapy, health and education are explored further in Karkou and Sanderson (2001, 2006).

While securing a more substantial place for dance within the National Curriculum based on its *intrinsic* value is crucial in ensuring that opportunities for aesthetic experiences is not dependent on social background and interests, consideration of the nature of the dance experiences offered is equally important.

The gradual growth in general dance interest between social classes I and IV/V with a significant increase among those with semi- and unskilled social class backgrounds suggests that the wider concept of dance and the arts proposed by Richey (1996, 2004) and others should be taken into account in curriculum

planning. The dance curriculum should therefore be constructed to take into account the interests of all young people in popular dance forms. Richey's vision of a two-way process and culture, whereby examples of both 'high' and 'popular' cultures are experienced, with both cultures adapting, adjusting and borrowing from each other, could be a means of promoting social and educational inclusion in schools.

An extension of the argument in support of a wider conception of dance in schools is that a *critical aesthetic attitude* should be developed so that children can learn to appraise all types and styles of dance, including their own creations and performances as well as those of others, in terms of the quality of movement, structure and form. Children need to be educated to recognise works that satisfy aesthetic criteria, whether these arise from 'popular' or 'high' art genres and cultures, not least because, as Prior (2005) has argued, rigid polarisations represent an outdated concept of art. Besides, as Redfern (1983) and Best (1985) confirm, the question of what constitutes an art form has occupied philosophers for generations with little consensus emerging. The concept of 'art' changes: there are numerous examples of artists (e.g. van Gogh) whose work was rejected in their lifetime only to be applauded subsequently as examples of genius. However, demarcations regarding what is or is not 'art', let alone what should be categorised as either 'high' or 'popular' art, are becoming increasingly irrelevant especially with the rapid development of new art forms, not only conceptually but as a consequence of the enormous and growing impact of new technologies.

Some time ago Willis (1990) argued for the inclusion of the creative dance styles developed by children during their recreational activities, complaining of the narrow interpretation of the arts by teachers and policy makers; Ross (1984) makes a similar point when he concludes that aesthetic education should not be an induction into the 'artistic predilections of a privileged social minority' (p. 28). On the other hand, while not in any way subscribing to such an 'induction', Greger (1972) believes that well-chosen examples of the 'classic' high arts offer particular opportunities for aesthetic education because of their 'layers of meaning', and Smith (1987) argues that such art 'has the capacity not only to intensify experience but to enlarge the scope of human awareness' (p. 88). Smith adds that his view is not 'snobbish or elitist' but is based on his fervent belief that all children should have the same opportunities to enjoy and benefit from the works of great artists. This stance is consonant with that of Bourdieu who, according to Bennett (in Savage & Bennett, 2005, p. 6) maintained that inequalities of access to art works represented 'significant inequalities ... in the ability to access and take part in cultural activities whose value is both historical and universal'. In the case of dance, the main examples of 'high art' classics arise from ballet (although modern dance classics have also emerged predominantly from the USA) and the limited appeal of ballet to adolescents of all social classes (apart from some middle- and upper-class girls) is clear from the study reported here. Nevertheless, and in view of the arguments of Richey (1996, 2004), Greger (1972) and Smith (1987), perhaps some experience of this dance form as a critical audience member

could be considered as making a useful contribution to dance education via the development of critical aesthetic perception. If this is considered desirable then the choice of ballet examples will be crucial, for it is evident from the study that the current image of ballet among many adolescents and especially boys may have been determined by nineteenth-century 'classics' such as 'Swan Lake' and 'Sleeping Beauty', and this is a barrier. The contemporary ballets referred to by Thomas (1995), and now available on videotape and DVD, could be employed alongside the best examples of dance works from various sources and cultures. It is the *quality* of the work and its *appropriateness* to primary or secondary school children that determines selection as a teaching aid in opening up new areas of experience in the development of artistic knowledge and understanding.

These points concerning the dance curriculum in schools are also relevant to government policies involving artists in education as well as to the creative partnerships initiatives.

Crucial to the successful implementation of any curriculum is the provision of well qualified teachers, for without such teachers little progress can be made in developing knowledge, understanding and positive attitudes to learning. New areas of experience can only be offered to children if the teacher is knowledgeable in the area and also an educator. This is especially the case within dance and the arts.

An impact of government initiatives is the increase in the numbers of artists working in various capacities within the school environment: in long-term residencies or as visiting dance companies performing and giving workshops. The artists employed in these and other ways have been characterised as 'support' staff by Miliband (2003).

While practising artists make important inputs into knowledge, understanding, and the technical expertise involved in arts making, performing and appreciating, government policy should be directed as a matter of urgency towards ensuring adequate numbers of well-qualified teachers who are also artistically knowledgeable in their field. Otherwise a situation could develop, as in Cyprus (Sanderson & Savva, 2004) where musicians and visual artists are permanently employed as teachers in primary schools after a brief induction into teaching practice, with no evidence of a teacher training requirement envisaged. The role of the dance artist in schools in Britain deserves particular consideration because few dance teachers are also practising artists, unlike their music, drama and visual arts colleagues—at least in secondary schools—and therefore they may be less confident in their negotiations with professional dancers and dance companies regarding the latter's proposals for working with the pupils. In many schools of course, and especially primary schools, there may not be a single teacher who has any substantial knowledge of dance and so the artists are virtually free to decide what to offer.

The National Curriculum requirements are so vague as to permit almost any input. A further difficulty, as Sanderson (2001) has underlined, is that dance continues to be regarded as a predominantly female interest, not only in schools but also throughout every stage of education, despite its widespread popularity in various forms as a leisure activity. A consequence is that there are few male dance teachers.

Male dance artists are therefore welcomed into schools to help break this cycle but the solution must surely be in providing excellent dance teachers regardless of their sex. Dance, like any other aspect of the curriculum, thrives in schools where there is high-quality teaching as evidenced by the quality of the work produced and the obvious enthusiasm of the pupils.

Artists have a role to play in developing understanding of the dance community and providing important links between schools and the art world, thereby extending the 'communities of practice' from which both parties can benefit. Artists also possess high levels of expertise as performers and choreographers that can inspire children to further achieve and in some cases pursue a professional dance career. The dance artists in education programmes under the aegis of the Arts Council which began more than 20 years ago have grown significantly (Sanderson, 1981; Sharp & Dust, 1997; Sharp, 2000; Castle *et al.*, 2002), and now have considerable and increasing influence, not only in schools but throughout education as a whole. Sanderson (2001) has raised issues regarding the suitability of some of the input of dance artists and companies working with children, and the artists themselves have acknowledged the tensions that can emerge between remaining at the 'cutting edge' artistically as performers or choreographers and working successfully in schools (Castle *et al.*, 2002). This expressed frustration and dilemma reveals the clear distinction between an artist and an artist teacher (Sanderson, 2002), and underlines the importance of an increased supply of the latter and a clearer, more limited role of the former in schools.

Conclusion

This article has highlighted a number of fundamentally important issues concerning arts education in general and dance education in particular, and it can be concluded from the discussion that increased provision for dance and the arts within the National Curriculum could make a real contribution to reducing social class inequalities and promoting social and educational inclusion. The nature of knowledge and understanding gained from participation in the arts as a practitioner and as an observer is of a different order to that gained from language, literacy and mathematical symbols and without opportunities to develop this artistic way of knowing there is the likelihood, as Reid (1969) has argued, of developing 'lop-sided' individuals. Engagement with the arts constitutes an alternative way of knowing which *educates* the feelings, thereby contributing to emotional as well as creative education. While government initiatives, including those of the Arts Council, are helpful in bringing practising artists into schools as well as enabling pupils—at least in secondary schools—to become familiar with their work and creative processes within the artists' own environments, this cannot replace the central necessity of a strong curriculum presence for the arts, with well-qualified subject specialist teachers at both the primary and secondary stages. Curricula taking into account the interests of the age groups involved are of crucial importance so that dance in schools

relates to the worlds in which children live, but also extends those worlds, opening up new areas of interest and opportunity and expanding horizons. By denying exposure to the traditionally elite art forms in schools, for instance, many children could in effect be encouraged to think from an early age that such forms of cultural capital are 'not for them'. Ignorance of these and other dance forms is also likely to promote prejudices. To this end it is important that contributions from visiting artists are less esoteric and more accessible to children. Furthermore, and despite Miliband's (2003) confident assertion, artists cannot truly be 'support staff' to teachers without appropriate additional training.

In reporting the results of this study the limitations in its design are acknowledged, including the difficulties regarding questionnaire research in schools highlighted by Denscombe and Aubrook (1992). It is recognised that scaling techniques and questionnaire research can scarcely penetrate deeply felt opinions, perceptions and levels of understanding of dance and its aesthetic dimension. Nevertheless, surveys—and particularly those involving large samples—can give useful information by providing an overview of a situation revealing areas of concern and raising issues for additional in-depth research. The development of attitude scales from the pupils' own opinions, as in the case of the study reported here, may also improve the level of confidence that can be placed in results of this nature. The research, however, can also be criticised in terms of the limited evidence of a reflexive account on the part of the researcher, for as Mauthner and Doucet (2003) point out, the issue of reflexivity is now regarded as central to quantitative research as it is to that of a qualitative nature. Interpreting the data in the context of who collected the data and for what purposes is considered to be a necessary, conscious constituent of any research process. In the present study the data, its analysis, the literature and the discussion were revisited and reflected upon repeatedly in revising this article, although it is recognised that reflexivity should be embedded into the whole research process from its inception. The task following the completion of this study is to return to the field and conduct in-depth interviews with teachers, pupils and artists, to observe and gather a rich database of qualitative material from which further recommendations can be made. Built into this research process at all stages must be reflexivity in order to improve trustworthiness, thereby increasing confidence in the research. It is also acknowledged that social class, gender and ethnicity are inevitably interlinked in research of this nature, providing at the very least an underlying influence. Future research should therefore ensure the ethnicity factor is explicitly taken into account.

Sanderson (2001) has illustrated that at present, although there is evidence of an increase in dance research activity, published work remains limited compared to other arts and that arising from a school context has barely started. All subjects need a strong, independent research base, especially when government policy is being formulated. Brehony (2005), referring to government policies towards primary schools, regrets the tendency of government in some instances to demand unambiguous evidence and also select research findings to suit particular purposes. This poses particular dangers for dance where the educational research base is so limited.

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