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Dance Education in Ireland

An examination of Smith-Autard's art of dance model in teacher education and the
Irish primary school curriculum

By

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Supervised by Dr. Carmel O'Sullivan

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Declaration

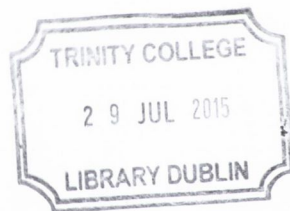
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Thesis 10650

Dedication

To the memory of my parents, Josephine and Kyran, for their enduring love and support.

Summary

A revised primary school curriculum was introduced to Irish schools in 1999. In that curriculum, dance is acknowledged as an area of arts education but delivered in physical education (Department of Education and Science, 1999a). Content and methodologies for the creative dance strand typify Laban's (1948) educational model (Fitzpatrick, 2000). Successive Arts Council reports (Benson, 1979; Brinson, 1985; Leatherdale and Todd, 1998; Marzin, 2003) point to serious deficits in dance education in the Irish educational system. O'Dowd's (2006) study of the implementation process of the primary school dance strand indicates that less than one per cent of primary schools in Ireland delivered the dance syllabus in 2005. The Inspectorate Division of the Department of Education and Science (2005) noted that a number of probationary teachers had not taught any physical education in 2005. The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (2007) observed that primary school teachers lacked confidence and were poorly prepared to teach dance, particularly creative dance.

This study examines the relevancy of a model of dance education which is based on the concept of dance as art (Redfern, 1973) in an Irish primary school curriculum context and in teacher education. The model, known as the midway model (Smith-Autard, 2002), has not been implemented in the Irish curriculum. The study examines Smith-Autard's model with newly qualified teachers (NQTs) completing a fourth year of studies at the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin. The context for the research was a dance module designed and taught by the researcher for the purposes of the study which was offered as a course option over three consecutive academic years. From an interpretive stance, I posed the research questions from the viewpoint of an experienced dance educator. The research used a mixed-methods approach to data collection with a predominantly qualitative focus. As part of the study, an interactive CD-ROM resource (Bedford Interactive, 2006) which claims to exemplify the midway model was explored with NQTs as part of the dance module, and in three primary schools located within a twenty-mile radius of Dublin city.

While modification is needed, this study found that an application of the midway model (Smith-Autard, 2002) appears to be viable in the Irish context. It is proposed that pedagogic approaches described and promoted by the midway model, including resource-based strategies, should inform initial and continuing teacher education programmes in the Irish

context. Although, contrary to the aesthetic promoted by the midway model, it is recommended that visual resources should extend beyond western theatre dance exemplars with a view to incorporating a greater range of cultural influences. A conceptual shift to dance as art would require that student teachers and teachers have access to specialist dance knowledge and expertise, and access to exemplars which complement the aims and objectives of the primary school curriculum. Realising this will require collaborative action on the part of policy and curriculum stakeholders, proposals are made in this regard. As the researcher played an instrumental role in most of the data collection, and because the study focuses on relatively small population samples leading to fewer results which are based on specific contextual findings, caution is recommended in attempting to locate this study within wider dance contexts, or other educational research.

Acknowledgements

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I am immensely grateful to the teachers and pupils who took part in this study. Their involvement made this research project possible.

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Chapter One

Introduction to the Study

1.1 Purpose of the study

This study explores the relevancy of a particular model of dance education not implemented in Ireland which is based on the concept of dance as art (Redfern, 1973). Known as the midway model, it claims to exemplify theory and practice promoted by the dance as art approach. Published as *The Art of Dance in Education* (Smith-Autard, 1994), the model is labelled ‘midway’ because it merges elements of Laban’s (1948) process-based pedagogy with elements of the product-oriented, apprenticeship-based conservatoire approach. Vocabularies associated with Laban’s classification of human movement and western theatre dance, in particular American modern dance, are used. The relevancy of the midway model in the Irish context is examined with newly qualified primary school teachers completing a fourth year of studies at the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin. ‘Newly qualified teacher’ is a term applied to teachers who have been qualified for less than twelve months. The overarching aim of the model, which claims to contribute to artistic, aesthetic, and cultural education, is an appreciation of dance as an art form. Methodologies for teaching and learning are presented as an interrelated three-stranded framework which explore and develop skill and aptitude in performance, composition and critical viewing. Fundamental to dance as art pedagogy is achieving a finished dance: ‘how to imagine, formulate, structure and achieve meaningful, coherent dance works’ (Redfern, 1978). A ‘complete dance’ is the main dance learning outcome identified in Smith-Autard’s (1994) midway proposition. The midway model places emphasis on use of professional dance works to support teaching and learning, and to enhance knowledge and understanding of dance as an art form. Regular access to western theatre dance exemplars via technology-based resources is promoted in methodologies proposed by the midway model. An interactive CD-ROM resource (Bedford Interactive, 2006), which was authored by Smith-Autard and technology specialist Jim Schofield, claims to exemplify dance as art pedagogy. The CD-ROM resource was specifi-

cally designed for use by non-specialist dance teachers working with seven to fourteen year olds. Its relevancy and effectiveness in the Irish context is explored as part of this study. The study evaluates claims published in the resource handbook with a view to determining its usefulness as a prototype for the development of teaching and learning resources sourced in Ireland.

The available literature on the background and development of dance as art theory and practice in the United Kingdom is examined in this study. It explores challenges (Curl, 1966, 1967a, 1967b, 1968a, 1968b, 1969; Redfern, 1973) made to the philosophical and educational tenets of Laban's (1948) modern educational dance, the predecessor model. Evolutionary processes in the United Kingdom, which resulted in the adoption of a dance as art approach into the curriculum under the 1988 Education Reform Act, are recounted. Elaboration of dance as art principles and practice (Smith, 1976; Smith-Autard 1994) is examined in the wider context of developments in dance education in the United Kingdom (Brinson, 1980; Adshead, 1983). The readiness of the Irish primary school curriculum to adopt the concept of dance as art is assessed. A review of the available literature explores the background of dance education in the Irish context since the introduction of the Irish Free State's national school curriculum (Department of Education, 1926), and significant events and developments are recounted. Links are made where pertinent to events and changes in the United Kingdom. Where major influence is suggested by developments in the United Kingdom, for example, the introduction of Laban (1948) to women's physical education teacher education programmes (*Irish Times*, 1965; O'Loan, 1973), the inclusion of 'movement' education as a distinct area of learning to the primary school physical education syllabus (Department of Education, 1971), and developments in initial and continuing teacher education (Brinson, 1985; O'Donoghue, 1985, 1989), these are explored. Distinctions are also drawn, in particular with regard to the influence of religious orthodoxy (Coolahan, 1981; Drury, 1990, Kennedy, 1990) and cultural heritage which reveals the dominance of Irish traditional dance in the primary school curriculum (O'Dowd, 2006; Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2009). Public attitudes and behaviours towards dance (Clancy, 1994; Hibernian Consulting,

2006; Office of the Minister for Children, 2007), which impact on how dance is accessed and developed in the primary school curriculum, are discussed.

1.2 Rationale for undertaking the study

This study is significant in that addresses a gap in the field of dance education research in the Irish context. Successive Arts Council reports (Benson, 1979; Brinson, 1985; Leatherdale and Todd, 1998; Marzin, 2003) pointed to serious deficits regarding the status and recognition of dance as part of arts education in the Irish educational system. Furthermore, the marginal position of dance in the complementary field of arts-in-education policy and practice is demonstrated in more recent reports (Arts Council, 2007, 2008, 2013). While dance as part of youth arts practice has experienced some growth in Ireland (McGrail, 2000; Coughlan, 2004), and the level of public participation in social dance activities seems high (Clancy, 1994), in particular on the part of teenage girls (Office of the Minister for Children, 2007), attendance and participation in dance as an art form experience in the Irish context appears to remain low (Clancy, 1994; Hibernian Consulting, 2006). This suggests a perception of dance as primarily an out-of-school activity, or as a recreational pursuit. Lunn and Kelly (2008) found that the most important socio-economic factor influencing whether or not people attend arts events was educational attainment, with access to the arts as part of the school experience also featuring. The primary school curriculum (Department of Education and Science, 1999a) had established dance as part of arts education, albeit delivered within physical education, although initial investigation (Department of Education and Science Inspectorate Division, 2005; O'Dowd, 2006) suggested that there was little access to experiences of dance as art in classroom practice, or as part of initial teacher education programmes, and that there was a dearth of teaching and learning supports available to teachers interested in dance. Given the apparent side-lining of dance as an important area of educational research and practice in the Irish context, this study identifies some salient issues and research questions which are presented in the following section.

1.3 Research questions

The issues which gave rise to this study are as follows:

- the need to develop dance as part of arts education in the primary school curriculum;
- the lack of access to best practice models that might inform developments in Ireland;
- the absence of teaching and learning resources for dance education in Irish primary schools.

The overarching research question under examination in this study is as follows:

- whether the concept of dance as art (Redfern, 1973) can inform the development of dance education in the Irish primary school curriculum.

Two associated questions informed and guided the inquiry, which were as follows:

- whether content and methodologies associated with the art of dance in education mid-way model (Smith-Autard, 2002) can usefully contribute to initial and continuing teacher education; and
- whether resource-based methodologies promoted by the midway model can provide the prototype for the development of dance education teaching and learning resources sourced in Ireland.

The methods used to address the overarching and sub-questions posed in this study are discussed in detail in chapter four.

1.4 Locating the researcher

As a former Arts Council Youth Arts and Dance Officer and, at the time of proposing this study, the Head of Young People, Children, and Education in the Arts Council, and a physical education teacher with many years experience in teaching dance at all levels of the curriculum, including in initial and continuing teacher education, I was familiar with the relevant sectors and stakeholders in the Irish context. Active involvement as a practitioner across the dance education, dance-in-education and youth dance communities in Ireland during the 1980s and early 1990s, and a regular attendee in company class with Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre, gave me ‘hands-on’ knowledge and engagement with issues

and activities in the field at that time. Physical education teaching posts in Montreal (one year) and Tokyo (3 years) provided me with the opportunity to extend my dance experience and take classes in theatre dance idioms prevalent in those jurisdictions. In Ireland, I had observed the many and various contacts with developments and expertise in the United Kingdom which had informed dance education policy and practice in Ireland since the mid-1960s (O'Loan, 1973), and was particularly active throughout the 1980s (O'Brien, 1985b, 1986, 1987, 1990). With the exception of the dance and dance pedagogy section in the Physical Education and Sports Sciences department at the University of Limerick, this appears to have fallen away in recent times. In the mid-1990s, dance lecturer, Teresa Leahy, invited Jacqueline Smith-Autard to the University of Limerick with the express purpose of informing the design and implementation of a dance education module to be delivered as part of a new Graduate Diploma/Masters in Dance programme organised by the Physical Education and Sports Sciences department. While, due to demand level, the course has not been offered in each of the years since, in the years when it was organised, Smith-Autard delivered the dance education module. Masters theses which focussed on dance education topics have been a useful resource to this study.

Smith-Autard is recognised for the significant contributions she has made to the general development of dance in education in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. A founding author and external examiner of the 'O' Level Dance examination, later to become the GCSE, she was a consultant for the Department for Education's Teacher Training Agency and is a recognised trainer for teachers in use of ICT to deliver dance in education. Her international work has taken her to Australia, Spain, Finland, Sweden, Canada, and the Netherlands to promote and extend dance education pedagogy, especially in relation to use of multimedia teaching and learning resources (National Dance Teachers Association, 2012). She has also been a regular contributor to National Dance Education Organization conferences and events in the United States of America (Smith-Autard, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010a). Author of two seminal books in the field of dance education *Dance*

Composition (1976) which has been re-printed and published in five further editions, and *The Art of Dance in Education* (1994, 2002), which provides a theoretical basis for teaching dance as art in primary, secondary and tertiary education. I completed the Masters programme at the University of Limerick in 2005, at which time I was introduced to the art of dance midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994). The module was taught by Smith-Autard. Module content included an introduction to the *Wild Child* resource pack (Bedford Interactive, 2001), a technology-based interactive resource which she and her colleague Jim Schofield had developed for use in educational settings. As mentioned previously, the midway model has not been implemented in the Irish curriculum. Initial investigation (Fitzpatrick, 2000; O'Dowd, 2006) suggested that an application of the model to the Irish primary school curriculum, in particular in the context of initial teacher education programmes, might be a viable option. Further discussion with Jacqueline Smith-Autard and Teresa Leahy confirmed their support, which led to a research proposal for this study. While sanction from Smith-Autard was sought and granted, for which I am immensely grateful, her involvement in a personal capacity has not informed the research processes or outcomes of this study.

1.5 Research methods

This is a qualitative, interpretive practitioner research study involving fifty-seven newly qualified teachers over a three-year period. In this study, I set out the research choices I've made regarding research approach, methods and the site of my study. I present a rationale for an interpretive stance. I provide an overview of the qualitative and quantitative debate and argue the selected approach using mixed methods of data collection. Ethical considerations, including those relating to the site of the study, are also discussed. The site of the study was the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin, and three primary schools, two located northside and one southside, within a twenty mile radius of Dublin city centre. The sample population, self-selected, comprised newly qualified teachers either teaching, or seeking work in the primary school sector. As mentioned previously, newly qualified teacher (NQT)

is a term applied to teachers who have been qualified for less than twelve months. NQTs all hold a primary degree qualifying them to apply for a teaching post in Irish primary schools to teach eleven subject areas, including the physical education and arts education curricula. The NQTs taking part in this study had completed their undergraduate degree at three different Dublin-based teacher education colleges. The NQT participants in the study were all registered for the Senior Sophister year of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.IV), a fourth year honours degree programme organised by the School of Education. This is a non-random sample which will impact on the extent to which inferences can be drawn for a broader population of newly qualified teachers. The context for the research was a dance module specifically designed for purposes of this study. This was the first time that dance had been included as an option in the B.Ed.IV programme. The module was offered as a course option over three consecutive academic years – 2007-'08, 2008-'09, 2009-'10. The research used a mixed-methods approach to data collection with a predominantly qualitative focus. NQTs in each year group were initially surveyed to ascertain their background and previous experience of dance and dance pedagogy. They participated in a yearlong dance education module, which largely followed the midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002) and emphasised the dance as art (Redfern, 1973) approach. Data were gathered through dance module assignments, B.Ed.IV dissertations of relevance to this study, field notes and a research journal. At the end of the module in each of the three years, interviews were conducted with NQTs which gathered data on the midway model in terms of its relevancy to teaching and classroom practice, and on how the module might be improved. Small group discussions and a questionnaire were used to gather data on the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource from NQTs participating in year two and year three of the study. The CD-ROM was not applied in year one. In year two of the study, the midway model was implemented by the researcher in three Dublin-based primary schools. Data from the fifty-seven pupils taking part in the lessons were gathered using an age appropriate questionnaire, and interviews were conducted with the three classroom teachers. An audit of doctorate registers in each of the five teacher education colleges of education was carried out to determine the prevalence of dance

education research in Ireland.

1.6 Definition: arts education; arts in education; youth arts

For purposes of clarity, this study applies the following ‘custom and practice’ definitions which were presented and agreed by the organising committee of a national seminar on the arts and education, *Encountering the Arts*, held in Dublin in November, 2010 (Barnard, 2011). There are of course, overlaps and intersections between the three areas of practice, but their distinctive nature and purpose, and organisational frameworks are important, and have relevance in the Irish context.

- *Arts education*: is the education of a (young) person’s artistic and aesthetic intelligence and responsibility for it lies within primary and post-primary curriculum provision (in the same way as, for example, science education and language education is attended to). It might be said that the teacher is central to the mediation of the arts education of a (young) person and the remit for this lies with education policy-makers and providers.
- *Arts in education*: refers to the parallel field of interventions by artists and arts organisations (of all disciplines) into the life and learning of young people, via visits, residencies, projects and other such initiatives. Such interventions can occur within or without the school building/timetable. It might be said that the artist is central to the mediation of arts in education experiences, and that responsibility for this field of endeavour falls more on arts policy-makers and providers.
- *Youth arts*: in the out-of-school environment, it is also acknowledged that youth arts (broadly defined) is a field where young people take part voluntarily in creative, cultural or expressive activity outside of the formal education process. It can encompass participation and appreciation, as well as engagement with arts work specifically created by, with, or for young people. Often, within this field, youth service providers and arts agencies act collaboratively to support such activity.

1.7 Thesis layout

Chapter two explores the background and charts the progress of dance education in the Irish primary school curriculum since the introduction of the Department of Education's first standardised *Programme of Primary Instruction* in 1926 to the most recent curriculum revisions implemented under the Education Act 1998. The chapter aims to uncover the major curriculum revisions implemented under the Education Act 1998. The chapter aims to uncover the major debates pertinent to dance education in Ireland during that period. The purpose here is to explore readiness on the part of the curriculum to adopt the concept of dance as art (Redfern, 1973) and to contextualise this study's examination of the midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002) in the Irish context. Chapter three examines the background and development of the art of dance in education midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994). Challenges to Laban's (1948) modern educational dance, which came under scrutiny in the United Kingdom during the 1960s (Curl, 1966, 1967a, 1967b, 1968a, 1968b, 1969) and 1970s (Redfern, 1973), are explored. The circumstances in which the establishment of modern and contemporary theatre dance in England informed the proposition that dance education ought to be situated within the aesthetic realm are investigated. The manner in which dance as art pedagogy, and the new contemporary dance forms emerging in England informed and reformed dance in primary, secondary and tertiary education in the United Kingdom (Brinson, 1980; Adshead, 1983), is examined. The evolutionary process from a Laban-based curriculum took some twenty years to complete. However, not all changes were deemed appropriate, largely associated with an overuse or misuse of content and skills associated with the product-oriented ethos of professional theatre dance (Cole, 1993). Proposals for a midway solution, which sought to achieve balance between product-oriented practices and process-oriented practices (Smith-Autard, 1987), are investigated. The main characteristics of the midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002), which promote the use of multimedia resource-based methodologies, are presented in this chapter. Chapter four describes the research methods and procedures used in this interpretive practitioner research study and chapter five presents and analyses the data emerging from the application of the

midway model (Smith-Autard, 2002) with newly qualified teachers in an Irish context. Chapter six discusses four major themes emerging from this analysis, while chapter seven offers some recommendations arising from the discussion, and considers areas for further research.

Chapter Two

Dance Education in the Irish Primary School Curriculum

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to explore the background and chart the progress of dance education in the Irish primary school curriculum since the introduction of the Department of Education's first standardised *Programme of Primary Instruction* in 1926 to the most recent curriculum revisions implemented under the Education Act 1998. The chapter aims to uncover the major debates pertinent to dance education in Ireland during that period. The purpose is to contextualise an examination of a particular model of dance education not implemented in the Irish curriculum. Known as the art of dance in education (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002), or midway model, it was developed in England during the 1980s following challenges to Laban's (1948) modern educational dance framework which resulted in curriculum reform. The midway model espouses and elaborates dance as art (Redfern, 1973) principles and practices, which became the successor model to the Laban framework. Events and debate which informed a gradual shift from dance as movement education to dance as art education in United Kingdom curricula are examined in chapter three of this study. Central to issues facing the development of dance education in Ireland is its historic positioning within physical education, and the ambiguity caused by statements in the curriculum which, on the one hand, establish dance as an area of arts education and on the other, see it is delivered within physical education (Department of Education and Science, 1999a).

The chapter is organised in six sections. As mentioned above, the period covered is framed within the introduction of the Department of Education's *Programme of Primary Instruction* in 1926 and the implementation of the revised primary school *Physical Education Curriculum* (Department of Education and Science, 1999b) under the most recent Education Act (Government of Ireland, 1998). The first section explores the development of physical edu-

cation in post-war Ireland from the perspective of dance. The second section reflects upon the influences of Gaelic revisionism and Catholicism on attitudes towards, and access to dance within the educational system in Ireland. The third section recalls the background and content of Laban's proposals for dance education, and considers the extent to which ideologies and principles underpinning *Modern Educational Dance* (Laban, 1948) exerted influence on the 1971 and 1999 Irish curricula. The fourth section reviews the nature and scope of proposals put forward in the Irish context for a rationale for dance as part of the Irish educational system. The fifth section explores the status and recognition of dance in Irish government policies since the first Arts Act (Government of Ireland, 1951) with consequent impact on dance education. The sixth and final section summarises the main themes emerging from the chapter.

2.2 Developments in physical education in post-war Ireland from the perspective of dance education

In Ireland, post-war government policies in education were largely vested in the cultural revision of the Irish Free State. The 1937 Constitution enshrined Irish as the first language. Catholicism was the religion of ninety-three per cent of the population at that time, exerting forceful influence on educational values and on the arts, shaping early state policies and censorship practices (Kennedy, 1990). The Department of Education had been set up in 1924 with policies focussed on the revival of the Irish language (Coolahan, 1981). An emphasis on reinstating the vernacular language resulted in a narrower subject range within national schools, including the dropping of drawing and physical education as obligatory subjects (Benson, 1979). The first standardised *Programme of Primary Instruction* shows that physical training based on the Swedish or other approved systems was encouraged, although, recognising that teachers may not be acquainted with these systems, it clearly states that there was no obligation to teach it (Department of Education, 1926). Irish step-dancing and figure-dancing was also encouraged with all instructions and orders to be given in the Irish language. O'Donoghue (1985) notes that where training did occur in schools, activities were

usually based around callisthenic systems attributed to Per Henrik Ling (1776-1819) or the Sokol system attributed to Miroslav Tyrš (1832-1884). Based around non-competitive gymnastic exercises, these systems promoted physical well-being and were designed to promote endurance, strength, flexibility and co-ordination. The systems were 'gaëlicised' to make them more acceptable to school principals and in many schools, Irish dancing was also taught (O'Donoghue, 1985). O'Donoghue observes that scant mention is made of physical education in the Department of Education's annual reports in the years 1946 to 1956 and remarks that the subject remained optional, with little information appearing in official records, reporting mechanisms, teacher development programmes or materials of a pedagogical nature. The low status accorded to the subject at that time is noted in an Irish National Teachers' Organisation (2007) discussion paper on physical education in the primary school which reports that no major developments occurred in physical education in primary education until the 1971 primary school curriculum was implemented. Teacher organisations from as early as 1947 had called for reform which sought to create a more child-centred focus embracing literary, aesthetic, practical and physical education subjects (Coolahan, 1981). The 1971 curriculum gave effect to reforms which impacted on all subject areas including physical education. O'Donoghue (1989) points to a 1965 report compiled by the newly appointed Physical Education Inspector, Captain Michael McDonagh, in which the gaining momentum of child-centred ideologies and an aspiration towards a more diverse and balanced physical education syllabus is recorded. A new component was introduced to the physical education syllabus which presented dance and gymnastics under the overarching title of 'movement' education. New content for dance – labelled 'creative dance' in the *Teacher's Handbook* (Department of Education, 1971, 290), reflected the ideologies and practices promoted in Laban's (1948) educational dance framework. The 1971 physical education syllabus was heavily influenced by developments in the United Kingdom, which had taken place some twenty years earlier, whereby curriculum and assessment in primary education had moved from a subject-centred approach and rote learning to the more child-centred, discovery-based pedagogies advocated by Dewey's 'laboratory school' theories

(Vertinsky, 2004, 279). In physical education terms, the major shift in curriculum assessment policies coincided with the formulation and publication in England of *Modern Educational Dance* (Laban, 1948). The seeming ‘fit’ of Laban’s educational proposition with revisions sought in the curriculum bolstered the case for the study of human movement and its psychological import as a viable rationale for dance education (Curl, 1966; Redfern, 1973), and according to Carlisle (cited in Curl, 1989), for the totality of the physical education syllabus. The new configuration placed dance and gymnastics in an overarching ‘art of movement syllabus alongside games, athletics and aquatics’ (Archbutt, 1977, 26). As mentioned previously, developments in the United Kingdom are explored in chapter three. The origin and influence of Laban-based approaches on dance education developments in Ireland is considered in section 2.4.

2.2.1 Developments in physical education teacher education in Ireland

In Ireland during the 1960s, post-war population increases and an economic upswing saw significant changes in post-primary education. The examination system was overhauled, free education was introduced and new structures, such as comprehensive and community schools, were set up. This impacted on syllabus development with a wide range of literary, scientific, practical and aesthetic subjects introduced to the curriculum (Coohalan, 1981). Increases in pupil enrolment and curriculum enhancement saw consequent intake into the teaching profession. By the mid-1970s, at primary and secondary levels, teaching was largely a degree profession, including in the area of physical education. Laban’s art of movement principles informed the creative dance strands, and a selection of simple European folk dances were added to the existing Irish step and figure dances suggested for the folk dance elements of the primary and secondary school curricula. The Richards Report (1976) notes that creative dance entered third-level education in Ireland as a part of women’s physical education teacher training programmes. Until the late 1950s, female physical education teachers had mainly been recruited from either the Ling Institute or the Dublin College of Physical Education. Male teachers were usually ex-army, trained at the Army School of Physical

Culture at the Curragh camp in County Kildare. The Ling Institute, founded in 1900 by Miss Studley, was by 1923 offering a two year full-time course based on the teachings of Per Henrik Ling, with dance activities comprising folk-dancing (Irish and other European) and ballroom (O'Donoghue, 1989). The Dublin College of Physical Education, founded in 1947 by Kathleen O'Rourke, offered a three-year course involving women's sports as well as the Woman's League of Health system of exercises. The League's system was based on the British system developed in London by Dublin-born Molly Bagot Stack in 1930, which O'Rourke brought to Ireland in 1934 (McCullagh, 2004). By the mid-1950s, the Irish Dominican nuns were establishing third-level teacher training opportunities for women at their Maria Assumpta campus in Blackrock, Co. Dublin which included a Froebel College, Domestic Science (St. Catherine's College), and Physical Education (St. Raphael's College). O'Rourke's Dublin College of Physical Education was amalgamated with St. Raphael's on her appointment as principal of the new Dominican college. St. Raphael's College of Physical Education opened with five students in 1955 in a purpose-designed building by architect Piaras Mac Cionnaith, which won the RIAI Triennial Gold Medal 1956-1958 (*Irish Times*, 1961, 9). External examiners from Scottish and English physical education teacher training colleges urged courses taught at St. Raphael's College to adopt the Laban-based principles and approaches which had informed developments in physical education in the United Kingdom since the 1950s. McCullagh (2004, 56) notes that O'Rourke conceded to these changes. In 1958 O'Rourke left St. Raphael's to continue her work with the League of Health and take on new challenges in the area of remedial education. She was replaced by Sister Rosemary Graham, and Mona Wren was appointed as Vice-Principal of the college.

Under Wren's stewardship, dance became a strong component of the programmes developed at St. Raphael's College. She sought an equalisation of standards with counterparts in the United Kingdom and external examiners from Bedford and Dunfermline colleges of education were invited to present demonstration classes in 'modern creative dance' (O'Loan, 1973). A 'national dance' repertoire was introduced, which comprised balletic interpretations of

dances associated with selected European countries. The dances, arranged and taught by Wren, included for example, the Polish mazurka, the Hungarian czardas, the Spanish jota, the English sailor's hornpipe, the Italian tarantella, the Russian kopek. Simpler European folk dances were also taught, primarily for purposes of inclusion in the primary school curriculum. Irish dances, both presentational and social, were included. Medal examinations in ballroom dancing were also offered as an optional pursuit. A programme note for a 1968 college production *Theatrical Fusion*, with choreography by Wren, notes that she had attended a summer school, followed by a full sabbatical year, devoted to studying American modern dance in New York during 1966/67. On her return, she introduced Martha Graham and Paul Taylor techniques to her work with final year students, in addition to the technically demanding 'national dance' repertoire she had already established at all levels. Wren also established a competitive award for choreography, presented each year to a final year student. Laban's (1948) framework was introduced as the conceptual basis for dance pedagogy in primary and secondary education. An *Irish Times* (1965) article gives reports on a seminar held to promote new approaches in physical education. The Minister of Education attended and proceedings were chaired by Captain McDonagh, the Department's Physical Education Inspector. The event included the launch of an hour-long documentary film on St. Raphael's revised programmes entitled *Physical Education in Ireland* (Black Raven Films, 1968) which featured demonstration classes in educational dance and gymnastics with primary school classes. In 1965 and 1966, newly appointed staff members at St. Raphael's, Helen Hunt and Imelda O'Loan, both graduates of the college, attended summer intensive courses in Worcester, England organised by Joan Russell, an exponent of Laban's work. An article by Hunt (1969) for the St. Raphael's College alumni newsletter speaks of the influence of Laban ideologies on physical education pedagogy. She stresses that these changes were not based solely on the advent of his art of movement analysis, but also on closely integrated and profound thinking in social and educational psychology. Of interest here is that claims of social and psychological impacts on the part of Labanism had by that time, begun to be challenged in the United Kingdom (Curl, 1966). For O'Loan (1973), the opportunity

for extended study in Laban's art of movement provided a theoretical basis which she later used to develop teacher resource materials for the 'movement' component of the 1971 physical education syllabus. A testament to Wren's endeavour is that in 1959, the year of her appointment, a student transcript signed by Sister Rosemary Graham shows a total of one hundred and sixty hours allocated to 'modern dance' and 'national dance' over the course of the three year programme. A 1969 student transcript based on a scholastic year of thirty-two weeks per year for three years signed by the then principal Sister Bede Kearns, shows that dance activities comprised a total of four hundred and forty-eight hours over the course of the three year programme. This included one hundred and forty-eight hours of 'modern creative dance', two hundred and four hours of 'national dance' and a further ninety-six hours of dance teaching tutorials. Brinson (1985, 58) highlights the indebtedness of dance education to St. Raphael's programmes, which formed the bedrock of dance education practice in Irish schools, and shaped curriculum developments during the 1960s and 1970s. He points to the wide range of influences, the strongest being Laban's art of movement principles, together with regular contact with the techniques of jazz and classical ballet, modern dance, and national dances.

The Ling Institute and St. Raphael's College closed in 1974 as part of new government proposals which revised third level provision for female and male physical education teachers. In 1968, the government had announced a new initiative, which in 1969 sent male physical education students to St. Mary's College, Strawberry Hill in London to begin a four-year degree programme (O'Donoghue, 1989). They were joined a year later by female students who had completed their first year of studies at St. Raphael's and the Ling Institute. This combined student group completed the first degree programme in physical education in Ireland in 1975, graduating from the newly opened National College of Physical Education at Thomond Park, Limerick. The degree programme was, and is to the present day, structured around physical education and a second curriculum subject area. The course is now managed by the Department of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, University of

Limerick. O'Donoghue (1989, 16) notes that the closure of the Ling Institute and St. Raphael's College in 1974 consigned to history the training of specialist physical education teachers. It also saw the end of a comprehensive dance syllabus, in terms of both time and content, as part of teacher education programmes in the physical education field. While the dance programme developed at St. Raphael's College was predominantly practical rather than theoretical, it created a legacy which would inform curriculum development throughout the 1980s. Prompted by recommendations made in the Benson Report (1979), the Arts Council undertook a number of initiatives in the early 1980s with a view to informing new policy in the area arts and education. In parallel, Arts Council dance policy also came under review and a report on the development needs of theatre dance in Ireland had been commissioned. Recognising the opportunity for alignment, the terms of reference for the dance report were expanded to include an investigation of issues pertinent to dance within the education system (Arts Council, 1987b). The dance report (Brinson, 1985) devoted a chapter to the situation of dance and education in Ireland.

2.2.2 Proposals for broadening the conceptualisation of dance education in Ireland

The Dancer and the Dance (Brinson 1985) identified three main recommendations for the improvement of dance programmes delivered as part of physical education teacher training at Thomond College of Education (now the University of Limerick). These were: an increased art form presence; further development of primary and post-primary teacher in-service courses; and the establishment of a fully recognised course, to produce specialist dance teachers, including an investigation of peripatetic career options. In terms of art form presence, promising developments occurred with the appointment of Mary Nunan in 1986 as dance artist in residence. The residency was jointly funded by Thomond College, Mary Immaculate College of Education and the Arts Council (Arts Council, 1989). Having graduated in physical education, Nunan studied Hawkins (1909-1994) and Limón (1908-1972) techniques in New York. On her return, Nunan danced with Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre (DCDT) for five years. Founded by Joan Davis in 1977, DCDT's artistic programme

was rooted in American modern dance. Davis had taken classes in Dublin with American dancer/choreographer Terez Nelson, and was a regular attendee at courses run by the London Contemporary Dance School (O'Brien, 1985a). The company's repertoire was almost exclusively commissioned from American choreographers. DCDT closed in 1989 following Arts Council cuts in dance funding (O'Brien, 1989). Nunan, together with Teresa Leahy, dance lecturer at the University of Limerick, founded Daghdha Dance Company in 1988. The company was based on the university campus. Daghdha's initial focus was dance in education, with programmes designed for primary and secondary school audiences. Nunan (cited in Mulrooney, 2006, 135) spoke of Daghdha's touring programme to schools and recalled meeting pupils and teachers who had never encountered contemporary dance; that there was little or no dance education happening in the schools; and where performing 'on hard, cold concrete floors' was very hard on the dancers. Mulrooney (2006) observed that Nunan expressed difficulties with a wholly schools focus and worked towards a company model that served a wider audience, albeit within an inherently educational ethos. The artistic programme increasingly moved away from a schools focus to a community remit, and left its home on the university campus in 2003 to take up residence in Limerick city. Nunan remained as Artistic Director until 1999 following which she became Course Director of the newly established MA in Contemporary Dance Performance at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick (Mulrooney, 2006). While the introduction of a post-graduate performance degree offered new opportunities for theatre dance in Ireland, there are currently no undergraduate degree programmes in dance available. Serious barriers in the area of vocational dance education and training in Ireland have been identified in successive Arts Council reports (Brinson, 1985; Leatherdale and Todd, 1998; Marzin, 2003) and remain an impediment to development within the professional sector to the present day. Professional training models, therefore, have had little influence on the Irish primary and secondary school curriculum. In addition, there is currently no professional dance company in Ireland whose work focuses on, or includes programmes specifically designed for children and/or young people. The Arts Council (1989, 2006a, 2008, 2013) has repeatedly underlined

the importance of resources, in which living artists and their work are represented in a fashion that aligns well with existing curriculum priorities and with the practical realities of classroom practice, to be made easily available. These issues are discussed in more detail in section 2.6.

The focus of Brinson's (1985) second recommendation for Thomond College was the provision of continuing professional development for primary and secondary teachers in the area of dance education. The recommendation prompted a four-year teacher-led curriculum development project facilitated by Diarmuid Leonard, Head of Education at Thomond College. The project, which got underway in 1986, was funded by the Department of Education's Physical Education Inspectorate Division and the Arts Council; and supported by Thomond College and the Dance Council of Ireland. The process and findings of this important project, set up to advance standards of dance and dance teaching in schools, were published in *DanceNews Ireland* (Leonard, 1987, 1988, 1989). A situational analysis of dance in schools determined that syllabus design should be teacher-led and that it would involve specialist and non-specialist dance teachers. The syllabus content to be explored would be aimed at the non-specialist teacher. A set of procedural principles in line with Stenhouse (1975, 1983), and a matrix of four teaching and learning elements – knowledge; concepts; skills; and values, identified in the publication *In Our Schools* (Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1986), guided the process. Perhaps an opportunity was lost in the planning phase as the content described relied heavily on Laban's (1948) framework as the fundamental conceptualisation of dance education. Should other styles, approaches, techniques, apparent in the list of dance experts informing early stages of the project have exerted influence on the four teaching and learning elements, the syllabus might have embraced a wider appreciation of the art form, and the range of dance materials explored. Leonard (1988) identified a compelling need for curriculum planners to understand the nature of dance as an arts discipline, and to place its distinctive contribution to arts education in general at the core of syllabus planning. He saw the need for teachers to accept that the

dance curriculum must reflect the intrinsic logic of dance as art, and that the teacher must be able to make this intrinsic logic accessible to his/her students. The curriculum project produced an eighteen-lesson resource pack (Department of Education, 1990) which O'Brien (1990) reported was widely disseminated through teacher in-service courses organised by the Department of Education's Physical Education Inspectorate Division with the support of the Dance Council of Ireland. The modules became, effectively, the junior cycle syllabus for creative dance and informed initial teacher education programmes at primary and secondary level until curriculum revision in the late 1990s. Brinson's (1985) third recommendation for Thomond College - the establishment of a fully recognised course, to produce specialist dance teachers - has yet to be realised. Thomond College of Education closed in 1991. University of Limerick courses in physical education are now managed by the Physical Education and Sports Sciences Department which established a Graduate Diploma/Masters in Dance programme in 1995. Jacqueline Smith-Autard, architect of the midway model and then Head of Dance at Bedford College of Further Education, England was instrumental in designing the course. University of Limerick is the main provider of training programmes for secondary school physical education subject teachers in Ireland. The four-year course includes two modules in applied dance which utilise Laban's movement principles and the midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002). While electives are offered in a range of areas, none are offered in dance. The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, which opened in 1994, now offers a Graduate Diploma in Education (Music). Graduates are eligible for admission to the Open Register of the Registration Council for Secondary Teachers of the Department of Education and Skills. In addition to the Masters in contemporary dance performance, the Academy offers an undergraduate degree programme which combines studies in traditional music, traditional dance and voice. Should the Academy pursue full-time undergraduate programmes in the area of dance, it is feasible that a Graduate Diploma in Education (Dance) might ensue and perhaps, explore possible links with courses offered by the physical education department.

2.2.3 Limitations existing within primary school teacher education

At primary level, implementation of the curriculum provides the focus for modules offered in dance as part of physical education in initial teacher education. Each of the five main colleges of education provides a short compulsory dance element of between four to six sessions, delivered in first and/or second year. Electives in dance are offered, again largely based on curriculum content. The 2007 consultative conference of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation placed particular focus on physical education. The conference discussion paper *Physical Education in the Primary School* (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2007) noted that 'movement' education had been important to 1971 curriculum planners. However, the lack of structured teaching materials, lack of in-service and confusion amongst teachers about how 'movement' content could or should be taught led to games becoming the activity of choice. Benson (1979, 30-31) observed that 'creative dance and movement' taught as part of physical education presented considerable difficulties to teachers, and a lack of training in the arts was frequently mentioned as a serious obstacle to the development of arts education in primary schools. A discussion paper on *Dance Education in Ireland* (Arts Council, 1985a) prepared for the Curriculum and Examinations Board's Arts Working Party asserts that primary school teachers needed to develop a level of personal appreciation in the art form in order to teach dance with confidence, particularly male teachers who 'often regard dance as lying in the realm of the mystic and cult, vague in its content and beyond their scope'. The paper pointed to initial teacher education in dance as a determining factor, highlighting that provision within physical education courses was 'too short and too infrequent' to meet teacher requirements. *The Arts in Education* (Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1985a,) also identified difficulties on the part of primary school teachers in implementing dance elements of the syllabus. A lack of experience in dance, especially creative dance, was given as the cause for the lack of teacher confidence in this area. To address a perceived lack of teacher confidence in approaching physical education overall, the *Report of the Review Body on the Primary Curriculum* (Quinlan, 1990) recommended that adequate and appropriate pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes should be made available.

The revised primary school curriculum was introduced to schools in 1999. *Beginning to Teach* (Department of Education and Science Inspectorate Division, 2005, 38) noted that a number of probationary teachers had not taught any physical education. Lessons observed by the Inspectorate Division demonstrated little or no planning or preparation and consequently, teachers experienced difficulties in organising pupils. O'Dowd's (2006) study of the implementation process of the dance strand found that less than one per cent of primary schools in Ireland delivered the dance syllabus in 2005. The Professional Development Service for Teachers was established to mediate the revised curriculum for teachers towards implementation in their schools (O'Dowd, 2006). As part of the support programme, all subjects received a period of intensive continuing professional development with seminars organised for all teachers in primary school education. O'Dowd notes that teachers experienced two professional development seminar days, devoted to physical education. Each teacher took part in two seminar days on the revised physical education syllabus, with approximately one and half hours in total devoted to the dance strand. Cuiditheoirí (support personnel) recruited through Teacher Education Centres supported schools in planning for implementation and in developing content and methodologies. O'Dowd asserts that as part of the implementation seminars, the specialist trainers did not give sufficient attention to creative dance content; and in folk dance the focus was on Irish dancing. She points out that Irish dancing cannot serve as the sole method of implementation as it does not satisfy the content objectives stated in the curriculum. O'Dowd (2006) states that the lack of preparedness and confidence on the part of teachers, and their negative attitude to dance cannot be addressed through one and a half hours of in-service. She expresses concern about the skills-set of the Cuiditheoirí who delivered the seminars who were predominantly physical education specialists from a sports background, and insufficiently equipped to explore the most under-represented strand which is dance. O'Dowd further asserts that teacher preparation in the area of dance poses a serious challenge to teacher education colleges. Gray's study (2007), which is based on his own experience of teaching dance in primary school, found that teachers' attitudes and perceptions of dance determine whether or not dance will be taught in schools. He proposes that without

commitment and enthusiasm on the part of the teacher, there is very little chance of dance becoming a viable classroom activity. He also highlights the need for more in-depth and consistently available teacher development opportunities.

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation's (2007) conference proceedings confirm the lack of preparedness and lack of confidence on the part of teachers in teaching the dance strand. However, as no differentiation between the two types of dance was sought, it's difficult to discern whether teachers regarded folk and creative dance as equally demanding. Two years later, the discussion paper and proceedings on *Creativity and the Arts in the Primary School* (Irish National Teachers' Organisation 2009) acknowledges dance as part of arts education delivered within physical education. The paper references Laban (1948) and Smith-Autard (1994, 2002) as informing the syllabus. The attention given to dance, when compared to the other arts areas, is scant. Dance was not included in the survey and therefore, the analysis of findings on creativity and the arts carried out in one thousand primary schools. Neither was dance included in sections on assessment and evaluation of arts areas or supports for the arts in the primary school (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2009). Smith-Autard (1994, 2002) is the sole dance reference in an otherwise comprehensive bibliography given for arts education subjects in the conference discussion paper (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2009). Proceedings show that workshops and presentations conducted over the course of the two-day conference did not include dance. Conference proceedings suggest that the curriculum's position on dance – that it is part of arts education, is not understood by teachers, a position compounded by its delivery within physical education. Conference proceedings from the two most recent teacher debates on physical education and arts education (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2007; 2009) suggests that in Ireland, dance plays a marginal role in teacher discourse on both arts and physical education. The Brinson report had found serious difficulties facing the development of dance in Ireland, citing negative attitudes toward the body, lack of an indigenous tradition of theatre dance, and prejudices against male dance as major problems. Brinson (1985) reported that very few primary

schools offer dance in physical education classes, and at secondary level dance occupies a very minor place. Such attitudes and circumstances, he concluded, create a climate in which dance occupies the lowest rung on the ladder of Irish education and the Irish arts. O'Dowd (2006, 23) asserts that this is due to 'a lifetime of neglect' and contends that it is the creative dance strand that 'suffers the most'.

Where dance is taught as part of the physical education programme, it is likely to be Irish dancing. The predominance of Irish dancing, and reliance of teachers upon the form, can be traced back to the foundation of state policies on education which focused on the revival of the Irish language (Coolahan, 1981) and in that context, Irish step and set dances. The promotion of Irish dancing was strengthened with the rise of Gaelic revisionism which actively encouraged the form over and above other 'foreign' styles. For dance, which mines and shapes human movement for its materials and meaning, the situation in post-war Ireland was further exacerbated by negative attitudes of the Catholic Church towards the body. O'Donoghue (1985) notes a Department of Education report for the year 1932-1933 which records that schools did not value physical education and the subject suffered accordingly. A Physical Education Committee was appointed by the Minister for Education in December 1936. Unusual for that time, there was no representative of the Catholic Church on the committee which, O'Donoghue (1985) surmises, was due to attitudes of the church, which was negatively disposed towards physical education. He points to a 1929 church encyclical letter on youth education advocating 'Christian prudence' with special regard to Christian modesty for girls, for whom the letter states 'it is most unsuitable to display themselves before public gaze' (O'Donoghue, 1985, 65). Debate on foot of the 1933-1932 report included concerns about Swedish drill systems and displays. There was a danger of effeminacy noted amongst rising generations associated with modern innovations in music, dancing, pictures and literature. Counter attractions for boys were proposed which included fostering interest in the 'traditional virile pastimes' of the country O'Donoghue (1985, 88). Kelly (1991, 12), a primary school teacher with specialist dance experience, writes that

while girls and boys often produce differently stressed movement responses, it is as nonsensical to suggest there is something called ‘boys dance’ as it is to suggest there is such a thing as ‘boys music’ or ‘boys painting’. Benson (1979) reported on misconceptions about the arts in education, whereby arts activities are seen as more suitable for girls than boys, and for the less intelligent rather than the more intelligent. Brinson (1985, 54) observed ‘deep inhibitions’ about the body in Irish schools and its use as a communicator; for boys, dance was seen as ‘unmanly’. Drury (1990) opined that if society were to design an activity which troubled the cultural, education and social orthodoxies which underpinned Irish schooling, it couldn’t have done better than to invent dance. Nunes (cited in Mulrooney (2006, 172), then Artistic Director of the Dublin Dance Festival, argues that such repression devalued the Irish body immensely, preventing exploration of the true power and value of dance as ‘an immediate and profound means of exposing the vulnerabilities and truths of inner worlds’ which good choreography excavates and communicates. The following section explores the orthodoxies enshrined in post-war government policies, and in doctrines of the Catholic Church which impacted on dance education developments in Ireland.

2.3 The influence of Gaelic revisionism and Catholicism on dance education in Ireland

As previously mentioned, the *Programme of Primary Instruction* (Department of Education, 1926) shows that Irish step and figure dancing was included as part of a non-compulsory physical education programme. Where taught, dancing instruction was to be carried out through the Irish language. In schools where Irish dancing was made available, it was usually taught by a school teacher with specialist knowledge, or peripatetically, most likely by a teacher registered with An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha (The Irish Dancing Commission). Founded in the early 1930s, An Coimisiún oversaw a tightly organised system of teacher registration; local, national and eventually ‘world’ competitions based around prescribed steps, dances and dress codes. Richards (1976) reports that private Irish dancing schools were a feature in most Irish towns, replacing the travelling dancing master. By the mid-

1970s, towns of more than five thousand inhabitants were found to have at least five such schools, compared to only thirty-five private ballet schools existing throughout Ireland. While Irish dancing was the form promoted by the state, there is evidence that other styles and approaches were made available in some schools. Classified advertisements for Dublin-based dance schools includes the Burchill School of Dancing (*Irish Times*, 1940) a leading ballroom studio led by Evelyn Burchill, which states that school visits were available. Robinson (2000, 64) and McCullagh (2004, 87) give personal accounts of teaching ‘modern creative dance’ and League of Health exercise routines in Dublin schools. Access to popular or foreign dance influences within schools was not the norm, and as O’Donoghue (1985) points out was in some instances, actively discouraged by the Catholic Church.

Catholicism, the dominant religion of the Irish state, exerted forceful influence in schools and communities and most of the Irish clergy were implacably opposed to dancing at that time (Brennan, 1999). Erina Brady’s Irish School of Dance Art opened in Dublin in 1939, offering training in ‘modern creative dance’ (Robinson, 2000, 153). Robinson, a graduate of the school, informs us that Brady had worked with the Austro-Hungarian born dance theorist and choreographer Rudolf Laban (1879 – 1958) and his collaborator, German dancer and choreographer Mary Wigman (1886 – 1973). Robinson records her own experiences of teaching ‘modern creative dance’ in a convent school in Dublin in 1945. She recalls that exhibiting bare legs was entirely unacceptable and at term end, the local Bishop advised the nuns to discontinue classes of that type at the school. Her experience is echoed by her contemporary Kathleen O’Rourke, who had founded the Dublin College of Physical Education (1947-1955) before her tenure as principal of St. Raphael’s College of Physical Education. O’Rourke also taught in convent schools under the supervision of a nun to ensure modesty was upheld, again determined by a non-display of legs (McCullagh, 2004). In 1934, when O’Rourke introduced the Women’s League of Health and Beauty to Ireland, the word ‘beauty’ was dropped from the title at the behest of the Catholic Church and the League’s logo, featuring a girl dressed in a tunic ‘leaping on a beach’ had to be abandoned

(McCullagh, 2004, 55). Church antipathy extended beyond Dublin. The Cork correspondent for the *Irish Times* (1941, 6) reported that ‘pongo’, a teenage dance craze of the day, was denounced publicly in an address by the Dean of Cork, who declared dancing as ‘the greatest scourge that ever struck Ireland’ pronouncing it as demoralising for both boys and girls. Also in Cork, efforts to bring ballet performances to local audiences had met with serious church objections. In 1929, public attendance at Anna Pavlova’s company at Cork Opera House were strenuously opposed in sermons given by local priests, resulting in a handful of audience members attending the performances and ‘an early return to London by the company’ (Fleischmann, 1998, 16).

The influence of ‘foreign’ styles on adult and teenage social-dancing that might, in turn, have brought some diversity to school children’s experiences of dance, was particularly thwarted within rural communities. Ó hAllmhuráin (2005) tells us that in rural locations, kitchens and crossroad platforms had been customary locations for social-dancing. The repertoire on these occasions included the older, pre-An Coimisiún, group set dances, ballroom, and popular idioms which were generically referred to as ‘jazz dance’ in Ireland at the time. By the middle of the 1930s social mores, Irish revisionism and commercial opportunism had become ‘an impassioned battle for the souls and feet of the nation’ (Ó hAllmhuráin, 2005, 11). Social dancing was becoming a lucrative commercial activity and dance licensing legislation, introduced under the 1935 Public Dance Halls Act brought it into the state’s economy and under the scrutiny of the Catholic Church. The church was heavily involved in building and managing new parochial halls in rural areas where public dances were held. Revisionist organisations such as Cumann Lúthchleas Gael (Gaelic Athletic Association), Conradh Na Gaeilge (Gaelic League) and, in the case of dance, An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha (The Irish Dancing Commission) actively discouraged ‘foreign’ styles and influences. An Coimisiún influence also took effect within traditional Irish forms, finding the freer body usage of sean nós (old style) and the close body contact of the popular group set dances less desirable than the style fostered within the organisation, where ‘the nearest

approach to contiguity is the joining of outstretched hands' (Brennan, 1999, 132). The emergence of céili bands with their swelled sound designed to fill the newly built parochial halls, may have brought new employment opportunities for traditional musicians and ceili dance 'callers', however, it sundered a lineage that had been informed by 'the cultural contours of the kitchen, the travelling dance master and the country house dance' (Ó'h Allmhuráin, 2005, 18).

The Coimisiún regimen, which had in most regions replaced the distinctive styles of travelling dance masters, would eventually produce dancers capable of the highly athletic performances seen in *Riverdance*, which according to Ó Súilleabháin (cited in Mulrooney, 2006), could not have happened if dancers such as Michael Flatley, Colin Dunne and Jean Butler had not been trained within the Coimisiún culture of competition developed over the previous sixty years. The increasing demands of virtuosic display and honed technique, seen as essential to winning competitions at worldwide level, was matched by a decreasing regard for the more fluid steps and patterns characteristic of the sean nós dancing master's style, which had placed equal value on the preservation of dance material and creative interpretation. While the work of most dance masters is lost, the work of North-Kerry master, Jeremiah Molyneaux has been preserved and continues to inform the work of Síamsa Tíre's stage productions and its school, of which the latter received high praise in an Arts Council review of dance education and training (Leatherdale and Todd, 1998, 19). Ó Súilleabháin (cited in Mulrooney, 2006, 229) notes that the improvisatory approaches of the sean nós styles, in general, have shaped Irish dancing courses developed at Limerick's Irish World Academy of Music and Dance. Accredited education and training opportunities, such as those offered by the World Academy and Síamsa Tíre, together with the work of voluntary organisations such as Cairde Rincí Céilí Na hÉireann, which promote non-competitive dancing for all age groups, are a valuable curriculum resource for primary schools in the area of Irish dancing.

Of the range of dance idioms that might inform the school curriculum, Irish dance is the most easily accessed and widely applied. Its preservation within the curriculum has been actively maintained since its introduction to the syllabus in 1926. When new approaches to teaching physical education incorporating Laban's proposals were introduced at a seminar on physical education at St. Raphael's' College in Dublin concerns were raised by some attendees about the potentially negative influence that these new approaches might have on the preservation of Irish traditional dance (*Irish Times*, 1965, 6). The vernacular form augmented national efforts to reinstate the cultural legacy, and to promote the language in the hopes of realising an Irish population of 'truly bilingual' status, an aspiration restated in the government's first *White Paper on Educational Development* (Government of Ireland, 1980, 108). A government review of the arts in the school curriculum carried out during the 1980s (Curriculum and Examinations Board 1985a), found that traditional Irish dancing was being timetabled within school hours or provided as an extracurricular activity in most primary schools. The Irish National Teachers' Organisation's conference on physical education in the primary school presented findings of a 2005 survey. The survey found that ninety three per cent of respondents taught physical education, the games strand being 'often or sometimes' included by one hundred per cent of respondents (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2007, 12-13). Seventy per cent included the dance strand 'often or sometimes'. Regrettably, no differentiation between 'creative' and 'folk' was sought so the degree to which creative dance was taught cannot be determined. Where teachers identified a type of dance activity it was in response to a question on the use of specialist teachers/coaches to deliver physical education. In the case of dance, teachers reported that folk dance was 'often or sometimes' taught by an Irish dance or ceili dancing teacher.

In 2005, the then Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin T.D. (Dáil Éireann, 2005), confirmed an emphasis on Irish culture within the revised primary school curriculum. When asked to make a statement on the manner in which Irish music, dance and culture is catered for in the primary school curriculum, Minister Hanafin responded that major empha-

sis is placed on Irish culture, including music and dance, in the primary school curriculum. She stated that the curriculum held numerous examples of learning experiences which emphasise Irish heritage, games, music and dance. Acknowledging that use of the Irish language is the most obvious aspect, the Minister pointed out that Irish culture permeates other curriculum areas. In visual arts pupils are, for example, taught to look at and respond to Irish works and in music, an awareness and appreciation of song and traditional Irish instruments is given emphasis. Dance, she explained, is a strand of physical education, and learning objectives include the performance of simple Irish figure and step dances. She also pointed out that Irish dancing is a particular focus of the implementation process, with opportunities to practise set-dancing during courses presented to teachers during the physical education module. On implementation within schools, the Minister responded that in her visits to more than two hundred schools that year, she had been impressed by the emphasis being put on dancing, singing and on use of the Irish language. She stated however, that much depends on the interest of the teacher and stressed the importance of summer programmes in encouraging teachers to include Irish culture in arts areas of the curriculum. The Minister was responding to a parliamentary question on access to Irish culture in schools so, understandably, her response focussed on local heritage and traditions. However, the view expressed by the Minister, which positions dance within a heritage context and dance education as cultural learning, rather than dance as art and dance education as art form learning, is indicative of the long-held organisational perception and understanding of the Department of Education. This view was evident in the Department's 1926 curriculum and while subsequent revisions published in 1977 and 1999 included creative dance, the folk dance elements, in particular the Irish tradition, continued to dominate. The dominant position of Irish traditional dance appears to be due to a number of factors. It is a part of the national cultural heritage and therefore, seen as an important element of cultural learning. Successive government policies, and government officials, have promoted and approved its inclusion in the curriculum. There are publically funded national resource agencies which advocate on its behalf, and regulate and support Irish dance teachers and teaching. In recent times, third-level opportunities have

become available, including degree programmes in ethno-choreology, traditional dance and music. Notably, there is now a significant theatrical presence which has heightened public and media interest in Irish dance nationally and internationally. The phenomenally successful *Riverdance* production has created welcome opportunities for dancers, choreographers and specialist teachers working in this idiom and has invigorated the debate on traditional Irish dance generally. Teachers and pupils, as audience members, now have access to dance ‘products’ which display high production values. These viewing experiences add to teacher interest, knowledge and experience of the form. The success of *Riverdance* and many similar productions which followed in the slipstream, have further secured the foothold of the genre already held within curriculum provision. Given the limitations on dance in the school timetable, non-specialists teachers are likely to opt for a genre they, and perhaps their pupils, are already familiar with and are easily accessed in terms of structure, content and teaching resources. The prescribed content for Irish dance in the primary syllabus is well known material. Should teachers not be familiar with the content, detailed instructions are provided for the Irish and European folk dances. Short videos of all the folk dances suggested are now available online (Professional Development Service for Teachers, 2008) and music recordings are readily available. None of the content or methodologies requires knowledge or skill in the area of dance composition. Of interest is the inclusion of the suggestion that teachers may find an opportunity to ‘explore the social and cultural background of some of the dances’ (Department of Education and Science, 1999c, 7), although no guidance or resource materials are given as to how such endeavour might be undertaken. Preserving the tradition of Irish, European and other relevant world heritage dance is important, but it must also be recognised that ‘creative dance’, which brings a knowledge base and skills set not addressed in folk dance, shares equal standing with folk dance in the dance strand of the primary physical education syllabus. Laban (1948, 23) believed in a dance education that aspires to release the natural flow of movement, which he saw as the antithesis to one based on codes and conventions such as ballet, folk dance and the body culture ‘movement to music’ practices, prevalent at that time. To this could be added, Irish step and figure dancing. While historical

state and church antipathy towards styles other than Irish dancing may have diminished, it appears there is little access to creative dance in schools, as part of the timetable or as an extracurricular activity.

O'Dowd (2006) expressed serious reservations about the capacity of the facilitators leading the implementation process of the revised curriculum to deliver dance content and methodologies other than folk dance. This suggests that the facilitators, who were themselves teachers, did not have sufficient knowledge and experience of 'creative dance' which in the syllabus, is strongly influenced by Laban's 'art of movement' principles and practices. It would be difficult for teachers to implement the creative dance strand as set out in the syllabus without an understanding of how to engage Laban's educational framework in the wider realm of fostering dance appreciation, which is the main learning outcome defined for dance in the curriculum (Department of Education and Science, 1999b). Teacher education programmes should also be informed by the challenges and changes to the Laban model since its introduction to the Irish curriculum in 1971, some of which have impacted on 1999 revisions. In the United Kingdom such developments have had significant impact on teaching and learning dance which, as mentioned already, are discussed in chapter three. The following section examines the influence of Laban's modern educational dance (1948) on dance education in Ireland, and the extent to which challenges and changes to this model in the United Kingdom had impact on the Irish curriculum.

2.4 Modern educational dance - the Irish experience

2.4.1 Background and development of Laban's art of movement principles

Rudolf Laban (1879-1958), an Austro-Hungarian movement theorist and choreographer, claims that his educational framework embodies the ideologies, techniques and compositional forms of *la danse libre* (free dance). The ideologies of 'free dance' stem from Laban's *bewegungskunst* (art of movement) research and practice, begun in Paris in the early 1900s. He coined the term 'art of movement' to encompass, and to brand, his movement concepts

(Preston-Dunlop, 1998). According to Preston-Dunlop (1998), Laban began his art of movement research by observing the human behaviours of everyday life, a practice which had informed earlier dance and movement theorists. Laban (1948) credits *ballet d'action* founder Jean George Noverre's (1727-1810) practice of sending students out into the street to study habits and movement characteristics of the day as his 'greatest deed'. Morrison (1998) affirms his familiarity with François Delsarte's (1811-1871) principles of expressive movement, devised for purposes of teaching expressive gesture to actors and musicians. Delsarte's notion of 'trinity' whereby space, time and motion co-exist and interact, informed Laban's research. Two contemporaries of Laban's, American modern dance pioneer Isadora Duncan (1877-1927) and developer of eurhythmics Emile Jacques-Dalcroze (1865-1950), also looked to 'natural' movement for inspiration. While acknowledging the importance of Duncan's work, Laban (1948) disapproved of both the inspiration she drew from ancient dance and the musical reliance of her work. Laban held that ancient historic dance cannot authenticate a lineage due to scant evidence, nor can conclusions be drawn as to how, why, when or where past societies danced, therefore containing little of educational value. The requirement for access to, and examination of specific contexts in which dance happens as essential to critical appreciation of dance would be debated by Best (1974) and Adshead (1988). Laban (1948) also wished to separate dance from its strong associations with music and employed the properties of movement and body rhythms as the impetus for much of his choreography. The practice of seeking inspiration from natural or pedestrian movement, as an alternative to prescribed codes and conventions such as ballet and folk dance, is a recurring theme in dance theatre history including, significantly, the work of the 1960s New York postmodernist Judson Church group (Au, 1988).

Laban's educational principles are rooted in an abiding conviction that it is possible, and desirable, to design a movement syllabus that draws on, explores, celebrates, and counteracts if necessary, the social contexts and mores of everyday human life. Laban (1948) refers to the work of Frederick Taylor (1856-1917) an American inventor and engineer who devel-

oped theories on scientific management aimed at maximising efficiency amongst unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers. Laban (1947) co-authored *Effort: Economy of Human Movement* with F.C. Lawrence, employing observational study techniques to improve factory work-rates and conditions (Foster, 1977). Laban (1948, 3) maintained that dance tuition could counter the negative impact of the mechanistic age, giving expression to the full 'effort-life' of the individual and in so doing, society would be creating a dance form that is 'the movement expression of industrial man'. Preston-Dunlop (1998, 101) describes her understanding of Laban's vision for *bewegungskunst* in education as becoming aware of, sensing, and realising an enjoyment of the free-standing body within the surrounding space, and the feeling of the changing qualities of time and dynamics – 'no more, no less'.

In 1912, Laban moved to Switzerland, remaining there for the duration of the First World War. He joined an artists' colony in Monte Verità, Ascona where, together with the German dance artist Mary Wigman (1886-1973), he set out to re-define dance (Maletic, 1987). Laban's research seeded the new German dance *ausdruckstanz* (expressionist dance), created with Wigman, which would inform the work of Kurt Jooss (1901-1979), Sigurd Leeder (1902-1981) and later, Pina Bausch (1940-2009). *Ausdruckstanz* was known in England as Central European Dance (Servos, 1998). Students of Central European Dance in the United Kingdom, many of them physical education teachers, collaborated with Laban in devising an interpretation of his 'art of movement' theories, processes and materials for use in educational contexts. Laban was not new to education and training, during his career he established a network of schools based on his aesthetic and artistic philosophy and teaching methods. His first school was founded in Zurich in 1915, followed by schools in a number of European centres managed by Laban graduates (Preston-Dunlop, 1998). By 1918 Laban had fully established his training methods, his choric ideologies and his choreographic practice which Preston-Dunlop contends, drew inspiration from the mythology, symbols and practices of ritual. Laban had been a member of the Rosicrucian society since his student days in Paris: 'the evidence is everywhere in his practice and his writings' (Preston-Dunlop, 1998, 12). In

England, Laban's choric practice would become known as 'movement choir'. Gleisner (1979, 19) an associate of Laban's, recalls the passion which Laban invested in his choric work which was designed to 'awake and let radiate more and more strongly a sense, a basic sense for reaching essential humanity'.

Laban returned to Germany in 1920. From 1933, he held the position of director of movement and dance at the State Opera Berlin, obtaining German nationality in 1935 (Vertinsky, 2004, 276 - 278). In 1936 he was the Director of Dance in Berlin and according to Vertinsky was at the height of his career. Vertinsky notes that the Nazi regime was not slow to recognise the political potential of Laban's talent for choreographing dance spectacles and mass movement choirs. Vertinsky contends that Laban worked willingly with the Nazis as Germany's dance master during the Third Reich before incurring Goebbels' displeasure on the eve of the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Goebbels cancelled Laban's large-scale movement choir on grounds of over association with left-wing beliefs. Laban was dismissed and in 1938, following a stay in Paris, moved to England to join his former pupil Kurt Jooss at Dartington Hall, a unique arts and educational community in the Devonshire countryside of south western England set up by Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst in 1925. There is no evidence to suggest that Laban ever came to Ireland however, Jooss did visit with his company in 1939. An *Irish Times* (1939) article reported the performances and noted the strong influence of Laban on Jooss' choreographic style.

Laban had recognised the importance of recording his work and was familiar with the Beauchamps-Feuillet (1700) system of movement notation. This system was developed during the reign of Louis XIV to record the court dances that formed the basis of the steps and motifs of classical ballet (Hutchinson Guest, 2005, 2-3). This, and other extant dance notation systems, would inform Laban's own system which he, together with collaborator Albrecht Knust (1896-1978), published as *Schritttanz* in 1928 (Preston-Dunlop, 1990). Largely through the work of Irmgard Bartenieff (1890-1981), a former Laban student and

trained physiotherapist, the embodied aspects of Laban's movement research have been maintained and further developed. Now known as Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), it is applied to movement studies, dance, drama as well as various forms of movement therapy (Hutchinson Guest, 2005, 3). The main inheritors of his professional training methods and compositional processes were the Folkwang Schule in Essen, and exponents of German expressionist dance, most notably Bausch (1940 – 2009). Also, American choreographer William Forsythe (1949 -) who until recently was based in Frankfurt, acknowledges Laban as an influence on his work.

2.4.2 Movement materials and approaches espoused in the framework

As mentioned previously, the theoretical and experiential system formulated by Laban through his study of human movement informs the educational framework published as *Modern Educational Dance* (Laban, 1948). Written in his sixty-ninth year, it was published in the English language. Laban (1948, vii) acknowledged the assistance of Veronica Sherborne (née Tyndale Biscoe), a student of his at that time, later renowned for her work in special education. Lisa Ullmann, erstwhile student and company member of Laban's in Switzerland and Germany, who by this time had become a major collaborator, colleague and life companion, contributed to the publication. The framework was devised primarily for use in primary and secondary education and was promoted as a means of educating the whole person. Laban (1948, 11) states that the aim was not artistic product, but the beneficial effect of the creative activity of dancing upon the personality of the pupil. He cautions against the use of formal devices and external stimuli rather, pupils should be allowed to create their own dances: 'neither dramatic nor musical inspiration received by a text or set music is required', the conflict and resolutions within movement itself was thought to provide sufficient inspiration. Accompaniment suggested is 'wordless singing or percussion', provided by the children themselves (Laban, 1948, 49-50). The 1948 framework is presented as a study of his 'free dance' ideologies described as a movement language (Laban, 1948, 26). Movement education was organised around four fundamental 'art of movement' principles as follows:

- Bodily actions – the five core being gesture, turning, leaping, stepping, and stillness;
- Effort – an exploration of the dynamic, expressive qualities of movement;
- Spatial design and spatial harmonies – developing an awareness and mastery in the use of personal (kinesphere) and general (room orientation) space.
- Social relationships.

Harmonious flow was the ultimate experiential outcome sought. Its achievement was thought to demonstrate a mentally and physically happily adjusted life (Laban, 1948, 23).

Modern Educational Dance was written as a guide for teachers and parents (Laban, 1948, vii). The text of one hundred and eleven pages comprises:

- An introduction to children's movement development, from an 'art of movement' perspective.
- A framework of sixteen progressive movement themes with pedagogical observations interspersed throughout.
- Two chapters of notes for teachers setting out the basic principles and techniques of 'art of movement' with emphasis on effort (eukinetic) and spatial (choreutic) harmonisation.
- A case for developing teacher competency in movement observation.

Laban (1948, 12) identifies five learning outcomes, denoted as 'achievable tasks' which can be summarised as follows:

- To foster and concentrate the innate urge and natural ability of children to move freely in an expressive, dance-like manner.
- Preserve spontaneity in movement as a lifelong quality.
- Allow each child to create dances appropriate to their age and ability, and be involved in communal dance practice led by the teacher.
- Increase each child's awareness of human movement through observation.
- Engender an integrated understanding of both the intellectual and creative capacities of the new ['free'] dance.

Laban presents his educational framework as a thematic structure, comprising sixteen themes comprising eight elementary and eight advanced. Elementary themes advise teachers to base early dance education in the instinctive movement behaviour of infants. Task setting should allow children to respond playfully to stimuli, using their own ideas and effort qualities without correction: ‘children should not be asked to copy’ (Laban, 1948, 20). An emphasis on technical aspects such as formations or footwork is seen as detrimental to the unfolding of the child’s unique qualities of expression. Content designed for younger children focuses on developing kinaesthetic awareness which is focussed on the body in motion and stillness. It explores simple whole-body actions, spontaneous and planned expressivity, simple spatial concepts, and partnering. Advanced themes emphasise the need for students to be involved in creating ‘finished dances’. In this endeavour, subjective response is seen as more important than objective response: ‘the creative stimulus and the awareness of the enlivening and freeing influence of dance movement are all that is desirable’ (Laban, 1948, 50). Developing a deeper awareness of contrasts and complementarities, leading to a more discerning and imaginative use of effort and appropriate spatial choices is included in work with older children, with increasing complexity. The use of improvisation is encouraged. Tasks that develop an ability to observe fluctuations and patterning in others is encouraged, with a view to enhancing personal understanding and knowledge. The framework aims to involve children beneficially in the ‘effort-life’ experience, an area of movement study Laban called eukinetics, which he believed reveals the human personality (Davies, 2001, 54). Eukinetics is introduced as exercises in the qualitative use of the motion factors, ‘weight, space, time and flow’. These four primary ingredients, used to greater or lesser degrees are, according to Laban, the bases of expressive movement. In his research, Laban observed eight basic qualities, which he called ‘effort actions’. Coordinated and felt interplay between the qualities and inherent rhythms of the eight actions, and relaxation (stillness), is seen as important to achieving a mastery of ‘free dance’ technique. The eight actions - pressing, flicking, punching (or thrusting), floating, wringing, dabbing, slashing and gliding, are presented as isolated actions, in combinations and with derivative options, in solo and group

contexts. The motion factors were originally described by Laban as ‘energy, space, flow and speed’. They later became known as ‘weight, space, time and flow’, a labelling regretted by Preston-Dunlop (1998, 228): ‘for it closed a concept that needed to stay open, for words appropriate for effort in industry, in theatre, in therapy and in the school hall are not identical’. Older students were to be introduced to a system of graphics (kinetography), now universally known as Labanotation. The dynamics of spatial harmonisation (choreutics) focuses initially on orientation within personal space (kinesphere), described as an imaginary space immediately surrounding the body and general space, which is described as room orientation. Initial exploration and performance of spatial pathways in the air and on the floor lead to more complex patterning. In ‘free dance’ the locus, or ‘space-centre’, of movement radiates from the solar plexus. The spatial bearing point is below the body, it is not directed upwards and forward as in ballet. Intermediate content explores the spatial dynamics of an imaginary cube. Orientation, described as sagittal (vertical), lateral (coronal) and horizontal ‘planes’, and directional pathways exploring dimensionality; diagonals and diameters of the imagined cube are used for purposes of movement education and performance studies. Advanced study presents a more complex spatial understanding involving ‘swinging scales’ which use prescribed definitions within the kinesphere, tracing points of an imagined octahedron and, ultimately an icosahedron. The icosahedron encapsulates twenty-six directions radiating from the ‘space-centre’, the centre itself being the twenty-seventh point of orientation (Laban, 1948, 86). Effort qualities create qualitative sub-texts, or dictate the patterning, of these advanced motion studies.

Laban (1948) did not expect school children to create work of artistic significance. His focus for children was choric practice, beginning with simple solo and partner formations leading to larger group formations. Laban students, including Redfern (1965, 29), elaborated on the possibilities: ‘groups may dance in unison, in canon, as a kind of counterpoint, and so on, or they may act and react upon one another and produce conflicting as well as harmonious situations’. Teachers are asked to find their own manner of stimulating pupils to dance,

they may select liberally, in mix and match fashion, from either broad movement concepts or specific elements of any one, or any combination of the sixteen themes. The 1948 publication does not set out evaluative criteria or propose assessment modes. The third edition (Laban, 1975) edited by Lisa Ullmann (1907-1985) proposed additional educational aims which aimed to assist students to realise and enhance their personal potential; to learn to relate to others; increase responsiveness; and enhance the ability to communicate. This third edition also did not address assessment methods.

2.4.3 Further developments to Laban's educational framework

Laban's thematic framework was further developed by Jordan (1966), Russell (1958; 1965; 1969) and notably, Preston-Dunlop (1963), all former Laban students. Preston-Dunlop extended the original content. Her text, *A Handbook for Modern Educational Dance* was written fifteen years after the publication of *Modern Educational Dance*, adding to the sixteen themes in light of the fact that 'teachers have been experimenting with them and the richness inherent in each has gradually unfolded' (Preston-Dunlop, 1963, xiv). Preston-Dunlop would also expound on Laban's (1956) notation system in a series of publications on kinetography Laban. Further revisions to the handbook acknowledge shortcomings, particularly its concentration on personal development (Preston-Dunlop, 1980). Changes were primarily aimed at facilitating an art form teaching and learning rationale, however, the focus remained solely on Laban's movement materials and thematic presentation. While a highly regarded and useful resource, and much relied on by teachers in Ireland during the 1960s and 1970s, a dance education syllabus based entirely on Labanism did not meet the requirements of a paradigm shift which sought a much closer alliance with processes and practices associated with the art form. While research into Laban and his life's work continues on a number of fronts, it appears that there have been no further developments of significance to the thematic framework since the 1970s. This is certainly the case in Ireland. O'Loan's (1973) teachers' manual (unpublished) is based on Laban's 'art of movement' principles. While Leonard (1987, 1988, 1989) posed some challenging questions, the dance in education curriculum project

(Department of Education, 1990) ultimately operated within the parameters set for creative dance by the curriculum. Perusal of the 1999 physical education curriculum suggests that while consistent with the ethos of his educational framework, the substance of Laban's thematic schema is much reduced. Particularly when compared to its 1971 predecessor. The influence exerted by Labanism on the Irish curriculum is examined in the following section.

2.4.4 The influence of Laban's educational framework on dance education in Ireland

O'Dowd (2006) determined that Laban's art of movement principles are evident in the 1971 curriculum. Publications listed for dance in the *Teacher's Handbook* are rooted in the Laban approach (Department of Education, 1971). As in the United Kingdom a decade earlier, syllabus designers in Ireland were seeking to establish a rationale and theoretical basis for physical education which embraced a more heuristic approach. The subject-centred approach gave way to a child-centred ethos which allowed for greater flexibility aimed at achieving an integrated curriculum involving linguistic, mathematical and artistic organisation of the child's knowledge and experience (Department of Education, 1971). The physical education syllabus was divided into four strands – movement; games; athletics; and other activities. The movement component comprised two elements - educational gymnastics and educational dance - with materials for both rooted in Laban's analysis of human movement. Educational dance presented 'expressivity' as the over-riding aim and the exploration of dance as a means whereby the child 'would come to terms with his environment' (Department of Education, 1971, 291). Laban's attention to movement observation is evident. The handbook states that by observing movement, the teacher acquires a better understanding of the personality of each child and thus, is better equipped to provide for their pupils. The aims for creative dance were entirely based on personal and social criteria. Of interest is that in music and visual arts, while the main emphasis was on the developmental needs of the child, criteria also placed value on providing a practice, appreciation and enjoyment of the art form. The presentation of expressiveness, personal development and civic responsibility as the rationale for dance education is discussed in section 2.5 within the context of wider

debate on the role of the arts in Irish education.

A new Education Act was passed in 1998, and the revised curriculum was published in the following year. Although situated within physical education, dance is recognised as an area of arts education. The *Primary School Curriculum Introduction* (Department of Education and Science, 1999a, 36) states the aim of arts education as being to develop in children an appreciation and enjoyment of aesthetic activities including music, visual arts, dance, drama and language; and the skills and knowledge necessary to express himself or herself through those activities. The curriculum states that arts education enables children to use a range of communicative expression, through which they can explore their experience of, and interaction with the world. It affords them the opportunity to respond as viewers, listeners or readers to the expressive creativity of the artist, the composer, the writer, and the performer. While ‘the choreographer’ is not mentioned, dance is listed as an area of arts education and it is clear that principles and practices associated with a dance as art orientation would align well with these sentiments. However, the curriculum goes on to state that:

Arts education comprises the visual arts, music, and drama. Dance is developed in the physical education curriculum, and the contribution of literature is experienced through the curriculum area of language (Department of Education and Science, 1999a, 52).

While some comparison might be made, issues pertaining to language and literature are beyond the scope of this study. The stated aims of the *Physical Education Curriculum* are to provide opportunities for children to learn through the medium of movement. The primary focus is on the body and on providing physical experiences which enable children to develop physical skills and co-ordination (Department of Education and Science, 1999b) – a marked difference from the aims of arts education which focus on aesthetic and artistic experiences enabling children to develop expressive and communicative capacities. The physical education curriculum recognises that dance differs from the five non-arts strands. However, difference is portrayed in ‘art of movement’ terminology: ‘the expressive quality of movement and the enjoyment and appreciation of the aesthetic and artistic qualities of move-

ment' (Department of Education and Science, 1999b, 3). There is no mention of difference in terms of educational mode, or that dance is an area of art form learning. Fitzpatrick (2000), a primary school teacher and dance advisor to the physical education committee responsible for curriculum revision under the 1998 Education Act, asserts that confusion existed during deliberations on creative dance resulting from unresolved tensions between art of dance (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002) proposals which she had recommended, and art of movement proposals recommended by the physical education specialists. According to Fitzpatrick, the eventual syllabus for creative dance typifies the Laban educational model. The strand unit for creative dance, which suggests a three-stranded approach: 'exploration, creation and performance', is presented as a framework for developing dance appreciation (Department of Education and Science, 1999b, 18). Of interest here is the absence of observing or viewing dance as a teaching and learning experience. A concept of arts education which excludes the perspective of 'spectator' is incomplete. Drury (2010) refers to the interplay between 'making' and 'receiving' art as the double-helix of experience. A pedagogy which focuses on 'making' art neglects to understand that an art object does not exist in any meaningful way until it is apprehended. He holds that the act of 'making' and that of 'receiving' are mirror images of each other 'ineluctably bound together as in the question posed by Yeats: *how can we know the dancer from the dance?* Drury proffers that the dancer and the dance require to be observed. He maintains that aesthetic apprehension is a learnt and unfolding process. A child of seven will perceive a work differently to a seventeen year old, and that seven old may themselves perceive the same work differently as they develop and mature their capacity to understand and engage with art. In teaching and learning terms, the experience of viewing dance, particularly when guided by an informed teacher, informs children's capacity to make meaning and explore personal identity through engagement with the materials and processes of dance. This can be enhanced by encounters with living artists and access to art form exemplars. The curriculum states that appreciation of dance can be enriched when pupils are given opportunities to see the more accomplished work and performance of others (Department of Education and Science, 1999a). Teacher

guidelines suggest that carefully selected dance performances and workshops can enhance teaching and learning (Department of Education and Science, 1999c). O'Dowd (2006), highlighted the absence of any explanation as to what constitutes dance appreciation during the implementation process. She stressed the need for curriculum resources to be made available for creative dance in order to facilitate teachers in providing meaningful dance experiences for children.

Content specified in the curriculum is entirely rooted in Labanism whereby 'concepts that relate to the body in space, to the changing dynamics of movement and to the implications of moving in relation to other people and the environment' are explored (Department of Education and Science, 1999b, 56). The nomenclature used in exemplars prepared for the curriculum implementation process - 'body parts, body shapes, body actions and dynamics, with lessons focussed on 'developing air and floor pathways, shape outline and dancing with a prop', demonstrates an almost exclusive use of Laban vocabulary (O'Dowd, 2006, 10). Teachers are informed that the strand enables children 'to learn through dance and to learn about dance' and that this is achieved by enabling children 'to improve body management skills, and understand a range of movement concepts' (Department of Education and Science, 1999c, 7). The physical education curriculum recommends the delivery of five strands each year. Consequently, it is likely that where dance is taught children will experience five or six hours of dance in the school year, shared between folk and creative dance. In other arts education areas - music, drama and visual arts, a progressive syllabus is delivered throughout the child's primary school experience. Of interest here is that, as mentioned previously, colleges of education allocate a similarly limited amount of time to dance and Leonard's (1987) first article on teacher development in junior cycle dance, asks: 'what can be done in six lessons?' The time constraint on dance is likely to be a contributory factor in explaining, for example, use of a much reduced Laban framework mentioned earlier, and the underdeveloped nature of content and methodologies generally for creative dance. Gray (2008) holds that due to time constraints within teacher education and the dearth of

resources, the resource-based midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002) will not be fully realised in Irish primary schools. He asserts however, that the three-stranded approach is relevant and in keeping with the primary school curriculum, and importantly, accords with the tenets of productive pedagogy. Unlike the arts subject areas, physical education is not an examination subject. Evaluation and assessment processes that might tease out ambiguities, explore rationale, hone learning outcomes and refine teaching supports are underdeveloped in the dance strand.

O'Donoghue (1985) had noted that a 1965 Department of Education report made no attempt to clarify what is particularly worthwhile about either educational dance or educational gymnastics. In acknowledging the anxiety which many teachers had expressed about teaching educational dance and gymnastics, the 1971 teachers' handbook suggested having more faith in the initiative and inventiveness of their pupils (Department of Education, 1971). Brinson (1985) held that the majority of teachers in the Irish education system did not understand the purpose of teaching dance. Leonard (1988) saw the need for teachers to accept that dance pedagogy must reflect the intrinsic logic of dance and that the teacher must be able to make this intrinsic logic accessible to his/her students. Vertinsky (2004) asserts that Laban provided an interesting combination of dance, body culture and physical education through which to examine the ways in which ideas and belief systems become embedded in particular embodied practices. But in the decades following his death Vertinsky argues that few of his pupils or scholars have attempted to seriously analyse and understand his work which she contends evoke either unconditional support or outright dismissal. In Ireland, Laban's proposition for educational dance appears uncontested, unlike challenges which unfolded in the United Kingdom during the 1960s and 1970s. However, the literature reveals that a rationale for dance education which locates the educative process in an appreciation of dance as art was proposed in Ireland in the 1980s. The following section explores previous debate and discussion regarding proposals for a rationale for dance as art in the Irish context.

2.5 Proposals for a rationale for dance as art in the Irish context

In October 1985, the Arts Council, in association with Dublin Theatre Festival, convened a one-day seminar on dance education at Mount Temple Comprehensive School, Dublin. O'Brien (1985b) reports that the Mount Temple seminar was attended by over eighty dancers, dance teachers, arts and education policy-makers, dance company managements, and media representatives. The Minister of State for Arts and Culture, Ted Nealon T.D. opened the seminar, followed by a performance of *Early Warnings* by LUDUS, a dance-in-education company based in Lancaster, England. Speakers included Arthur Lappin, former Drama and Dance officer at the Arts Council and then Chair of the Dance Council of Ireland. Lappin called on the Minister to address the seeming immobility of the Department of Education in relation to the arts. He urged collaborative action between the Minister for Education and the Minister of State for Arts and Culture in the context of two new reports – *The Arts in Education* (Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1985a) and *The Dancer and The Dance* (Brinson, 1985). He recalled previous Arts Council reports (Bodkin, 1949; Richards, 1976; Benson, 1979) all of which, particularly the latter, had identified major gaps in arts education provision in Ireland (O'Brien, 1986). The Benson report (1979) had been commissioned to inform the development of the Arts Council's first policy on education. Findings concentrated on shortcomings and inadequacies within the educational system. The report called for sound arguments to be made across all of the art form disciplines, in order to persuade educationalists and policy-makers that the arts have a significant and unique contribution to make to education. Benson (1979, 21-24) urged a consideration of this contribution under a range of factors which, in summary, were as follows:

- social and cultural relevance including the case for broader access to the arts, and an understanding of diverse interpretations of the arts;
- the impact of new technologies and the growing need for media literacy;
- the arts as distinctive modes of inquiry and communication;
- achievement of high-level aesthetic judgement as an integral part of intellectual development;

- economic impact;
- purposeful use of leisure time.

The report became the cornerstone of Arts Council policy and strategy in the area of the arts and education for the following thirty years.

Recommendations made in the Benson report, which were many and detailed, were briefly mentioned in the *White Paper on Educational Development* (Government of Ireland, 1980). This paper gave scant attention to arts education. The Benson report did, however, provide the impetus for significant debate on the arts in education, begun in 1984 as part of curriculum reform under the auspices of the newly appointed Curriculum and Examinations Board, now reconstituted as the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (1993). The Board appointed an Arts Working Party whose membership included Benson, then the outgoing Education Officer at the Arts Council. *The Arts in Education* (Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1985a) was largely informed by Benson's report, and argued educational significance for arts provision within education in an overarching rationale encompassing 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' factors. Extrinsic benefits, presented as neither the most important nor ultimately the most convincing, focus on: employment, transferable skills, tourism, national worth and confidence, audience development, and purposeful use of leisure time. Intrinsic benefits, seen as addressing more fundamental concerns, place emphasis on the arts disciplines as distinctive forms of knowing having characteristic and separate symbol systems (Goodman, 1976) which if ignored, will deny children a significant and unique domain of human thought and feeling. It is further argued that the arts involve children in human processes which of their nature are separate to, and not encountered in other curricular areas (Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1985a). A rationale for each of the arts disciplines, including dance, is presented within this context. The case for dance, as in other arts areas, was informed by a separate position paper on dance prepared by the Dance Council of Ireland for the Arts Working Party (Arts Council, 1985a). The position paper on dance entitled *Dance Education in Ireland*, articulated the need for a clearly stated

rationale for the inclusion of dance within the educational system. The paper, which was informed by a Calouste Gulbenkian study on dance education and training in Britain (Brinson, 1980), presented two fundamental principles requiring articulation in a rationale for dance as education in an Irish context, these were: the nature of the art form itself, and the unique contribution of dance to Irish education. The position paper addressed these principles under the following six headings:

- Cultural relevance of dance
- Historical relevance of dance
- Educational relevance of dance
- Social relevance of dance
- Dance as a distinctive area of arts theory and practice
- Dance as a contributor to broader arts education.

Highlighting the developmental nature of primary education as the most formative years regarding the acquisition of psychomotor, cognitive and affective skills, the paper argues that experiencing movement as a means of expression and communication brings physical knowledge and self-confidence. When linked with other art forms and subject areas, and followed progressively at a level commensurate with the infant, middle and senior grades, the paper argues that it was difficult to see why dance was all too often accorded little or no time in the school curriculum (Arts Council, 1985a). The paper proposed a review of the curriculum and in so doing, suggested that dance education models from elsewhere should be examined and possibly adapted to suit Irish conditions. *The Arts in Education* (Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1985a) draws on this paper in its case for dance which, together with drama, literature, music and the visual arts, as mentioned already, were presented within the wider context of an overarching rationale for arts education in Irish primary and post-primary education.

Brinson (1985) noted the contribution of the Richards (1976) and Benson (1979) reports

however, asserted that these accounts had not given adequate attention to dance either as an art form or as a fundamentally important part of education. Brinson (1986) later recounted that during his investigations in Ireland, dance within the educational system had emerged as a strategic priority, resulting in an entire chapter dedicated to the topic. Two areas of priority were identified in the report. The first was to situate the case for dance within the wider context of developments sought for the arts as part of formal education in Ireland. The second was to identify and prioritise specific strategic actions for the development of dance as education in the Irish context. The case for the wider context was premised on the contribution which engagement with the arts made to national wealth - understood as accruing economic, psychological and social benefits. Brinson (1985, 51) asserted that the arts not only communicate ideas but also are 'a way of having ideas, of educating the imagination and creating a national climate within which imaginations can flourish'. He had recommended an Irish consideration of a set of principles originally put forward in *The Arts in Schools* (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1982), briefly summarised as follows:

- that human intelligence is manifested through a number of distinctive modes of understanding and communication;
- that the arts play an essential role in developing the ability for creative thought and action, benefitting the individual student and society as a whole;
- the need to educate feeling and sensibility, challenging perceived views that divide intellect from emotion in seeing the arts as outpourings of emotion, rather than disciplined forms of inquiry and expression;
- that art processes allow for an exploration of values, and are concerned with the evaluation and revaluation of the world in which we live;
- the arts are essential to cultural change and identity, involving personal and social experience; in order to have ideas about the world and to act in it, young people need to develop physical and perceptual skills far above the level at present posited in Irish education.

Brinson (1985) proposed areas of strategic importance to dance education in Ireland, includ-

ing the need for an informed inspectorate, specialist advisors/teachers, engagement with the dance profession and private teaching systems, for example, ballet and Irish dancing, and teacher education. The report urged greater awareness of aesthetic education, improved syllabuses and a radical overhaul of teacher development.

The Report of the Board of Studies for The Arts (Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1987) endorsed the proposals of the Arts Working Party, highlighting three overarching aims for arts education:

- to develop a love of, interest in and value for the arts (defined as dance, drama, literature, music and the visual arts);
- to achieve a balance between artistic education (making art) and aesthetic education (receiving art);
- to acquaint the student with the traditions of art.

The report made an unprecedented twenty-seven recommendations on dance ordered as nine general aims, and nine for each of primary and post-primary levels. Recommendations, given here in summary, sought to bring about:

- better understanding of dance as an art form;
- access to dance within the educational system as a cultural entitlement;
- extended range and purposeful use of natural play and movement in infant classes;
- increased bodily and kinaesthetic awareness and intelligence;
- increased abilities in dance performance, composition and observation;
- wider knowledge of dance through related areas of study and visits to dance performances;
- opportunities for talented pupils to participate in work commensurate with their ability level which may provide a basis for a future career in dance;
- promotion and encouragement of positive attitudes towards the body, and to dance;

- increased social skills;
- better use of integration with other art forms leading to an understanding and valuing of common and distinctive features of dance, and of other arts disciplines.

2.5.1 Emerging tensions between art of movement and art of dance

A change of government in 1987 brought about a formal review of primary education.

Revisions to the 1971 curriculum began with the work of the Review Body on the Primary Curriculum established in 1990 by the then Minister for Education, Mary O'Rourke T.D.

The Quinlan (1990) review carried out a detailed appraisal of primary education and the ensuing report provided the basis for a redesign and restructure of the curriculum. The

Report of the Review Body on the Primary Curriculum (Quinlan, 1990) did not consider individual arts disciplines in any depth; dance receives no mention. The report identifies the lack of a rationale for the arts within previous curriculum planning and stresses the

importance of preparing a general statement of aesthetic principles from which aims and objectives for the arts disciplines in the curriculum can be derived. These were to encompass historical, critical-appreciative and expressive aspects of arts education and research within

the field of aesthetical educational theory. The work of Abbs (1987), Reid (1969), Witkin (1974), and Ross (1989) are recommended for this task. Coincidentally, Ross (1990) had

addressed a conference on dance education held at Thomond College, the second on the topic to be held in Ireland. As mentioned previously, the first had taken place in 1985, organised

by the Arts Council and Dublin Theatre Festival (O'Brien, 1985b, 1986). Ross gave the keynote address and spoke of tensions in the arts education sector in the United Kingdom due to

a move away from post-war liberal arts and a child-centred ethos, to the market-economy policies of Thatcherism. He asserted that *The Arts in Schools* (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1982) had been published because of fears that education was moving towards a materialistic and functionalist reformulation of objectives. In Ireland, the publication of the

Education for a Changing World: Green Paper (Government of Ireland, 1992) would generate similar debate. Debate on the Green Paper highlighted an almost complete absence of men-

tion of the arts. Deputy Michael D. Higgins (Dáil Éireann, 1992) pointed out that none of the many reports on the arts and education from Benson (1979) onwards had been mentioned, asserting that they have been uniformly ignored. A survey (Shelly, 1993) records the continuing lack of access to dance as part of physical education in schools at that time. A dance response to the Green paper (Leahy, 1993) was compiled by the Dance Department at the University of Limerick following a one-day seminar on the topic held in January 1993. Drury (cited in Leahy, 1993), a former Arts Council Education Officer and member of the Curriculum and Examinations Board Arts Working Party, drew comparisons between the vocabulary used for the arts and other curriculum areas. Terminology employed for the arts suggested students should acquire an ‘appreciation’, and an ‘enjoyment’ of participation in creative activity. When compared to non-arts areas which extol for example, ‘mastery’, ‘understanding’ and ‘knowledge’ Drury asserted that it was hard to escape the conclusion that appreciation and enjoyable participation are ‘a bit soft’. Drury was despairing of the deficiencies in understanding the distinctive educational significance of the arts, with consequent failings in understanding the nature of human intelligence. Declaring this as wilful neglect on the part of the Department of Education, Drury held that recommendations made on dance since the first *White Paper on Educational Development* (Government of Ireland, 1980) ‘might as well never have happened, for all the influence they have had on the Department of Education’. A vigorous lobby on the part of the arts sector ensured that the second paper, *Charting Our Education Future, White Paper on Education* (Government of Ireland, 1995) affirmed the centrality of the arts as part of the curriculum. The White Paper (1995, 21) presents and understanding of arts education as developing the imagination, fostering important kinds of thinking and problem solving, as well as offering opportunities to symbolise, to play and to celebrate, thereby assisting the young person to become ‘a tolerant, critically aware and socially committed citizen who can live with confidence in the world’.

Curriculum revision had begun in the wake of the Quinlan report (1990) under the auspices of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, formerly the Curriculum and

Examinations Board. Committees representing all of the principal partners and interests in primary education were established on a phased basis to draw up subject statements and teacher guidelines in each of the six curriculum areas: language; mathematics; social environmental and scientific education; arts education; physical education; and social, personal and health education, due to be completed in June 1995 (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1995a). A committee on arts education and another on physical and health education were set up in 1992 and 1993 respectively; in each case drawing on a range of interests and expertise, including members of the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and the Arts Council. The arts education committee worked in plenary on general matters, and in the case of music and visual arts, in specific syllabus development working groups (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1995b, 1995c). In line with recommendations of the Quinlan report, the arts education committee were tasked with addressing the absence of an overarching rationale for inclusion of the arts within the educational system, and to place greater emphasis on 'art appreciation' in order to balance 'expressive activities' which were thought to dominate the 1971 arts curriculum. Of particular note, is that drama was introduced to primary education as a separate subject area for the first time under the 1998 Education Act. Case-making and deliberations on this significant development are in evidence throughout the working documents of the arts education committee (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1995b, 1995c). Committee proceedings demonstrate an understanding of dance as part of arts education (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1995b, 1995c). However, there is no evidence to suggest that the positioning of dance within physical education was contested by either the arts education committee or the physical education and health committee. Minutes of a meeting held in May 1993, record the importance of 'tactile-kinaesthetic' learning in early childhood and note that the 'present generation is more at ease with dance as an expressive form than were in previous generations'. A position paper on the contribution of the arts to education tabled in June 1993, includes references to *The Dancer and the Dance* (Brinson, 1985), and where arts education disciplines are listed dance is frequently included. In

February 1994, the visual arts syllabus working group requested input from 'a dance expert' (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1995b, 1995c). The documentation noted the categorisation of dance under physical education. The absence of documentation on substantive issues such as rationale, syllabus content and teacher education – present in arts subject areas, suggests that the arts education committee regarded these as entirely within the remit of the physical education and health committee.

The physical education and health committee was sub-divided into physical education and health education working groups (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment 1995a). A suite of discussion documents and papers prepared by the physical education working group include references to Laban's movement analysis (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1995a). Documentation recorded in April 1994 shows that the focus is on expressive movement with 'use of the body as an instrument of expression and communication'. By June 1995, the term 'dance' appears interchangeable with the term 'expressive movement'. While stated objectives of the dance programme aimed to introduce children to 'the art of dance', this was to be achieved through activities leading to an appreciation of 'expressive movement'. There is no mention of dance idioms, materials or repertoire other than Laban's art of movement principles, Irish and international folk dance (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1995a). Documentation suggests that the positioning of dance as an element of the physical education programme was uncontested (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1995a). Minutes of the meeting held in May 1995, record that an initial discussion on dance had taken place with members of the arts education committee (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1995a). No details on this discussion were found in either the arts or physical education files. It is possible, given that the committee process was due for completion the following month that no further action or debate occurred. It appears that an opportunity was lost for dance at a time when the drama lobby sought and won a distinct position in the curriculum for this area of practice. While dance as a separate subject may not have been achieved, an informed advocacy effort might

have increased the visibility of dance, and gained better recognition and status for the art form within wider government policies impacting on curriculum development. Of interest here is the apparent absence of a lobby on behalf of the dance community, which had exerted considerable influence during the 1980s. The Dance Council of Ireland, founded in 1985, had a remit in education with representation on the board (Arts Council, 1987b). The Council, which had exercised its remit in education since it was founded, had ceased trading by the mid-1990s. The successor agency, Dance Ireland is focussed almost entirely on the theatre dance community and the needs of dance artists. Without the support of a lead agency, it's possible that the dance education sector has found unified approaches on matters of concern difficult to achieve.

More recently, research conducted by the Arts Council (Ni Bhriain, 2012, 2014) in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills' Junior Cycle Teachers programme into the feasibility of developing short courses in drama and theatre could provide useful insights and perhaps, a model of implementation for dance in secondary education. The revised junior cycle framework, to be introduced in 2014, includes the option for schools to offer short courses in a range of areas including artistic performance (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2011). It is envisaged that short course options will be introduced at an early stage in junior cycle developments and will offer schools the opportunity to engage in curriculum development with, *inter alia*, other schools, external organisations and agencies. New avenues for dance learning could be explored within this context that might draw on dance expertise in the design of course templates and their delivery within participating schools. Of note, is that a partnership approach to curriculum development in dance involving the Arts Council and the Department of Education has not occurred since the junior cycle syllabus project in the 1980s (Leonard, 1987; 1988; 1989). There are also significant developments evident within the early childhood education. Development of quality standards and curriculum frameworks such as *Aistear* (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2014) has opened up possibilities of incorporating innovative work in

early childhood education settings. The Arts Council recognised emerging early childhood arts practices within the arts sector and has supported a number of pilot projects and artist residencies with a view to positioning itself within the early childhood arts policy domain. The process was informed by arts and education specialists in the field including Earlyarts UK (Arts Council, 2013). However, the primary focus was on visual arts, music and literature reflecting the nature of the activity in the arts sector. The lack of Irish-based dance artists with expertise in this area of practice is regrettable. Developments elsewhere might inform the situation in Ireland. For example, in the United Kingdom, a ten-year collaborative research project which explored partnerships in which dancers use their knowledge and skills to ‘put dance at the heart of young children’s and families everyday life’ was set up in response to a perceived lack of confidence amongst early years practitioners about supporting movement activities with babies and young children (Jabadao DMP, 2009, 1). In the United States, information on developments in early childhood movement and dance programmes, including the promotion of quality standards, can be accessed through the National Dance Education Organization (2014a). In Ireland, there is some level of interest indicated within the dance education sector. Whelen’s study (2012) investigated how creative dance might support the development of young children’s learning dispositions through the Aistear framework. Principles of the midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002) informed a pedagogical approach used in the lessons which emphasised collaborative engagement through exploring, creating and performing dance. Evidence of ‘enjoyment’ occurred frequently throughout the study, emerging as an overarching theme used to illustrate a relationship between reciprocity, playfulness and resilience. Whelan contends that ‘enjoyment’ connects these three learning dispositions which she maintains, was demonstrated by the children’s enjoyment of activities which placed emphasis on collaborative dance composition, enabling the children to create and to perform to their own dances. This study is a welcome development, however for dance to be sustained within areas of social and education policy, artists, teachers and childcare practitioners need greater access to professional development programmes suited to their needs and that meet the required

standards set down by the relevant authorities.

While development has taken place since the 1971 curriculum, it is not at a pace equal to dance curricula in other jurisdictions which also relied heavily on the Laban framework in the 1960s and 1970s. In Ireland, for children and teachers to experience dance as art education, physical education departments would need to ensure that programmes in dance adequately fulfil the curriculum aims, including evaluation and assessment, identified for arts education. It's unlikely that a physical education department would, or even could organise programmes to meet the aims and objectives of two curriculum areas, particularly as dance is only one strand among six in physical education requiring such facilitation. It's possible therefore, to surmise that an understanding of dance - as an area of physical education delivered within physical education, still persists. Until dance is given due attention within initial teacher education its contribution to the primary school curriculum will not be realised. Nor will it contribute to student teachers' own development and growth as creative individuals independent of their status as future teachers. The full force of its vocabularies, techniques, knowledge, skills and methodologies; its value as a means of developing interpretive, analytical and evaluative skills; and its contribution in terms of establishing connections with other areas of the curriculum, particularly other arts areas – all of which feature in arts education programmes seeking excellence (Seidel, 2009; Winner, 2013), will continue to be denied to children and teachers. The realignment of teacher education colleges currently underway (Department of Education and Skills, 2012) and the revision of the Bachelor in Education programmes to four year courses with major and minor specialism options may provide new opportunities for arts education programmes, including dance, within these centres. Brinson (1985) observed that in the United Kingdom and worldwide, it was not until the full force of the dance community was harnessed with single purpose in pursuit of better understanding and treatment of dance within educational systems that change of status occurred. The status and recognition of dance in government policy is central to how the art form is understood and regarded within the educational system. The

following section outlines how dance has fared within state policies since the first Arts Act was instated in 1951.

2.6 The status and recognition of dance in Irish government policies since the first Arts Act, with consequent impact on dance education

Ireland's first Arts Act (Government of Ireland, 1951) did not specify dance amongst the art forms listed. The Act states that 'the arts' means painting, sculpture, architecture, music, drama, literature, design in industry, and the fine arts and applied arts generally. Cinema was added as an amendment to the second Arts Act (Government of Ireland, 1973). The Minister for arts and culture, Síle de Valera T.D. (Dáil Éireann, 1998) stated that in preparing for the new Act she was aware that dance was regarded as 'the Cinderella of the arts' and gave assurances that this situation would be reviewed to ensure the art form would be given greater stature within the new legislation. The 1951 and 1973 Acts were repealed under the third Arts Act (Government of Ireland, 2003) and a broader interpretation of the arts was introduced being, 'any creative or interpretative expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, in particular the visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture'. Deputy Michael D. Higgins (Dáil Éireann, 2003) recorded his dismay that earlier state legislation on the arts had not included dance as an artistic activity, declaring 'it was just left out'. In responding, the then Minister for arts and culture, John O'Donoghue T.D. acknowledged that the new Act defined dance as an art for the first time in the history of the state. The agency charged with responsibility for the support and development of the arts in Ireland is the Arts Council/An Chomairle Ealaíon. The agency was established under the Arts Act in 1951. Annual reports for the years 1951 – 1976 show that financial support for dance in those twenty-five years was exclusively for ballet. Following publication of the Brinson report (1985), the Council decided that the Irish National Ballet model was not the most appropriate framework for dance development and that the IR£420,000 subsidy given to the national company could be better spent elsewhere in dance. The 1988 annual report (Arts Council, 1951-2011) records examples of new funding for

dance which include contemporary dance companies; dance education initiatives at Thomond College; support for the newly formed Dance Council of Ireland founded in 1985; and the establishment of Daghdha Dance Company.

The need for specialist knowledge within government departments and agencies and was highlighted by Brinson (1985). While the Department of Education Inspectorate had until the early 2000s included graduates of St. Raphael's College of Physical Education, O'Dowd's (2006) study identified a lack of specialist knowledge in dance in the Department of Education and Skills. The stark absence of specialist dance knowledge at staffing and board level of the Arts Council was somewhat addressed in 1979 with the appointment of a Drama and Dance Officer (Arthur Lappin 1979 - 1985). This post became 'Education and Dance' in 1985 (Martin Drury 1985 - 1990). While neither post-holder brought specialist dance experience to their roles, significant developments occurred impacting on both dance-in-education and dance education. Recorded in *The Arts and Education 1979-1989* (Arts Council, 1989, 27-30) these included publication of the Brinson report in 1985; the Mount Temple conference in 1985; joint initiatives with Thomond College of Education; increased funding for Barefoot Dance Company, a community dance company based in Wexford, set up in 1980 by Cathy O'Kennedy. The 1987 annual report shows that funding for dance had reached a high of seven per cent of the total expenditure on art form areas by that year. Following the resignation of the Education and Dance Officer, in 1990, the dance role at the Arts Council disappears for six years. The Education post was filled but the dance portfolio was not. Annual reports for the period 1990 to 1996 (Arts Council, 1991-2011) record the absence, explained as being due to financial constraints. Funding for dance dropped to its lowest point since support for Irish National Ballet began in 1976, not exceeding two per cent of Arts Council expenditure on art form areas throughout the years 1991 to 1997. The newly appointed Minister for Arts and Culture, Michael D. Higgins T.D. (Dáil Éireann, 1994) drew attention to areas of neglect, including the need for more funding for dance. In 1996, a 'Youth Arts and Dance' post was established and an appointment made. Swift (*Irish Times*,

1996, 14) welcomed the appointment ‘following a six year absence’ at the Arts Council and noted that the appointee had ‘extensive dance and education experience’. In 2004, a new post entitled ‘Young People, Children, and Education’ (YPCE) was established, to which the serving youth arts/dance officer was appointed. A separate part-time dance post was created and has been maintained to the present day. The absence of dance experience at board level was eventually addressed in 1993, by five-year term appointments of Patrick Murray in 1993, Mary Brady 1998, Mary Nunan in 2003 and Paul Johnson in 2008. Lack of recognition of choreographers by Aosdána, an affiliation of creative artists engaged in literature, music and visual arts in Ireland established by the Arts Council in 1981, was also righted to some degree. In 2004, Aosdána was informed by the Arts Council that membership was to be opened up to choreographers and architects, as new disciplines (Arts Council, 2004). Aosdána membership is limited to two hundred and fifty places and in 2011, stood at two hundred and forty-nine, two of which are choreographers, five are architects (Arts Council, 2010).

Reports on dance education and training in Ireland (Brinson, 1985; Leatherdale and Todd, 1998; Marzin, 2003) repeatedly point out that the absence of Irish-based vocational training opportunities holds back the development of professional practice in Ireland. Historically, this may be due, in part, to the failure of the Irish National Ballet company to establish a school, ‘most of the dancers had to be brought in from abroad’ (Fleischmann, 1998, 198). Joanna Banks (cited in Mulrooney 2006, 217), a principal dancer with the Irish National Ballet company, expressed the view that ‘there needed to be a high calibre school in place that would feed young Irish dancers into the company’. Benson (1979) had identified a need for an Academy of Dance, for tuition and development of ballet, contemporary and traditional dance. Brinson (1985) urged the Arts Council to engage with the Department of Education stating that there cannot be a significant development of classical ballet or modern dance in Ireland without a national school of good quality. Leatherdale and Todd (1998) found that other than in Irish dancing, there were no full-time vocational education and training routes

for dance situated in Ireland and also encouraged engagement with the Department of Education towards achieving a framework for vocational dance qualifications. Renshaw (1999, 2) proposed an Academy for Performing Arts to include dance studies, that would create ‘an educational environment which promotes practice-based research, continuing professional development and innovative approaches to design and delivery of teaching’. Marzin (2003) proposed a professional curriculum for dance that would provide adaptive courses enabling students to pursue secondary education and pre-vocational dance training leading to full-time options in contemporary dance idioms. To date, no Irish-based contemporary dance or ballet company has established a school. Neither are there any education and training models in place that fully meet the requirements of aspiring dance artists of these genres which, in the case of ballet recognises the need for early training in dance. Models which accommodate the need for young people to pursue a career in dance while completing their second level education are established in the United Kingdom and many European countries. Such models allow young dancers to learn and absorb the necessary skills, techniques and safe physical practices during their teenage years that will sustain them throughout a dance career. In Ireland, pre-professional ballet and contemporary dance studies usually begin at post-leaving certificate level. Students are very often in 'catch-up' mode, potentially putting their bodies and minds under physical and mental stress leading to injuries or difficulties during training or in later years. A lack of access to the requisite early learning can also place young Irish dance artists at a disadvantage in auditioning for work with others emerging from international programmes with more advanced skills and better work practices.

Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin T.D. expressed concerns about the adaptive model proposed by the Marzin (2003) study (Dáil Éireann, 2004). The Minister cited the reduction of time spent on academic studies, and the heavy combined workload proposed for pupils who are still at a young age. Of note is that courses which place the type of ‘workload’ described by the Minister have been available in music performance since the birth of the

Free State, with courses accredited and supported by the Irish government in for example, the Royal Irish Academy of Music, established in 1894. In dance, the only option currently available to second level students in Ireland is the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), unique within the curriculum in that it offers dance modules as part of the Arts Education course (Department of Education and Science, 2000). Graduates cannot, however, enter Universities or Colleges of Technology, which is a serious impediment for students wishing to follow the only accredited dance option within the curriculum (Leatherdale and Todd, 1998). The syllabus has its origins in the Vocational Education system. Patricia Glynn, a graduate of Thomond College, was instrumental in its design. During the 1980s, Glynn developed a highly successful Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) dance course at Marino and was awarded Arts Council bursaries to support her dance studies at LABAN in London, and a Masters in Dance at the Tisch in New York. On her return, Glynn led the design of the dance modules for the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme. Deputy Eamon Gilmore (Dáil Éireann, 2009) asked why the Leaving Certificate Applied performing arts course, which contains a strand for dance, cannot be modified for inclusion in the mainstream Leaving Certificate. He pointed out that many students who were pursuing dance in private classes or youth dance groups outside school - and other activities such as drama in youth theatres, are high achievers academically. He asserted that confining dance and drama to the Leaving Certificate Applied discriminated against these students. Minister for Education, Batt O’Keeffe (Dáil Éireann, 2009) pointed out that the level of demand for such an approach would need to be determined. He stated that the Leaving Certificate Applied programme is taken by some seven per cent of the student cohort. A maximum of four credits from a total of two hundred credits is available for the dance component. O’Keeffe confirmed the ‘applied’ certificate does not permit direct entry into higher education, but students may progress to Post Leaving Certificate courses and from there upwards to higher education. Faced with competing needs for investment in education, he stated that mainstreaming dance education as an examination option in the main Leaving Certificate programme was not a priority at that time. There are currently four Post Leaving Certificate

courses in dance, one in Cork and three in the greater Dublin area which offer pre-professional courses in dance performance and/or teaching qualifications in ballet. The Marino course, mentioned above, is not included as this course now focuses on theatre studies. In the case of theatre and drama studies, there are a wide range of third-level options available in Ireland. In contrast, the majority of young people seeking a career in dance, particularly in performance dance, travel abroad either on a scholarship awarded by the school or at their family's expense. Arts Council annual reports show that dance performance scholarships were introduced in 1977 and continued until 2001. Madden (*Irish Times*, 2002) notes that scholarships for vocational training abroad were phased out, seen by the Arts Council as competitive and an unreliable means of supporting dance training. In 2010, the Arts Council and the University of Limerick undertook a feasibility study (O'Brien, 2010) towards establishing a programme for young contemporary dancers who by necessity have had to complete their professional training abroad. The programme, which got underway in 2011, enables young dancers to interact with and reconnect to the Irish theatre dance community.

2.6.1 Public perception of dance

It would appear that the bleak scenario within formal and professional education is in stark contrast to public participation levels in dance as a social activity. An Arts Council audience and participation survey (Clancy et al., 1994) shows that more than one-third (thirty-five per cent) of those surveyed had participated in one or more of the twenty five activities listed. Of the twenty-five activities, the highest participation levels recorded were in Irish dance (set dancing) and disco dancing, closely followed by involvement in choirs. A comparative survey, carried out ten years later showed similarly high involvement in social dance activities (Hibernian Consulting, 2006). Moreover, the popularity of social-dancing is not unique to Ireland, a Eurostat survey found that in the twelve months prior to that survey, twenty two per cent of Europeans 'had danced' the highest level of involvement of all activities measured (Hibernian Consulting, 2006, 103). Of particular note is that the Hibernian study reports

that a clear first preference of the public for spending on the arts was ‘arts programmes and facilities dedicated to working for and with children and young people’ which shows that fifty four per cent of those surveyed selected this as either their first or second priority, significantly ahead of any of the seven other categories listed. This represents a marked increase on a 1994 figure which was already high. National research undertaken to inform *Teenspace National Recreation Policy* (Office of the Minister for Children, 2007, 49) found a very high level of interest and participation in the arts with dance emerging as ‘the most popular hobby for girls’; dance (mainly hip-hop and other popular forms) is the most frequently quoted ‘like to join’ activity by girls. Participation in organised youth dance groups is a growing area of practice in Ireland. McGrail (2000) proposed that youth dance is a discrete area of dance practice as it operates without a standardised syllabus, encompassing instead a variety of approaches to dance which suit the needs and interests of a given group of young people. *Making Youth Arts Work* (National Youth Arts Committee, 1993) acknowledged non-formal education experiences as an important cultural dialect, embodying certain socio-cultural experiences which are encoded nowhere else. However, Coughlan (2004) holds that youth arts must be viewed as complementary to provision within the formal education sector and that one cannot be reviewed without considering the other. Deputy Jimmy Deenihan (Dáil Éireann, 2003) contends that growth within the art form is shaped by the formal education experience. He pointed to an absence of positive promotion of dance within the education system, seriously restricting developments within the dance infrastructure generally. This he noted was the case despite the social experience which sees ‘large numbers taking part in a wide range of dance activities’. It is the case that while high levels of participation in Irish traditional dance and social dancing is evident in these studies, public support in terms of audience attendance levels for art form genre is low. The Hibernian study (2006) found some eighty-two per cent of people surveyed agreed that lack of an arts education in school was a significant obstacle to developing an interest in the arts. A National Economic and Social Forum statistical analysis of public involvement in the arts found that the most important socio-economic factor influencing whether or not people

attend arts events was levels of educational attainment (Lunn and Kelly, 2008). While access to the arts in school also featured, the impact of arts education on attainment levels in mainstream education, or any relationship between the two, was unexplored.

The Arts Council's (2014, 14) most recent strategic review identified as a key strategic priority issues relating to two particular cohorts of the population. These were:

- Large sections of the population, chiefly defined by socio-economic circumstances, but critically related to educational attainment, do not engage in the arts (as supported by public funds through the Arts Council).
- Formal arts education in the Irish school system remains poor and public arts provision for children and young people is uneven in distribution.

Proposals identified in the Arts Council's review of strategy prioritise children and young people in both formal and non-formal education settings. In addition to developmental initiatives already mentioned in the area of junior cycle reform and early childhood and care contexts, an artist residency programme in colleges of education is also now underway. Prompted by measures identified in the Arts in Education Charter (Department of Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht, 2013) and organised in partnership with the colleges, there are currently six three-year residency programmes in place. Two of the residency programmes are with dance artists. The dance residencies are situated in the Froebel Department at Maynooth University and in St. Patrick's College at Dublin City University. The Froebel model is a collaborative venture between the arts and physical education departments; the residency in St. Patrick's resides wholly within the physical education department. Drury (2010) in a keynote address on the arts in education given at a colloquium held at Mary Immaculate College of Education University of Limerick, notes that some artists are 'disposed personally and skilled professionally' to work in educational contexts, and some teachers are disposed personally and skilled professionally to create and facilitate arts experiences for children. Describing these capacities as discrete lines of latitude and longitude

which at a point of intersection he maintains, can enable high quality arts experiences for pupils and students. By enabling quality encounters between future teachers and artists with a fluency in the language and traditions of their art form which is negotiated and facilitated by skilled pedagogues who know and understand the needs of their students, it is hoped that in time, the experience gained will exert positive influence on how the arts are accessed and experienced in the primary school classroom.

2.7 Conclusion

A review of the literature informing this chapter reveals a dearth of available research in the area of dance and education in Ireland. A digest of information on seventy-two research reports published in relation to the arts in education in Ireland between 1979 and mid-2007, as well as more detailed summaries of fourteen of these reports includes three titles on dance (Arts Council, 2007). In comparison to titles included in other performing arts areas which demonstrate research interest in a range of fields including education, health, community and arts sectors, the three reports on dance were all commissioned by the Arts Council. On a positive note, the situation of Irish traditional dance has steadily improved since the introduction of Ireland's first primary school curriculum in 1926. This is due largely to the work of An Coimisiún Na Rincí Gaelacha and more recently, to the internationally acclaimed *Riverdance* show, and developments at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick. However, even within this well promoted genre which enjoys a reasonably secure infrastructure with state supports in place, there is scant research or account of its role and function within formal education. Central to the debate on dance education in Ireland is its positioning within physical education which confuses its status as a discrete area of arts education. Tensions exist between art of movement and art of dance teaching and learning (Fitzpatrick, 2000). While a coherent rationale for dance as art education emerged in the 1980s, Laban (1948) is the dominant ethos and an understanding of dance as 'movement' education continues to inform the teacher education experience. Laban's 1948 principles and practices and subsequent development by practitioners such as

Preston-Dunlop, however, have been reduced to a basic interpretation of his movement analysis. Thematic approaches and 'free dance' ideologies and techniques are not apparent. While 'appreciation' is given as the main learning outcome of the dance syllabus with access to dance 'product' recommended, resources for folk dance are minimal and none are offered for creative dance. Serious time constraints in timetabling for dance appear in both schools and colleges of education with the result that little progression in student or pupil learning occurs. A lack of access to dance in school means that aspirant primary school and physical education teachers enter third level without knowledge or experience of the art form in an educational context. Therefore, an attitude which regards dance as an activity occurring only in recreational or non-formal education settings persists.

Benson (1979) called for good arguments to be made across all art forms, in order to persuade educationalists and policy-makers that the arts have a serious and unique contribution to make to education. Brinson (1985) brought fresh energy and insight to debates on dance and dance pedagogy in Ireland not seen since the expansion of dance programmes at St. Raphael's College by Mona Wren in the mid-1960s. His research and subsequent report informed a rationale for dance as art education articulated in curriculum documentation in the mid-1980s (Arts Council, 1985a). Leonard (1987, 1988, 1989) maintained a dance as art stance arguing its importance in the context of teacher development programmes. Important programmes in dance at Thomond College got underway in the early 1990s which included Mary Nunan's dance residency and the establishment of Daghdha Dance Company.

However, the apparent disconnect between arts education and physical education interests in curriculum and assessment processes organised by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (1993) in the first half of the 1990s represents a missed opportunity for dance education in that it failed to build on the work carried out in the 1980s. Leadership in terms of advocacy and expertise, which seemed evident in the 1960s, largely emanating from St. Raphael's College of Physical Education, and in the 1980s through the work of the Dance Council of Ireland, has in more recent times fallen away. The lack of Irish-based initial and

continuing professional development opportunities for dance artists interested in the educational field, and any company or performance programmes dedicated to producing work for young audiences weakens the overall position of dance education. A professional dance community with expertise and interest in dance-in-education might bolster, interact with, and resource the development of dance within the educational system at all stages – from early childhood education through to further and higher education. While significant developments have occurred, in particular in Limerick and Dublin centres, the low status accorded to the art form in government policies, together with the continuing absence of undergraduate and artist formation training options in Ireland continue to hamper overall development of dance in Ireland. Robust advocacy on the part of the wider dance community, particularly at critical junctures in curriculum development and policy-making, that might draw on the relevant reports, inform debate, develop strategic relationships, harness public support for dance and raise visibility towards encouraging increased status for dance within the Irish educational system is lacking.

Chapter Three

The Art of Dance in Education Midway Model

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the background and development of a particular model of dance education not implemented in the Irish curriculum. As mentioned in chapter two, Laban's modern educational dance came under scrutiny in the 1960s and 1970s. Ideologies and practices upheld in the model were contested and challenged by Curl (1966, 1967a, 1967b, 1968a, 1968b, 1969), and Redfern (1973). In the context of significant developments in modern and contemporary theatre dance in England, new theory emerged which proposed that dance in primary, secondary and tertiary education ought to be situated within the aesthetic domain. The term 'dance as art' was used to distinguish content and methodologies which are different from those associated with former terms such as 'modern educational dance', 'creative dance' or 'expressive dance' (Smith, 1987, 1988). The conceptual basis underpinning the 'art' model is a threefold framework, whereby 'performing', 'composing', and 'viewing' experiences are presented as an interrelated process which aims to progress teaching and learning in dance as artistic, aesthetic and cultural education. Capitalising on the perceived opportunities for dance pedagogy presented by the emergence of new contemporary theatre dance forms in England, advocates of 'dance as art' theory and practice reformed primary, secondary and tertiary dance education syllabi in the United Kingdom. The shift from Laban's educational model was a gradual process, taking some twenty years for dance as art to become established as the consensus approach (Smith-Autard, 1996). The background and development of the 'dance as art' approach is examined in detail in section 3.2. Dance theorists and educators promoting dance as art sought to have dance removed from the physical education curriculum, and established as a discrete area of arts education aligned with other arts disciplines for example, music and visual arts. The situation of dance within physical education is considered in section 3.3. The three-stranded 'art' approach was adopted into the English and Welsh curriculum as part of 1988 revisions. Scotland and

Northern Ireland, although regulated separately, followed a parallel development. As outlined in chapter two, this was not the case in the Irish curriculum, where dance education remains rooted in Laban's movement principles.

The evolving curriculum brought radical changes to syllabus content and methodologies. Not all changes were deemed appropriate, particularly within secondary education, where the introduction of assessment processes in 1986 surfaced tensions which were largely associated with an overuse or misuse of skills and teaching methodologies associated with professional theatre dance (Cole, 1993). A search for solutions which might incorporate dance as art ideologies alongside Laban methodologies amongst dance educators was evident (Russell, 1974). A *midway* solution was proposed which sought a more balanced approach between product oriented practices associated with professional dance and process oriented practices associated with the former educational framework (Smith-Autard, 1987, 1988). This study explores the midway model's relevancy and applicability to initial teacher education programmes in Ireland. With this in mind, the main features of the midway model, which promotes the use of multimedia resource-based methodologies, are examined in section 3.4. An application of the midway model to an Irish context is presented in chapter five.

3.2 Background and development of dance as art theory

3.2.1 The impact of Laban's art of movement principles on dance education in Britain

The Gulbenkian report on dance education and training in Britain (Brinson, 1980) records that dance appeared as part of the British school curriculum with the introduction of the Syllabus of Physical Training for English and Welsh primary schools in 1909. The syllabus was informed by Swedish and central European calisthenics and eurhythmics and included folk dances of various British and European styles. Revisions undertaken as part of the 1919 and 1930 syllabuses, including in the area of dance, were informed by women's physical education colleges, the first of which had been established in England in 1885. By the mid 1960s, six women's physical education colleges were established (Robbins, 1963). The

Robbins report notes that teacher education colleges were first established in the nineteenth century by voluntary, mainly religious, bodies to train teachers for the schools they had set up. Local education authorities entered this field early in the twentieth century. The colleges offered a general course mainly for those entering straight from school wishing to teach either in primary or in secondary schools. Course duration was increased from two years to three in 1960. Robbins commends the ‘high quality’ of specialist colleges for women teachers of physical education and domestic science and recommended their future should lie in a gradual enlargement of scope and subjects covered, while retaining high standards in their specialist areas. Developments in Ireland, while on a much smaller scale, followed a similar route, as outlined in chapter two. The relationship between dance and physical education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland remains the case to the present day. In Scotland, as part of revisions begun in 2004 and implemented in 2010, dance is now positioned in the expressive arts curriculum (Education Scotland, 2004; Clark, 2011).

Brinson (1980) informs that classical ballet was the prevalent theatre dance form in Britain until the mid-1960s with a system of private schools established throughout the United Kingdom. At its pinnacle was the Royal Ballet School, which had by then secured an international reputation as a centre of professional training. However, the codes and techniques of ballet were not thought appropriate for use in schools. Instead, changes and developments elsewhere were brought to bear on the dance experiences available in British schools from the early 1900s onwards. Dominant among these influences were the performances of American dance artists Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis and Loie Fuller. Duncan's challenge to the codes and conventions of classical ballet, which she saw as physically and intellectually restricting, and her choreographic ideas inspired by ancient Greek artefacts found particular resonance with the artistic ambition of some British dance exponents. Amongst these were Ruby Ginner, Madge Atkinson and Margaret Morris, all of whom opened private schools that broke with the traditions of ballet, developing dance materials based on Greek revivalist ideals or, in the case of Atkinson, so-called natural human movement. Atkinson

(1885-1970) developed a teaching system known as *Natural Movement* and together with Anita Heyworth, was a founding member of the London College of Educational Dance. Jacqueline Smith-Autard attended classes in *Natural Movement* with Atkinson (Smith-Autard, 1996).

The most important influence by far on the British curriculum was the ideas and presence of Rudolf Laban who arrived in England in 1938 (Cole, 1993). Laban was first and foremost a dance theatre artist and choreographer in the self-styled, highly expressionistic *Ausdruckstanz* form and before taking refuge in Devon, had been the leading dance theatre exponent in Germany (Laban, 1975). In addition to dance and physical education contexts, his research and analysis of general human movement informed many movement related practices in England and elsewhere, including a system which aimed to maximise factory workers' efficiency (Laban, 1947). Foster (1977, 35) maintains that there was 'an element of chance in the way Laban had his interests directed towards education'. His interest in teaching, before moving to England, was primarily in the area of professional dance training (Maletic, 1987). Central European Dance or Modern Dance, as *Ausdruckstanz* was known in the United Kingdom, arrived in England in 1932 when Lesley Burrows returned to set up a studio in Chelsea having studied at Mary Wigman's school in Dresden, Germany (Brinson, 1991). Laban's ideologies and teaching system were introduced to women's physical education courses by Joan Goodrich of Bedford College of Physical Education who had studied at both the Burrows studio and with Mary Wigman in Dresden. Laban's general movement principles informed *The Dance as Education* (Jordan, 1938), the first British textbook on modern dance in education, which was as influential in its day as Laban's post war writings (Brinson, 1980). Brinson credits Jordan's 1938 publication as the first British textbook in the field however, the publication title given in his report is *Childhood and Movement*, which is Diana Jordan's second book, published in 1966. Jordan had studied with Burrows and Wigman. Burrows and Jordan were instrumental in organising summer holiday courses for teachers in various centres throughout the United Kingdom. These courses, the

first of which was taught by Laban in London in 1940, were instrumental in promoting content and methods espoused in *Modern Educational Dance* (Laban, 1948) and elaborated upon in subsequent publications by Laban students, most notably Preston-Dunlop (1963) and Russell (1965, 1969). As mentioned in chapter two, lecturers from St. Raphael's College of Physical Education attended Laban holiday courses in England in the late 1960s in order to introduce the Laban framework to courses in Ireland (O'Loan, 1973). Laban's approaches were increasingly adopted into the British physical education curriculum and consolidated into primary and secondary initial and continuing teacher education programmes throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

Laban's ideologies and teaching approaches suited the child centred, open methodologies introduced and promoted as part of curriculum revision under the 1944 Education Act. The Act organised education into three progressive stages – primary, secondary and further education. A government publication - *Moving and Growing Part 1 and Part 2* (Ministry of Education, 1952, 1953), replaced the 1933 primary education syllabus for physical education. The Plowden report (1967) on primary education acknowledges the impact of *Moving and Growing* in promoting acceptance of Laban's general principles of movement in educational contexts. The report refers to Laban's early work in theatre and dance, and to the influence of modern educational dance in girls' secondary schools in England. However, Plowden asserts that it was Laban's general human movement principles that were adopted for their value in all strands and stages of the physical education curriculum. Furthermore, the report encourages a broad and comprehensive use of the term 'movement' to include not only games, gymnastics, swimming and so on, but also 'expressive movement of dramatic and dance-like quality'. Collapsing all aspects of physical education into the overarching outcome of 'movement' education was a radical shift. In the case of modern educational dance, it was the inverse of Laban's (1948) intention which positioned his highly technical analysis of human movement as a means of achieving a richer and more fulfilled dance experience, not as a curriculum subject. Laban's early advocates in England had emphasised

the experience of dancing itself, seeing this as a means of developing expressive power (Brinson, 1991). Jordan's publication, *The Dance as Education* (1938), placed great emphasis on the benefits of spontaneity which she saw as 'the greatest characteristic of modern dance'. She devotes a chapter to self-expression which includes statements by children – participants in her own classes – on their experiences of modern dance. The children's comments, selected perhaps for the positive sentiments expressed, emphasise self-development aspects for example, an allowance to 'express one's feelings', 'no restrictions', and 'modern dance is the best way of developing one's personality' (Jordan, 1938, 50-51). Jordan (1938) deplores the fact that dance was not considered as art education. It is telling that Jordan's (1966) second publication, *Childhood and Movement*, includes the word 'movement' rather than 'dance' in the title. The later publication, which presents a 'movement' syllabus based on an interpretation of Laban's principles of human movement, encourages teachers to seek out imaginative and expressive potentialities across a range of activities including games, gymnastics and drama. Plowden (1967) notes an increasing recognition of the place of 'expressive movement' in primary education, whether as dance or drama. The report places emphasis on experimental and exploratory methods which when pursued successfully would 'transcend the limits' of what can be prescribed or produced by use of direct methods and cautions against technical content which, if introduced too early could diminish a child's ability to play creatively. Plowden captures the enthusiasm of the time for Laban-based methods, which had become the consensus approach in the United Kingdom. In primary schools and particularly for girls, emotional development and self-expression were among the main benefits claimed by the women physical educators for educational gymnastics, and aesthetic experiences were central to 'movement education', the term associated with dance teaching and learning at that time. Although, in making these claims, they met with considerable resistance from their male colleagues, who were growing in numbers following the war, particularly in secondary education, and sought to prioritise the subject's physical and social benefits (Bailey, 2009). Bailey's review of claims made for the educational benefits of physical education and school sport suggests a distinctive role in

the acquisition and development of children's movement skills and physical competence, and attributes in the social domain, would emerge as the dominant claims of positive benefits for young people. Of interest is that claims in the affective learning domain are almost exclusively made in a dance context. In addition to tensions regarding the fundamental ethos of physical education, the Plowden report also failed to foresee the challenge that emerged from within the dance education sector itself, which would test the relevance of Laban ideology for dance education, and robustness of the 'movement' education proposition.

3.2.2 Challenges to the Laban framework

Curl's (1966; 1967a; 1967b; 1968a; 1968b; 1969) six articles examine 'the ever-widening gap' between the philosophical foundations underlying Laban's work, which is rooted in Pythagorean theory, Plato's cosmology and Greek myth, and the modern educational dance practices of the time. Curl (1969) acknowledges that whatever Laban's philosophy, dance education had 'reaped rich rewards' from his contribution to movement education and the revision of teaching practices in the United Kingdom. He asserts that the success of Laban's methods was bound to lead to an enquiry into underlying principles, particularly in further and higher education. He further asserts that examination of philosophical and theoretical underpinnings was not a strong characteristic of those involved in dance and movement education. With the gradual advancement of dance to degree status Curl asks how, without discarding Laban's theories in their entirety, could his ideologies be re-oriented to meet more stringent aesthetic and academic criteria. His challenge to the Laban model, and to the teaching profession, concludes with the view that for dance to progress at tertiary level, practitioners need to adopt a more critical approach to matters concerning dance as a subject area in general and in that context, specifically to issues relating to the education of feelings and aesthetic sensibilities. He holds that 'true aesthetic consciousness' concerns itself with the 'true symbolic space' of the artist and can differentiate between the actual feeling and imagined feeling, between self-expression and the formulation and presentation of aesthetic feelings in the art form (Curl, 1969). Curl argues that philosophical foundations in this

instance will have artistic rather than cosmic significance. Responding to Curl, Lange (1969) points out that Laban was an artist not a philosopher. His contributions to modern choreology and human movement theory, which were not disputed, must be understood in the context of his artistic creed which Lange argues was the sum of endless observations and experiences coming from practical involvement. Lange attributes the growing misunderstanding and confusion which, concurring with Curl he admits was the case in modern educational dance, to inadequate teaching.

Brinson (1991) comments that for some teachers dance and movement became synonymous. He notes that the Laban framework was variously described on school timetables as for example, 'modern dance', 'modern educational dance', 'movement education' and 'art of movement'. He points to confusion amongst teachers about the nature and purpose of dance education and to heated debate in physical education colleges and at Laban's Art of Movement Studio on the matter. Adshead (1981) charts developments in third level degree options for dance in the United Kingdom, including the transfer of teacher education to degree status. She points to confusion, evident in course submissions to further and higher education accrediting bodies, whereby the terms 'movement' and 'dance' often appeared interchangeable. Redfern (1978) notes that dance exponents such as Duncan and Laban were known for their ideologies rather than by any distinctive performing technique. Therefore, she posits that it was not altogether surprising that in education, modern dance came to be regarded both in practice and in theory as a matter of self-expression, a cathartic experience involving genuine passions and sentiments. Redfern (1976) agrees that the Laban system had become the source of a great deal of confusion, suggesting this was partly due to a 'slavish adoption' by some teachers to the highly technical terminology that, as with the technical vocabulary of music, needs to be seen and understood within the context of teaching and learning in an art form context. Evoking Best (1974), she questions whether dance was understood as teaching and learning in an aesthetic discipline, and cautions teachers to be wary of claims made about the educational merits of dance based on 'slippery notions' of creativity and self

-expression. Robinson (1999) notes that debate about the arts in education often places emphasis on the value of self-expression. While acknowledging this as an important idea, he points to the difference between giving direct vent to feelings and the creative processes and traditions of an art form. Artistic processes may be driven by emotional impulses, but rather than discharging feelings, although this can occur, the aim is to give them form and meaning. Curl (1969) had urged dance educators to engage in critical discourse with a view to interrogating a more robust rationale for dance in education, particularly with regard to shallow notions of self-expression and emotionality. In an art form context, debate on the nature of actual versus symbolic feeling, and the primacy of feeling over content is not exceptional. Langer (1953) points out that emotional content in dance works represents an artistic intention, that dance is virtual not actual. She asserts that ‘feeling’ content is imagined rather than actually felt by the performer. The celebrated American choreographer Doris Humphrey in her seminal work on dance composition, states:

I am not an advocate of ‘emoting’ as the keystone to dance structure. It is well to say again that there is a discipline which must be followed in constructing dances. Just self-expression, provided that can be had at all, is certainly not acceptable. (Humphrey, 1959, 31)

Had dance been a subject in its own right with links developed between artists and educators, the opportunity for engagement on matters of mutual interest or concern, while perhaps not always finding alignment, may at least have assisted clarification of educational intention and purpose. As previously mentioned, new theatre dance forms would bring new opportunities for dance education. In addition, the emergence of third level degree courses, many of which developed relationships with the professional dance sector, would prompt new thinking and inform the debate from the 1970s onwards. In 1977, the first British BA Honours degree course in Dance Studies was validated by the Council for National Academic Awards at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance, London (Brinson, 1979). Adshead (1983) records that by 1973, more than one hundred colleges of education and specialist physical education colleges offered dance within initial teacher education programmes.

3.2.3 A paradigm shift - from movement education to aesthetic education

In three extended essays on 'Imagination', 'Effort', and 'Modern Educational Dance', Redfern (1973) undertook a critical analysis of the philosophical, theoretical and pedagogic bases of the Laban framework. She examined claims made about its participatory nature, its psychological impact, and its social and recreational benefits. Redfern's appraisal exposed weaknesses in the framework however, she did find much that was right 'and much that was absolutely right' (1973, 142). Redfern's (1978) investigation of the connection between 'movement qualities' and 'aesthetic qualities' in dance explored affinities between Laban's 'effort elements' and qualities associated with modern dance. In working with 'effort', Laban advocates sought genuine experiences, understanding that engagement with a range of 'movement qualities' enriches and strengthens the human personality thereby 'bringing the inner life into a state of harmony and balance'. In theatre dance, performance is not seen as achieving such an outcome, nor is it taken to be a manifestation of the dancer's inner attitude. As dance artists in the post Duncan and Laban era increasingly recognised the implausibility of the notion of art as the self-expression of the artist, Redfern asserts that it is possible to see how Laban followers would reject the proposition of dance education as an aesthetic activity, particularly one that promotes an understanding of aesthetic qualities as illusory rather than 'real' experiences. Redfern points out that in his publication *Mastery of Movement on the Stage* (Laban, 1950, 10-11) Laban himself expresses an understanding of how the artist consciously reproduces 'inner attitudes' for purposes of stage performances whereby such qualities 'have not to be possessed, but to be pictured and presented'. Redfern (1973) had urged a reconsideration of dance education maintaining Laban's movement principles as a means of informing the materials of dance, but locating the educative process in an appreciation of dance as art. She contends that Laban's 'effort elements' as presented in *Modern Educational Dance* (Laban, 1948) have value in an educational context, once the metaphysical nature of the theory underlying it, and its focus on performer rather than art object are understood. Moreover, she recommends that his wider analysis of human movement could usefully inform critical appreciation processes within a 'dance as art'

construct, providing a vocabulary with which to explore and discuss performance, composition and viewing experiences. While in the United Kingdom the Laban analysis came to be associated with a particular philosophy and teaching methodology, it was internationally recognised as a comprehensive notation system used by professional dance notators to record many styles of dance (Hutchinson Guest, 2005). Regarding critical appreciation, Redfern (1978) also points out that well planned teacher-guided processes have benefits not only for dance education, but also contribute to language development in general, and pupils and students will gain further understanding of how words function metaphorically and literally. Teaching and learning opportunities through links with music education are also identified.

Cole (1993) reports that during the 1970s, an interpretation of dance described as ‘aestheticised’ movement was progressed for purposes of inclusion in ‘human movement studies’ which by that time had become an area of study applied across many branches of learning in the humanities field. She asserts that the ‘aestheticised’ formulation did not advance the study of dance. McFee (cited in Curl, 1989) called for conceptual clarity about what if anything, is different about dance and where its educational import lies whether as a subject in its own right or as part of human movement studies. Acknowledging the generalised nature of the aesthetic domain, which has relevance across many areas of education including physical education, he argues that what distinguishes dance from other physical education strands is its artistic possibility. A rationale on grounds of aestheticised movement alone is he argues, to equate it with physical education. Rather, dance education is the study of an art form and a case for its place within the curriculum must be made on grounds of its unique and distinctive contribution to arts education. Redfern (1978, 63) opposes the proposition that general human movement could form the basis of a unique or applied branch of learning, and claims that it ‘struck a powerful blow in the attempt to establish dance as an autonomous art form’. For her, a purely kinetic understanding of dance, appraised for its movement qualities alone, severs it from its art form provenance, and from the fundamental

principles of choreographic intent and meaning. To those who conceived of dance exclusively as a participative activity where what is valued most are spontaneity, cooperative endeavour and emotional satisfaction 'in a spirit of warm togetherness' Redfern poses the question: why engage with dance when other activities might satisfy these outcomes to a greater degree. If however, importance is attached to 'doing' and making' then she asserts, what is created and performed no matter how short, becomes subject to standards of some kind. Redfern (1986) proposes that the matter of establishing standards is an educational factor that teachers must confront. She contends that teachers must enable their students to struggle with the nuances of art making while simultaneously widening the learner's concept of art, helping them to become more discriminating, more critically aware. An appreciation of dance, developed progressively through age appropriate performing, composing and viewing experiences, should be informed by relevant artefacts available for objective viewing and public discussion (Redfern, 1976). Again, the importance of guided viewing is stressed, in order to deepen a student's ability to notice detail, observe contexts and participate in discourse about dance. For Redfern (1983) aesthetic appreciation is an imaginative achievement, developed only by practice, and engagement with the art object is core to pedagogy associated with dance as art.

3.2.4 Which sort of dance?

Redfern (1978) and Smith-Autard (1996) contend that the appropriate genre for a dance as art syllabus is Western theatre dance which they consider, lends itself to an educational setting. While techniques and conventions emerged, particularly in the American idioms such as Graham and Cunningham, deviation and manipulation of these by students and followers of the style were not only permitted but often actively encouraged by the originator. Also, compositional processes in contemporary idioms almost always employ a collaborative approach between the choreographer and the dancer; the latter seen as the materials for the work. This joint enterprise usually involves a mix of both prescribed and devised outcomes. The relationship between those who interpret and perform and those who create has rele-

vance for an educational setting. In a dance education setting, the outcome is often characterised by joint endeavour between the teacher and the pupils, indeed the interpersonal offering is often valued more highly than the artistic experience (Redfern, 1978).

Adshead (1981) records her unease with the uncritical acceptance of the dance as art proposition, particularly one based exclusively on Western theatre dance. She argues that an 'art' orientation, even when set within the wider context of philosophical aesthetics, is just one of a number of possible perspectives. Adshead cautions that while all forms of dance might be said to be aesthetic they do not all fulfil the requirements of 'art' and indeed do not exist for that purpose. Adshead proposes that meaningful dance study requires the totality of dance to be available to the curriculum, including all genres, any style and the full expression and experience of dance as a human activity. She contends that an 'art' focus based entirely on Western theatre dance idioms might turn out to be as constricting for dance educators as the former 'movement' education syllabus had been. Brinson (1979, 1986) had also called for a wider interpretation, including the then emerging dance as art approach. Brinson argued the case for dance as part of education as it is a part of human history; it plays a unique role in human culture; and makes a distinct contribution to human communication. For Brinson, the sociological, psychological, anthropological and historical perspectives needed to be explored and articulated in order to convince non-dance academics of its role and educational significance at all levels of the curriculum. While Redfern (1978) situates dance as art pedagogy within the Western theatre dance tradition, she does not rule out the inclusion of folk dance or popular idioms in primary, secondary and tertiary dance education. These styles, she asserts, can be taught from a perspective of aesthetic teaching and learning. In the case of folk dancing, while the original function and content of the repertoire may not have survived, the rhythms, patterns, formations and overall expressiveness can foster aesthetic awareness. Popular idioms, which she contends are the folk dances of the present day can likewise, be contextualised and explored for their social and aesthetic significance. However, Redfern (1978) cautions teachers that not all folk dances or popular styles will have suffi-

cient depth or structure to sustain educational interest, and that any selection must also take account of the physical, cultural and intellectual capacities and interests of the pupils and students. Smith (1987, 112) cautions against a wider interpretation, particularly a presentation of folk dance exclusively focussed on social or ethnic provenance which although a valuable dance experience is, she states: ‘outside the art education context’. Her conviction that an exploration of wider cultural heritages needs to be situated within the provenance and context of Western theatre dance is clearly evident in her development of the resourced-based midway model, which is examined in section 3.4.

3.2.5 The influence of western theatre dance on dance education in Britain

Theatre dance idioms emerged during the post World War One years in the United States of America. American modern dance artists such as Doris Humphrey and Martha Graham built on the pioneering work and re-conceptualisation of theatre dance by their predecessors Loie Fuller (1868 – 1928), Isadora Duncan (1877 – 1927) and Ruth St. Denis (1879 – 1968). In addition to their legacy at home, these American choreographers all found success beyond the United States; in the case of Fuller and Duncan in Europe, and for St. Denis the so-called Far East (Cohen, 1998). Duncan had particular success in Germany where she encountered Mary Wigman (1886 - 1973) who worked with Rudolf Laban (1879 - 1958) and Kurt Jooss (1901 - 1979), the founder members of the *Ausdruckstanz* movement which gave rise to German expressionist dance idioms (Partsch-Bergsohn, 1994). Dance is an international art form and the interaction between companies and artists involved in the growth of American modern dance and German expressionist dance is well documented (Humphrey, 1959; Au, 1988; Partsch-Bergsohn, 1994; Cohen, 1998). Humphrey (1959, 169) refers to the flourishing of ‘modern dance geniuses’ in post World War One Germany, many of whom, including Wigman were welcomed into America after World War Two. Redfern (1976) acknowledges the connection between German expressionism (referred to as Central European Dance in the United Kingdom) and American modern dance and the influence of both traditions on dance developments in the British curriculum.

In the United States, following the emergence of new idioms in the 1920s, degree courses and advanced dance research developed over the course of fifty years and became a normal part of the American system. Many colleges supported the work of artists and companies whose practice was rooted in the modern idioms. It took some thirty years before the new techniques and styles gained credence in courses and syllabi in the United Kingdom. London School of Contemporary Dance (later called the London Contemporary Dance School) was established in 1966 by the Robin Howard Trust with the intention of promoting Martha Graham's technique and style. A performance group, London Contemporary Dance Theatre, was established at The Place in 1967, with Graham dancer Robert Cohan as Artistic Director. The Graham repertory, however, was not made available to the London-based company and Cohan was forced to devise other means of generating a repertoire (Robertson, 1989). This, inadvertently, would bring new opportunities to British choreographers, seeding an enduring relationship with contemporary dance. The emphasis on Graham technique would recede and a more eclectic style of contemporary dance technique would emerge to inform the work of the company. As graduates and company members sought work opportunities, American modern and contemporary idioms found their way into the broader dance community, colleges and schools from the late 1970s onwards. In 1976, London Contemporary Dance Theatre took part in third-level residency programmes in colleges of education and universities in Yorkshire and Liverpool which included lecture-demonstrations and public events that stimulated interest in modern dance beyond the campuses of host institutions (Jordan and Rowell, 1998). Dance Umbrella, a London-based international festival devoted to contemporary work was launched in 1978. A wide range of third-level courses and private dance schools became available, with courses for dance educators offered. Arts Council of Great Britain's access policies during the 1970s and 1980s, and the emergence of other contemporary dance companies which organised outreach and education initiatives including youth dance, fuelled further interest in the idiom.

In Germany the pioneers of *Ausdruckstanz* - Laban, Jooss and Wigman, were seminal to the

development of Pina Bausch's *Tanztheater*, and informed the work of many European dance artists. Laban is an acknowledged influence on the work of the celebrated American choreographer William Forsythe. In England, the Laban legacy is maintained by the Laban Guild for Movement and Dance, and continues to inform GCSE options in secondary education.

3.2.6 Product versus process

The influence of American modern dance drastically altered the aims, content and methodologies of dance education in British schools and colleges, as German influences had previously done in the 1950s. A radical swing occurred, from the process-based approaches associated with Laban ideologies to pursuance of techniques and approaches associated with product-based theatre dance. A rift occurred between dance educators and the professional dance sector which was prompted by the emergence of dancers from newly established companies and courses in the fields of modern and contemporary dance (Brinson, 1980). Interaction between dance artists and dance educators was initially nurtured in the post-war era, with occasional talks, lecture demonstrations and small-scale performances in schools, primarily by dancers or dance students from the professional ballet world. The relationship with ballet continued into the 1960s with initiatives such as the *Ballet for All* programme (Brinson, 1991). However, these programmes made no attempt to influence or challenge dance as taught within the curriculum (Cole, 1993). The work of professional dance artists did not have any significant impact on the curriculum until the arrival of American modern dance in the mid 1960s. By then, dance educators had identified the need for the aims and purpose of curriculum dance to be reappraised, in particular for purposes of the General Certificate of Education Advanced and Ordinary levels and importantly, as part of third level degree programmes. Brinson (1979) asserts that many teachers opposed the notion of applying the discipline necessary to acquire any theatre dance technique, which was seen as rigid and antithetical to a child-centred curriculum. He urged greater collaborative effort between dance and education professions with a view to encouragement and enrichment of 'the artist in the teacher' and 'the teacher in the artist' leading to quality dance experiences for children in schools.

Smith (1987) lays much of the blame for the rift between artists and educators on an assumption on the part of dance artists that educators knew little and wished to learn more about technique. Briginshaw (1980) and Cole (1993) recount the experiences of three pilot dance artist residency projects organised in secondary schools in Hampshire, Leeds and Manchester. The projects were funded by the Arts Council of Great Britain as an exploration towards launching a dance-in-education scheme which aimed to link the professional dance world with dance education. The major influence for the projects was an American schools scheme operated by the National Endowment for the Arts. The lead artists in each of the United Kingdom projects had all either trained at the London School of Contemporary Dance and/or danced with London Contemporary Dance Theatre (Briginshaw, 1980). One of the artists, Irene Dilks, had studied with Graham in New York. In all three projects, the Graham technique, or a modified version of it, was employed. Results showed that attitudes varied regarding the place of technique in dance education with two opposing views emerging. On the one hand, some educationalists perceived technique as regimented, mindless exercise that stifled the creative nature of dance education. Amongst these voices were advocates of the Laban framework which advises that seeking precision or over-emphasis on technical aspects such as formations or footwork is detrimental to the unfolding of the child's unique qualities of self expression, particularly emphasised in work with younger children: 'children should not be asked to copy' (Laban, 1948, 20). On the other hand, some dance artists advocated the need for a thorough technical training for pupils and teachers as an essential pre-requisite for school involvement in dance-in-education projects. In addition, where the inclusion of technical study was deemed acceptable, views differed as to how and by whom it should be taught, and which styles or genres were appropriate in educational settings (Cole, 1993).

Briginshaw, as did Adshead (1981), regards dance education as an eclectic discipline, drawing on sources such as social, folk, historical and ethnic as well as various forms of theatre dance. She proposes that should a basic level of technique be seen as desirable for

use in schools, then a technical training derived from styles practised in theatre dance is not the appropriate route to follow. Arguing that dance techniques by their nature are designed to serve a choreographic end-product rather than for use in education, Briginshaw (1980) suggests that research be undertaken towards devising a technical lexicon more suited to children's developing physique, and sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of different teachers. Such a solution she posits would not prevent the judicious use of particular forms of theatre dance performance techniques at more advanced levels, particularly with older adolescents and within dedicated youth dance groups. While many physical education and primary school teachers availed of courses and conferences organised during this period to acquaint themselves with basic contemporary dance techniques and rudimentary choreographic processes, Smith (1987) asserts that assessment processes at secondary and tertiary level exposed the difficulties teachers had with technical material which was being presented, often in 'watered down fashion', as an end in itself unconnected to its original choreographic context. Smith contends that the choreographic ambition of theatrical dance artists was misunderstood and misinterpreted by teachers and lecturers, who placed value solely on the acquisition of techniques, in the same manner that Laban's movement principles had been misconstrued in the 1960s. Redfern (1976) pointed to the importance of process as well as performing aspects, reminding teachers that the skills and methodologies involved in enabling pupils to structure 'complete dances' which had meaning for both spectator and performer was an essential feature of the three-stranded 'art' approach. An undue focus on technical achievement was unsuited to many pupils and students who did not have the physical aptitude for such approaches. For Redfern (1978), assessment criteria and methods based on practical work alone posed difficulties for pupils. She asserts that students of limited ability in composition and performance should be able to study dance solely from the point of view of the spectator and be assessed accordingly. Formulating assessable learning outcomes aimed at striking a balance between the artistic processes of creating and performing dances and aesthetic encounters requiring analysis and interpretation by pupils of their own dances and those produced professionally as art works, became the central concern of

dance education in the United Kingdom from the mid 1980s onwards.

A good deal of ongoing dance practice in schools, which had stemmed from modern educational dance, maintained an emphasis on process over product. Cole (1993) notes that some teachers maintained that 'art' content and methodologies were inappropriate for use in schools, others did not have the knowledge and experience necessary to teach from a dance as art stance, and some teachers did not consider dance as important as other physical education syllabus strands. She observes that Adshead's proposition for a broader approach became evident in many degree courses and in turn, in a number of schools where an emphasis is placed on experiencing a wide range of styles drawn from diverse cultural and historical contexts. It is the case that GCSE examining boards no longer prescribe a particular dance style or period, or set a prescribed technical study for examination purposes. The literature reveals that many teachers struggled with devising programmes and assessment methods which met the artistic and aesthetic ambition of the dance as art approach, wider curriculum demands including, for example, citizenry and social inclusion, and that satisfied the educational needs and developmental nature of children and young people. The situation was further exacerbated by the physical education question, which is examined in section 3.3. However, the concept of dance as art education has radically altered the direction of dance education in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. A review of dance syllabi in Australia, New Zealand and Canada shows evidence of the three-stranded approach in primary and secondary curricula. In the United Kingdom, it contributed to the development of dance education by raising teaching and learning standards in making, performing and appreciating dance. Smith- Autard (1996) notes the rising number of GCSE candidates achieving A to B grades which increased from twenty-two per cent in 1990 to forty-nine per cent in 1994. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on theatre dance brought an increasing awareness amongst dance educators of the need for resourced-based teaching approaches. Exemplars drawn from a range of theatre dance practice, some authored specifically for use in schools (Bedford Interactive, 2001, 2006, 2008), extended the pupils' dance experience

beyond the classroom. The growing awareness of how theatre dance product can enhance and enrich the interrelated processes of doing, making and viewing dance in the classroom has provided fertile ground for interaction with the professional dance world (Cole, 1993). The shift from a 'movement' orientation to the 'art' orientation is reflected in dance education textbooks for example, the seminal publication *Dance Composition* (Smith, 1976) now in its sixth edition; *The Art of Dance in Education* (Smith-Autard, 1994); *Let's Dance* (Harlow and Rolfe, 1993); and *In Touch with Dance* (Gough, 1993). Jobbins (cited in Chappell, 2011) contends that the impact of collaborative endeavour between dance artists and educators in the United Kingdom has been significant. Supportive of the aspirations of Smith-Autard's midway approach, she argues that the model needs updating to acknowledge the developed relationship between educational and professional dance. However, Smith-Autard (cited in Chappell, 2011, 168) maintains that 'dance partnerships are rare in schools', but supports Jobbins' call for wider reflection on the benefits of such collaboration and for reforms within dance education generally. Deliberations of this nature might usefully inform development within an Irish context.

As mentioned in chapter two, American modern dance had significant influence on the development of theatre dance in Ireland. Many dance artists for example, John Scott, Adrienne Brown and Mary Nunan, forged strong links with American modern and post-modern dance, and some for example, Snaggy O'Sullivan, Paul Johnston and Liz Roche explored contemporary theatre dance forms and practice. Others such as Finola Cronin and Ríonach Ní Néill acknowledge German expressionism as an important influence on their work. However, there is no full-time professional dance training available in Ireland whereby links between professional dance companies, agencies and artists and educational institutions and schools might be made. Where relationships do exist between artists and education, these are short-term and occasional. The situation in Ireland is notable for its lack of debate on issues such as occurred in the United Kingdom. The literature review found no evidence of serious discourse on the situation of dance education in Ireland since conferences organ-

ised by the now defunct Dance Council of Ireland held in Thomond College in the early 1990s. Issues related to for example, challenges presented by the increasingly diverse society which is reflected in Irish classrooms, dance and disability, and the role of dance in the evolving curriculum are largely unexplored. Initial or continuing teacher education courses have not engaged with the dance as art model in an Irish context, and the implications of maintaining the Laban model as status quo remain unchallenged. For example, should the 'art' model be pursued, the strong position of Irish traditional and other folk dance styles will need to be considered. As mentioned in chapter two, programmes developed at the World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick and Síamsa Tíre are challenging long-held conventions and, in the slipstream of *Riverdance*, some choreographers are exploring the boundaries between contemporary and traditional forces in theatrical presentations. Exemplars here would include Colin Dunne's *Out of Time*; Mary Nunan's *Clann Lir*; and Michael Keegan-Dolan's *The Bull*. It is conceivable that such innovation will produce new forms that could, with other theatre dance idioms, inform an 'art' approach within the Irish context. Debate on whether any curriculum shift, as Smith-Autard (1994, 2002) asserts, ought to be within the parameters of a theatre dance provenance or, as Adshead (1981) and Brinson (1986) suggest, be situated in a much wider interpretation of dance would not only be welcome, but essential to developing a viable curriculum for dance in Ireland.

3.3 The position of dance within physical education

Brinson (1991) notes that the child-centred approaches of the 1960s and 1970s gave way to methodologies that included Graham-based and musical theatre techniques, changing the philosophy as well as the practice of dance education. While welcoming revised methodologies that explored coherent approaches to including technical challenge, particularly for older children and teenagers, he asserts that the shift demonstrated the increasing incongruity between physical education and dance and brought to the fore 'the historical error under which the two are linked' Brinson, 1991, 68). Serious questions arose about the capacity of physical education teachers to deliver the dance as art model, particularly in light of the

range of topics included in a physical education syllabus. In her role as a member of the physical education inspectorate, Burke's (cited in Curl, 1989) explanation of the dichotomy of views existing is interesting in that it shows a reasonable understanding of these differences. Dance as part of physical education 'gives balance' to the movement experience of pupils which ranges from the skills-based, competitive or quantifiable aspects to the more open-ended process-based aspects where the articulation of movement qualities is important. Dance as part of an arts programme 'gives balance' to the aesthetic education of pupils, offering experiences in composing, performing and appreciating, which while in the physical, non-verbal realm have a commonality of purpose with other arts education areas. However, Burke, other than asserting the need for quality teaching in both configurations, offers no solutions or opinion as to where dance should ultimately reside within the curriculum. Carlisle (cited in Curl, 1989) contends that the development of human movement studies weakened physical education as a practical subject. He holds that the treatment of the artistic and aesthetic nature of the subject by some academics, and the progressive intellectualisation of the profession, particularly in higher education, fragments the primarily practical concerns of the subject. He questions why certain games and dance styles, for example Scottish Highland traditions are proscribed, seeing no good educational reasons for such emphases but he states: 'very obvious political ones'. Carlisle presents a refreshing case for re-visioning physical education as a subject rooted in 'bodily education' with somatic and cognitive learning outcomes that facilitate the development of personal awareness, focus, concentration and control. Carlisle favours a holistic curriculum that includes a wide range of activities including dance experiences, presented in age appropriate fashion that can at a later stage encompass opportunities for specialisation. He proposes an inclusive schema aimed at countering the partiality of teachers who promote one area to the exclusion of others. Referring to the narrowing physical education content in schools, often with an emphasis on sport, he poses the question: are there any physical educationalists left? This echoes concerns raised by O'Donoghue (1989) identified in chapter two, who notes that in Ireland the closure of women's colleges of physical education in 1974 consigned to history

the specialist physical education teacher. Murdoch (cited in Curl, 1989) points out that documents issued by the British government to inform 1988 revisions to the national curriculum did not include any mention of dance. She asserts that at a time when dance education was facing a precarious future the issue of assessment was of paramount importance in arguing its position within the British curriculum. As Chair of the British Council of Physical Education, Murdoch proposed a rationale and programme for dance within physical education which strives to accommodate the concept of dance as art, and a range of dance styles. Acknowledging that debate on the matter of whether or not dance should be situated within physical education was ongoing, documents that would convince national curriculum planners that dance had a place in the final design were urgently required. Recalling presentations at the first daCi (dance and the Child international) conference in 1978, Murdoch proposes a classification structured around three emphases – the child as performer; the child as choreographer; the child as critic, would be a useful basis for a comprehensive dance education. She further suggests that a productive area of investigation might be the analysis and identification of assessment criteria. In that regard, she proposes that a set of progressive competencies be agreed around which a framework appropriate to the needs of growing children can be assembled. On the matter of dance within physical education, Murdoch, stressing once more the urgency of time, states: ‘beggars cannot be choosers’ and calls for combined effort on the part of dance and physical education practitioners to ensure a place for dance in British schools. Of note, regarding the urgent need pointed out by Murdoch for documents to be prepared for government, Smith-Autard (1996) records that collaborative response, instigated by her and dance educator, Veronica Jobbins, led to such documentation being submitted, and to the foundation of the National Dance Teachers Association (2014b).

Robinson (1999) holds that the position of dance within physical education in the United Kingdom, while providing short-term security for the discipline, presents long-term difficulties in terms of a lack of teacher competency and too little emphasis on the artistic nature of dance. As an interim step, the report suggests that the subject title *physical education* should

be changed to *physical education and dance* arguing that dance plays an important and unique role in education, including the development of physical literacy. Robinson (2001) further contends that dance is retained in physical education for the convenience of curriculum designers and demonstrates a reluctance on the part of government officials to engage with the implications of acknowledging dance as art education. Brinson (1991) asserts that the historic confusion between the two disciplines will not cease until dance achieves separate status. While an obvious overlap in terms of physicality exists, the uses of the body, values and emphases are different in the two disciplines.

Dance remained as part of the physical education curriculum of England and Wales in 1988, maintaining the traditional links between the two areas (Bannon, 2000). Smith-Autard (1996) notes the proliferation of GCSE courses in dance, which was first examined in 1988 and by 1994, had over three thousand, six hundred candidates applying. Revisions were introduced into primary schools in 1989 and implementation continued into the mid-1990s. The dance programme utilises the ‘dance as art’ model with pedagogies structured around the three-stranded approach – performing, composing and viewing. The curriculum has subsequently been reviewed and reformed on several occasions. The Dearing Review (1994) brought changes which placed the emphasis on performance and inclusion of folk dances diffusing the focus from ‘art’ to ‘social’ forms and, together with reduced timetabling, was seen as a regression rather than progression for dance as art education (Smith-Autard, 1996). Substantial revisions occurring in 1999 and 2007 maintained dance as a statutory element of physical education. Further revisions got underway in 2011 and in the areas of physical education and the arts, are due for completion in September 2014. The most recent revisions present dance as part of the physical education syllabus (Department for Education, 2013). Dance UK (2013), the national dance development agency predicts that the dance as art approach will be maintained and delivery will be within the physical education curriculum in England and Wales. GCSE qualifications in dance, while under reform, will also be retained. The role of specialist teachers for GCSE dance is now firmly established in England and

Wales with many third level institutions offering training opportunities in this particular field of dance expertise.

As previously mentioned, as part of *Curriculum for Excellence* (Education Scotland, 2004) revisions, dance is now presented within the expressive arts curriculum alongside music, art and design, and drama. Outcomes for expressive arts are devised to cover five learning stages covering students from three to eighteen years with the latter stages intended to provide a foundation for the Scottish Qualification Authority's (SQA) Higher qualifications (Blanche, 2007). Outcomes for dance education centre on creating, presenting, evaluating and appreciating dance. Interestingly, while acknowledging the shift as significant for the status of the art form, Clark (2011) points to difficulties regarding equitable access to dance in schools since its separation from physical education. A small number of schools offer dance as a subject, usually where dance expertise exists within staff membership. While dance is an option at higher level, take up by schools is sporadic. There is only one publically funded centre of excellence in Glasgow which provides secondary school education alongside dance studies. Only six schools have presented pupils for examination since the Higher dance option became available in 2002; in 2007, one hundred and fifty eight pupils enrolled for Higher dance (Blanche, 2007). Clark asserts that this situation will not be resolved until specialist dance teachers become available to schools, and that local authorities and arts organisations develop creative approaches and partnerships to support the delivery of dance-in-education programmes. She contends that initial teacher education in Scotland needs to offer further opportunities in dance education. Teachers may convert their Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree in a subject they wish to teach through a Professional Graduate Diploma of Education (PGDE). At present, there are no PGDE courses offered in dance. The B.Ed degree in Physical Education includes an element of dance but specialisation in dance is not an option.

Redfern (1978) notes that in the United States of America, the distinction between studies in

dance as an art form and dance as part of a physical education programme were clearly defined. She attributes this to the longstanding recognition of dance as an art form discipline in third level institutions, with courses first appearing in the 1920s. The representative agency for dance education in the United States of America is emphatic on the need for clarity in school curricula and course descriptors, stating that schools, colleges and institutions need to decide, and structure the content, delivery and assessment of dance programmes accordingly. Organization guidelines state that if learning outcomes focus on the creation, performance and analysis of work by students or others, then dance is taught as art and the channel of delivery is the arts. If, on the other hand, learning outcomes focus on physical activities directed towards health, social and recreational education, then dance is taught as a component part of physical education (National Dance Education Organization, 2012). Acknowledging both as valid and legitimate, the Organization points out that the two areas serve different educational goals and outcomes and therefore, professional teacher preparation requirements differ. As mentioned previously, dance has featured in third level education in America since the 1950s and, generally, dance educators are trained in Colleges of Fine Arts and physical educators are trained in Colleges of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance – or some similarly titled college or department.

As stated in chapter two outcomes identified for dance in the Irish curriculum are interwoven with broader physical education aims encompassing all strands of the syllabus. At primary level dance is confusingly described as an area of arts education delivered within physical education and taught by the class teacher. At junior and senior cycles it is stated as part of physical education and taught by a physical education teacher who, as mentioned above is also responsible for a second subject area. Other than the Applied Leaving Certificate in which a dance module is offered within a wider arts education course, there are as yet no dance options available in secondary education, nor is there any third level course developing specialist dance educators. It is hoped that the revised junior cycle may offer some new footholds for dance within the short course component including in the area of evaluation

and assessment. At primary level dance needs to be aligned with other areas of artistic and aesthetic study. At secondary level dance should ideally be offered as a subject in its own right or at least, as a specialist area of study within a physical education curriculum as is possible under the GCSE system in the United Kingdom. For this to be realised change is necessary within curriculum design and organisation with follow-on implications for teacher education and access to specialist dance supports.

3.3.1 Some observations on teacher education

While assigning dance to physical education fails to give due regard to its aesthetic and artistic relevance Sanderson (1996) saw positive aspects to this outcome. Dance became compulsory in primary schools meaning pupils had at least six years experience in the activity before moving to secondary school; dance educators achieved greater respect and official recognition; and developed more confidence in teaching dance. It is also the case, that if dance had not been included in physical education it may have been entirely omitted from the revised national curriculum. Smith-Autard (1994, 2002) contends that the marginalisation of dance within physical education reduced dance content to poor levels of provision, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The Gulbenkian report on dance education and training in Britain (Brinson, 1980) had called for a radical overhaul of the education of teachers of dance at primary and secondary levels. At secondary level, the report identifies the need for specialist dance teachers to lead programmes for more advanced secondary school students. If dance is to be improved at primary level, the report points out that it needs more attention in the training of the generalist class teacher. It is also the case that visiting specialist teachers working on projects or programmes within the primary education, who are often practising artists, require professional development opportunities. Chappell's (2007) study elucidated specific tensions and dilemmas encountered by specialist dance teachers working in primary school classrooms. The emphasis on learning as an interactive process between teacher and pupil, rather than a formal transmission of knowledge and skills, challenged the expert dance teacher. Melchior (2011) contends that generalist primary teachers with an

adequate background in dance are able to make connections across and within the curriculum in order to teach 'dance as art' in a thematic context - something that specialist teachers are less likely to be able to do. It is also the case that, as they discover the capacity of dance to enable 'critical, creative and moral capacities' generalists teachers find it increasingly restricting to rely on 'how to' dance prescriptions, preferring instead to design their own teaching and learning contexts that are relevant and meaningful to their students.

Rolfe (2001) sought to identify the individual and institutional factors that had the most significant impact on student teachers' confidence to teach dance. She located her study within a four-year undergraduate programme in primary education. During their second-year students had participated in a ten-hour dance course consisting of five two-hour sessions which emphasized 'making' and 'appreciating' dance. The course addressed questions of children's learning, classroom planning and organisation, as well as evaluation and assessment of children's work. The course used a range of resources including dance videos seen as appropriate materials to support future teaching, and artist visits. Nine of the twelve student cohort selected to take part were female, reflecting the gender imbalance typical of recruitment in England. Of the twelve, five had considerable dance experience prior to the university course, 'several' had experienced dance in primary school mainly country dance and 'a few' had considerable dance experience in secondary school in both dance and drama. None expressed a negative attitude towards dance. Rolfe remarks that the students' prior experience was all practice-based; none had been part of an audience. The perception of dance teaching was therefore weighted towards 'doing' dance rather than developing knowledge and understanding of dance. Rolfe cautions that the lack of separation between 'knowing' and 'doing' perpetuates an inadequate understanding of how the concepts and theories related to teaching generally may be applied to dance, and importantly prospective teachers will fail to deepen their learning of dance education. Although students variously described their university course as interesting, useful and enjoyable, Rolfe (2001) observes that this did not 'automatically translate' into confidence to teach dance in schools. Only six

taught dance in their subsequent school-based work, and of these, three elected to teach 'traditional' dances. The remaining three devised a dance framework using a stimulus such as water or animals. Students placed in a teaching environment they perceived as supportive appeared more able to 'take risks' and try out ideas. If the class teacher was enthusiastic and offered encouragement to the student, this affected their feeling of confidence. Where this was not the case, students' tended to resort to 'safe' content such as traditional dances. Those that did not teach gave a variety of reasons however, a lack of confidence generally emerged as a key factor. Rolfe concludes that the development of student teachers' confidence to teach dance is influenced by a range of factors, 'the most significant being prior experience, the university dance course and their school-based work placement'. Regarding the latter, the support of a class teacher and constructive feedback outweighed all other factors suggesting that in-school practice could have both a positive and negative effect on their confidence. She contends that students need to have the experience of observing good practice, as well as teaching, and asserts that the role of the class teacher in nurturing confidence is not always fully acknowledged within the teaching practice partnership.

3.4 The art of dance in education midway model

Redfern (1978) observes that historically a diversity of dance forms was to be found in British schools, very often reflecting the personal interests of the teacher. By the mid-1960s, the most securely rooted was modern educational dance usually taught alongside some form of folk dance. Smith-Autard (1996) notes that by the mid-1970s, there were two models of significance – Laban's educational framework taught mostly by primary and lower secondary teachers, and a version of American modern dance model taught in a number of colleges and in some secondary schools with older pupils. The move towards the product orientation was not widespread and the process orientation was maintained by the majority of teachers in primary and secondary schools. Cole (1993) observes that the shift to the three-stranded dance as art approach was gradual and, prompted by the need for assessable outcomes, had by the mid-1980s become the dominant force in dance education. Smith-Autard (1996)

reports that while both incorporated the three-stranded approach to some degree, confusion and tensions between users of process-based and product-based approaches lasted into the mid-1990s. She noted that some initial teacher education courses retained an emphasis on the Laban-based educational model and in this context, pursued an approach which placed equal emphasis on selected aspects of both models. Smith-Autard acknowledges the influence of Mary Thomas, a senior colleague at Dartford College of Education, on her conceptualisation of the midway approach, through encouraging her to merge the Laban approach and the professional model, in particular techniques associated with American modern dance. The model, which presents a rationale for a resource-based teaching methodology, was published as *The Art of Dance in Education* (Smith-Autard, 1994). Implementation strategies for primary, secondary and tertiary education are proposed in the publication. An overview of the main characteristics of the midway synthesis is presented in section 3.4.1.

3.4.1 Characteristics of the midway model

The midway model offers a theoretical and practical framework for teaching and learning dance. It acknowledges the distinctive role dance should have in a balanced curriculum, and aims to contribute to artistic, aesthetic and cultural education. The overarching aim of the model is developing the capacity to appreciate dance as art. This is achieved through qualitative experiences in performing, composing and viewing, in turn contributing to artistic, aesthetic and cultural learning. The features retained from the Laban-based educational model and the professional or conservatoire model are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1:
Features retained from the educational model and the professional model (Smith-Autard, 2002, 6)

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

The educational model emphasised the experiential child-centred process of dancing as a means of development personal qualities. The professional model emphasised dance product and in its professional status was accessible only to those capable of achieving high technical and performance standards; in educational settings it often proved too exacting (Smith-Autard, 2010b).

The midway approach incorporates elements of both, albeit realigned, and introduces dance as art (referred to as ‘art of dance’ in the midway literature) concepts leading to an appreciation of dance as an art form, and contributing to artistic, aesthetic and cultural learning. Table 3.2 depicts the elements retained from the educational and professional models and art of dance concepts introduced.

Table 3.2:
Elements retained and art of dance concepts introduced (Smith-Autard, 2002, 26-28)

Educational Model	MIDWAY			Professional Model
Process	Process	+	Product	Product
Creativity	Creativity		Knowledge of	Knowledge of thea-
Imagination	Imagination	+	public artistic	tre dance repertoire
Individuality	Individuality		conventions	
Feelings	Feelings	+	Skill	Skill acquisition
Subjectivity	Subjectivity	+	Objectivity	Objectivity
Principles	Principles	+	Techniques	Techniques
Open methods	Open	+	Closed	Closed methods
	APPRECIATION through THREE STRANDS Composing, Performing and Viewing dances contributing to Artistic education Aesthetic education Cultural education			

The dual functions of the midway model, and ‘art’ concepts introduced are briefly summarised as follows.

Dual functions of the midway model:

Process and Product: In achieving a finished dance, students engage with processes of exploring and selecting dance material; creating phrases; viewing and appraising the work of peers; interacting with relevant professional exemplars, usually in the form of selected phrases/segments from a visual resource; refining their own solo, partner and/or group dance sequences.

- Creativity, imagination, individuality and Knowledge of theatre dance:* Learning outcomes are aimed at allowing students to explore and articulate their own creative responses. Exemplars of professional work are used to develop a knowledge and understanding of theatre dance practice. Motifs or phrases from the professional reper-

toire act as motivation for new ideas and to develop technical ability. Guided discussion enables students to formulate their own critical opinion about the solutions that professional choreographers have reached to express distinctive style. As students develop their capacity to have ideas, confidence in their own creative process will grow.

- *Feelings and Skills:* Teachers are encouraged to design dance frameworks that use a style and vocabulary accessible to the age group concerned. Whatever the level of challenge in terms of skill acquisition, it is essential to provide specific contexts for shaping emotional content. The aim is to facilitate an exploration of the dynamics of emotional feeling and kinetic sensation towards firstly, reaching satisfactory meaning and secondly, shaping communication. Maintaining a balance between subjective and objective modes is important. A broader definition of the professional model – one that includes all elements of theatre dance not just performance technique, is intended to provide balance and accountability to the potentially over-indulgent subjectivity of the educational model.
- *Movement principles and Stylised techniques:* Teachers are encouraged to draw on the eclecticism of the theatre dance repertoire in order to offer a range of stylistic and expressive possibilities *and* the principles of movement described within the Laban analysis. The latter is suggested as the basis for developing a conceptual understanding and ‘language’ of movement. Introducing repertoire techniques, alongside movement principles brings theatre dance artists into the classroom, allowing the art form to inform the learning process.
- *Problem solving and Directed teaching:* An appropriate use of both didactic and more open methods is recommended. A balanced approach is important, particularly for the non-specialist teacher who acts as a catalyst, guide and consultant, rather than an instructor.

Art of dance concepts introduced:

As mentioned previously, the overall aim of the model is encouraging an appreciation of

dance as art. Smith-Autard (1988) contends that appreciation is a learned ability, achieved through the organisation of assessable learning outcomes under a three-stranded teaching and learning framework comprising composition, performance and viewing.

- *Composing*: Includes processes of responding to themes and stimuli, improvising, exploring and making decisions by selection, manipulation and refining dance materials generated. In every instance of task-setting, whether structured or more open, the teacher's role is one of facilitator.
- *Performing*: Involves the processes of gaining increasingly complex physical skills and performing these skills with co-ordination, rhythm, balance, strength and flexibility leading to increased abilities and confidence to perform dance expressively and qualitatively in front of an audience of peers or others. While the children will become more skilled through experiencing and practising the dances that they create – especially when they work with others in duets or groups, teachers always need to give them aspects of performance to work on.
- *Viewing*: Developing an appreciation of dance through facilitated viewing experiences, whereby children are encouraged to use their imaginations to describe and interpret dance in both their own words and through the introduction of dance terminology in age appropriate fashion. While they will gain much from viewing their own and their peer's work, viewing experiences should include references to work available to the public world. Resources can include video, DVD, CD-ROM, television, film and whenever possible live performances of dance.

Detailed sample planning materials suggest how the model can be applied in practice. The main learning outcome, around which a set of interrelated lesson planning materials are designed, is the experience gained in achieving 'a complete dance' (Smith-Autard, 2002). The importance of enabling teachers to move from an exploration of movement materials to the act of composing a dance is critical to midway pedagogy. Smith-Autard (1996) credits Mary Thomas with the notion of a dance framework, first conceived as a 'libretto', which

would provide a simple structure for teachers to use. Further developed by Smith-Autard, a predetermined dance framework assists teacher understanding of ‘form’ and encourages the notion of ‘well-made’ dances. Of note, is the acknowledgement she gives to the ‘intuitive grasp of form’ she gained through classes with for example, Anita Heyworth and American teacher Dorothy Madden, enabling her to develop knowledge and skill in phrasing and composition. While sample frameworks are suggested for the non-specialist teacher, it is likely that teachers inexperienced in dance would need to acquire a basic knowledge of compositional principles and experience in performing and viewing dance, in order to develop their own dance frameworks. Planning materials include the following elements:

- *Teacher-created dance framework*: A composed structure for a dance broken down into sections denoting what is to be worked on in each section, the order of the sections and how these relate to make a whole dance. A well-made teacher-created dance framework has a clear beginning, middle and end, contains variety and contrast, develops logically and achieves coherence of form (Smith-Autard, 2002).
- *Learning outcomes*: A teacher-created matrix setting out the composing, performing and viewing learning objectives which inform the dance framework and related unit of lesson plans.
- *Guided viewing worksheets*: Formulated by the teacher and used to deepen and inform the viewing experiences (peer and visual resource) of their students. Questions (viewing tasks) used strategically at different stages aim to encourage individual and/or collaborative response through verbal, written or pictorial means as appropriate.

While not the only approach used, resource-based teaching is requisite to midway model pedagogy. Methodologies promoted by the model require access to a range of professional theatre dance practice. Deconstruction of parts of a selected choreography in order to learn as repertoire or study with a view to exploring similar content supports artistic and aesthetic learning. Resource-based methodologies associated with the model are examined further in section 3.4.3. The midway model claims to contribute to artistic, aesthetic and cultural

education. Teachers are encouraged to assist student engagement with the artistic processes and working traditions of theatrical dance; to elucidate and refine the textures and modalities of their own individual aesthetic judgment; and to consider a range of different cultural contexts and characteristics which explore differing values, beliefs, ideologies and social behaviours. The model's claims regarding artistic, aesthetic and cultural education are elaborated on in section 3.4.2. The model presents assessment and evaluation as an iterative process informing future planning. Assessment of the pupils' abilities as creators and performers and critical viewers of dance is based on the learning objectives which the teacher will have determined and emphasised for the particular assessment period. Emphasis on, for example, interpretation and translation of an idea into a short dance; selecting and refining movement material into motifs and phrases; understanding formal devices such as contrast and repetition; demonstration of physical aptitudes such as a leap or a balance, projection or focus; and some or all of observing, describing, analysing, interpreting and evaluating dances in a manner that uses the student's own experience and is suited to the development stage of the pupils. Worksheets are suggested for assessment purposes whereby students are asked to respond to set questions. This allows the teacher to draw attention to particular aspects and to introduce new learning opportunities.

3.4.2 Contribution to artistic, aesthetic, and cultural education

As previously mentioned, developing an appreciation of dance as art is the overall aim of midway model pedagogy. This is a gradual process which Smith-Autard contends can have many historical and cultural encounters, and be lifelong. Appreciation is described as coming to value an art work for the artistic, aesthetic and cultural qualities and meanings discerned by the perceiver (Smith-Autard, 2002). According to Smith-Autard, concepts of artistic and aesthetic education are interrelated - the three processes of composing, performing and viewing are seen as interdependent, informing the making, shaping and presentation of symbolic meaning in dance. However, for the purposes of clarity she offers a definition of

artistic education as those aspects which relate to the discipline of dance, primarily learnt in an objective way. Artistic learning is gained through engagement with the processes and traditions of, in this case, western theatre dance at a level appropriate to the learner's experience and age. Physical skill and choreographic ability develop simultaneously with conceptual knowledge and understanding through an exploration of ideas, themes and content presented within the three-stranded teaching and learning 'art' framework. Aesthetic education is understood as developing the human capacity to determine relevance and meaning, to explore and differentiate complex sensorial responses through facilitated experiences that recognise a range of perception modalities (Smith-Autard, 2002). To mature aesthetic perception, Smith-Autard agrees with Reid's (1969) assertion that some type of classification framework, which might encourage discussion of perceived qualities in an art work, is needed. Observations about how a particular aspect of a dance, a motif, or a whole dance is received and experienced by the viewer are enabled through the use of some frame of reference which can prompt description, evaluation and shared debate. While admitting the autonomy and individuality of separate art works, Smith-Autard suggests that teachers may find Osborne's (1970) framework useful for classroom situations. Osborne's classification, which used the headings of sensory qualities, expressive qualities and formal qualities, might assist teachers in facilitating or mediating classroom discussion about the thoughts and feelings experienced by the children in viewing dance. The development of a child's capacity to increasingly differentiate and put language on their received experience of embodied qualities within a dance work is difficult to measure. In this regard, Smith-Autard urges educators not to set aside opportunities for aesthetic encounters in favour of what can be assessed.

Of interest to the Irish context is a study (O'Donnell, 2012) involving Irish primary school children which used elements of the Smith-Autard's (2002) midway framework.

O'Donnell's study investigated the acquisition of dance appreciation skills in children of seven and eight years of age over the course of eleven forty-five minute sessions. O'Donnell

selected short excerpts from seven different dance works (ballet and contemporary) as exemplars in exploring and deepening children's conceptual understanding and appreciation of dance as art. For her study, O'Donnell adapted the Leder (2004) framework of aesthetic appreciation and judgment originally proposed for adults. O'Donnell calls for further research specific to the art of dance that might scaffold and support the generalist educator in cultivating pupils' skills of dance appreciation in a systematic and comprehensive manner. The study highlights the paucity of 'authenticated and accredited instruments' available to teachers for assessment purposes, in this case the assessment of dance appreciation, a stated learning outcome in the *Primary School Curriculum Introduction* (Department of Education and Science, 1999a, 56). The use of critical frameworks to explore aesthetic response is practiced in the professional art world, for example, Lerman's 'Critical Response Process' (Williams, 2002; Lerman, 2003) provides a system which facilitates critical dialogue aimed at deepening viewing experiences and enabling constructive feedback on dance composition. Structured processes have also been developed in the visual arts, for example, the VTS approach (Visual Thinking Strategies, 2014), which are informing educational materials used in visual arts education programmes internationally. In Ireland, the primary school curriculum dance strand aims to develop an appreciation of dance (Department of Education and Science, 1999b). Teachers are not assisted in this endeavour. There are no response methods promoted, or frameworks available to them and the only visual resource produced by the Department to date is short videos of children performing Irish traditional dance (Professional Development Service for Teachers, 2008). Proposals for a portal site, which were identified as a priority in the *Arts in Education Charter* (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2013), may provide some opportunity for the development of new, or links to existing arts education resources, including dance.

The catalogue of dance resources proposed by the midway model is choreographic work with a provenance in western theatre dance, primarily contemporary and modern idioms. Where non-western idioms appear, these reflect the style and production values of the

theatre dance tradition. Within the context of the midway model, Smith-Autard (1996) is not concerned with other types of dance such as for example, social or folk dance, or their role in education. A construct exclusively defined by the western theatre dance genre, raises issues concerning the depth and breadth of the cultural education contribution of the midway model. Principles identified by Robinson (1999) for teaching and learning across the school curriculum in England and Wales are as follows:

- to enable young people to recognise, explore and understand personally held cultural assumptions and values;
- to enable young people to embrace and understand cultural diversity by bringing them into contact with the attitudes, values and traditions of other cultures;
- to encourage an historical perspective by relating contemporary values to the processes and events that shaped them;
- to enable young people to understand the evolutionary nature of culture and the processes and potential for change.

Responsible citizenry is one of four capacities identified in the revised Scottish Curriculum (Education Scotland, 2004). Attributes and capabilities identified within this capacity include the following:

- respect for others;
- commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life;
- develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it;
- understand different beliefs and cultures;
- develop informed, ethical views of complex issues.

In Ireland, where issues pertaining to cultural diversity are increasingly debated, the *Intercultural Education Strategy* of the Department of Education and Skills (2010) aims to ensure that:

- all students experience an education that respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership;
- all education providers are assisted with ensuring that inclusion and integration within an intercultural learning environment become the norm.

Smith-Autard (2002) suggests that by encouraging students to bring their own cultural and physical vocabularies and influences into artistic and aesthetic processes rooted in a western theatre dance construct, dance education will reflect a multi-cultural society. However, Doyle (2003) contends that issues relating to cultural diversity are not sufficiently teased out in the midway model. The model does not explore the implications of catering for the distinctive values, attitudes and traditions of non-western cultures. Rather, it seeks to explore such differences within the context of how such traditions have informed the evolution of western theatre dance. Doyle acknowledges that mention is made of the need for teachers to understand cultural diversity however, she observes that the model offers little guidance beyond the western cultural experience, including in its promotion of technology-based dance resources, the contents of which are rooted in modern and contemporary theatre dance. To the issue of cultural diversity, Doyle adds that physical inclusivity is likewise unattended to within the midway literature. Karkou (2008) questions the applicability of the suggested dance resources to forms other than contemporary dance and calls for resources in the field of traditional dances, particularly English traditional dance, which according to Karkou receives little attention in English schools. Savrami (2012) discusses hoped-for developments in undergraduate degree options in dance education within the Greek educational system. She proposes that the principles of the midway model should inform course design. However, Savrami does not elaborate on relevancy, or on whether and how the model might need adaptation within the cultural context of the Greek educational system.

While unresolved on the matter of cultural education and physical inclusivity, Doyle (2003)

notes that the midway model is rooted in extensive experience and endorsed by British education authorities. She points to the manner in which Smith-Autard (2002) details a progressive application of the midway model with content and exemplars provided for 'art of dance' teaching and learning in primary, secondary and tertiary education making it, she asserts, a useful resource for initial teacher education. Melchior (2011) suggests that engaging with the compositional and aesthetic outcomes prescribed by the midway model would provide wider opportunity for teachers wishing to extend dance learning beyond performance-based outcomes. Chappell's (2007, 2009) interrogation of specialist dance teachers' understanding and approach to creativity, notes that the midway model places equal emphasis on creativity, imagination and individuality, and on acquisition of knowledge of theatre dance. Drawing on Best's (1985) assertion that 'product indicates process', Chappell maintains that the debate between formalism and expressionism is 'alive and well' within dance education discourse, particularly as it applies to compositional teaching and learning. She argues that a blending of both should inform dance pedagogical practice, utilising open-ended problem solving and directed teaching. In this she points to Smith-Autard's (2002) assertion that aesthetic sensibility and responsiveness *and* an understanding of the conventions and codes of an art form are educated through a balanced approach, exemplified within the theoretical framework underpinning the midway model whereby subjectivity and feelings inform teaching and learning in equal measure to objectivity and training. Warburton (2003) observes that some dance educators argue that there are irreconcilable differences between professional training and educational models while two models – Hutchinson Guest's (1995) 'language of dance' approach and Smith-Autard's (2002) 'art of dance' midway model, seek to build bridges between the two. In particular, he points to the bridging of transmission and developmental approaches as a characteristic of the midway framework. Hutchinson Guest's (2012) teaching approach is rooted in a deep knowledge and understanding of Labanotation as a means of recording human movement and claims uniqueness as the only approach to movement study and dance that is based on the 'movement alphabet'. Warburton contends that both models have a great deal to offer dance

makers, performers, viewers and dance critics in promoting an understanding of dance as a knowledge domain.

3.4.3 Resource-based teaching and learning

Resource-based approaches can be either thematic, whereby a common theme links a range of subject areas together or discipline-based, whereby the resource exemplifies a single subject, in this case the art of dance. The former is more often found in primary schools, the latter, while suited to all levels, is more likely to be applied in secondary schools (Brinson, 1991). Brinson proposes that the contribution of dance to primary and secondary education needs to include doing dance, creating dance, learning about dance and seeing dance, especially the best examples available in performance spaces, on video or on film. For Smith-Autard (1994, 2002) quality dance experiences for children in schools demands access to professional dance works for purposes of observing, describing, analysing, interpreting and evaluating dances in a manner that uses the student's own experience and is sympathetic to the development stage of the pupils. Teachers need to have access to purpose-designed, easily managed resources via text and technology that enable the artistic processes and legacy of living and past artists to be available in ways suitable for use in schools and colleges. This is no different than having access to for example, dramatic texts and theatrical performances, scores and musical performances, visual art work and extant works of literature to support artistic, aesthetic and cultural teaching and learning outcomes. As information and communications technology (ICT) developed during the 1970s and onwards, new possibilities and opportunities emerged for the development and use of such resources within educational settings. Popat (2002) notes an increasing use of video technology to view pre-recorded dance performances and to record students' work for analysis. Popat stresses the importance of the teacher's role of in guiding compositional learning. Commenting upon the varying quality and appropriateness of websites set up by dance companies and on the internet generally, she cautions teachers against uninformed use of these for choreographic learning purposes. Chappell (2006) agrees, noting the growing use of new technologies within dance education

highlights the importance of critical inquiry as this area of dance pedagogy develops.

The use of non-interactive video recordings according to Smith-Autard (2003) is cumbersome, as finding the particular motif or section repeatedly for demonstration purposes can be difficult and time consuming. Interactive technologies that offer options of easily accessing precise moments are more useful to dance pedagogy particularly if easily controlled and authored for use within the curriculum. When designed to include teaching and learning relating to music, costume and set in addition to dance content, she contends that teachers have available the pedagogic means of holistic art form presentation. Best practice technology resources develop students' abilities to direct and monitor their own progress, and assist teachers to guide and improve student learning in the usage of ICT and dance materials (Smith-Autard, 2009). Smith-Autard (2008) holds that for dance as a subject to advance politically, teachers need to move on from outdated technologies to techno-enhanced teaching and learning environments including digital, interactive resources, internet and intranet facilities that support student learning. She maintains that teachers in the United Kingdom are worried that their teaching role would be diminished by use of newer interactive technology approaches that shift pedagogy into a more student-centred environment. Smith-Autard (2009) asserts that teachers are not taking advantage of available interactive technology resources putting forward two reasons for this: compliance with the curriculum requirements for ICT is understood by teachers as being met by the use of more traditional media such as videos, music CDs and DVDs; and the reluctance on the part of teachers to change from a *modus operandi* that upholds the teacher as expert and pupils as apprentices. Robinson (1999) argues for systematic and comprehensive programmes of ICT education in schools pointing out that young people are often more alert to the possibilities of new technologies than their teachers and are often more expert than adults in using it. He encourages student self-monitoring, reflection upon their own performance and progress with a view to encouraging the development of the self-directed learner. Robinson contends that the earlier self-directed learning is internalised the better, but recognises that this is unlikely to occur until

secondary school, where self-directed learning is more ‘in tune’ with the development of young people’s growing maturity, their need for independence, and a growing proficiency in various forms of ICT. However, he cautions teachers about pervasive use of technologies, identifying potential physical harm caused by long exposure to screens and the individual led processes involved which need to be balanced with direct contact with others. In addition to cautions relating to social development, concerns about the possible effects on young people’s emotional and imaginative development are also identified, stating that these have not been fully evaluated. Schools are reminded of the need to promote other modes of learning and human contact so that the full capacities of young people are developed through and alongside the use of new technologies.

In an Irish context, the use of ICT in appropriate contexts is promoted as a means of adding value to educational contexts by adding a dimension to learning that was not previously available. It is seen as a significant motivational factor in students’ learning and can enable collaborative learning (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2007). The Irish report identified four areas of need arising from the piloting process of the ICT framework:

- the need to develop further support materials for example, planning tools and sample activities for use in schools;
- the need to embed ICT into the curriculum design, assessment and examination processes across all subjects and syllabuses;
- the need to invest in ICT infrastructure in schools;
- the need to provide continuing professional development for primary and secondary teachers in the use of ICT in curriculum delivery and assessment processes.

As previously mentioned, proposed developments under the *Arts in Education Charter* (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2013) include a portal site to be made available to the education and arts sectors. It is possible that the site will promote appropriate resources for teaching and learning in arts education subject areas. In the case of dance, it is

difficult to determine where existing resources might be found or if there are none, where they might be sourced. While choreographic material suitable for use in schools in a range of genres exists, there is no evidence of companies, agencies or artists investigating how these might be used as a resource for curriculum dance. There are currently no professional dance companies in Ireland producing work specifically for young audiences. Of relevance here is the research currently being undertaken by the Arts Council (Ni Bhriain, 2014) which aims to connect contemporary theatre practice to Irish secondary schools. The initiative is exploring various models, including the use of new media, in partnership with key agencies and organisations in the arts and education sectors. Based on the idea of partnership and maximising current resources and infrastructure, the proposed service could offer a new approach to connecting secondary education in Ireland with theatre. Findings from this initiative might usefully inform similar developments in dance education in Ireland.

From the 1980s onwards the development of multimedia resources for use in schools became a particular focus of Smith-Autard's work. She established a research partnership with Schofield, an ICT specialist and in 1990 they founded Bedford Interactive. A problem of common interest to both Smith-Autard and Schofield was the dissemination of viewing materials that might assist and enhance accurate reconstruction of GCSE dance studies set annually by the chief examiner. Video-based resources produced by the National Resource Centre for Dance (United Kingdom) were available at the time. However, Smith-Autard and Schofield maintained that students' work did not achieve the necessary quality for good grades. Two years of funded research at Bedford College of Higher Education into the potential use of laser technology for dance education interactive videos led to the production of *Dance Disc 1* which won a British Interactive Video Association in 1989 (National Dance Teachers Association, 2012). The video used synchronised moving images of a professional dancer with accompanying graphics including a Labanotation display, and a separate sound track of audio teaching points. *Dance Disc 1* was made available to a small number of colleges resulting in, according to Smith-Autard and Schofield, significant improvement in

reconstruction of GCSE examination set pieces. However, the equipment was expensive, difficult to manipulate and available only in the United Kingdom. Work with laser technology would be followed by resource packs based on CD-i and CD ROM technology specifically authored by Schofield and Smith-Autard for dance education purposes from the mid 1990s onwards. *Dance Disc 2*, a pilot interactive video disc, produced in 1995 with the support of the Arts Council of England and European Commission, analysed an excerpt from a televised work by Siobhan Davies - Chorale 1 from *White Bird Featherless*. This project aimed to gather feedback from teachers and students on the potential use of technology within dance education. *Graham Technique*, analysing ten basic exercises which demonstrate the fundamental characteristics of this technique, followed. *Motif and Variations* a CD-i technology based resource pack designed for children from fourteen years upwards was produced in 1996. In 1999, the entirety of Scott-Barrett's fifty-six minute piece, *Wild Child* for Ludus Dance was authored as a fully interactive CD-i in 1999 and CD-ROM in 2001. *Choreographic Outcomes*, aimed at improving an understanding of form in dance composition was produced in 2003. *Step Dance – a Wild Child Mini Resource Pack* for ages seven to fourteen years, and *Vocalise* – an interactive CD-ROM for students of sixteen years and upwards followed in 2006 and 2008 respectively. Bedford Interactive has published six multimedia dance resources for use in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Each of the six includes written materials designed around artistic, aesthetic and cultural education, aimed at assisting both cognitive and affective learning. A seventh resource, *FORMotion*, a multifaceted interactive software application is aimed at dance companies, universities and dance agencies which have large archives or use dance footage for purposes of rehearsing existing repertoire and devising new work. The application, which enables self-authoring, is also suggested for use in teaching (Bedford Interactive, 2013).

Cook (2005) asserts that Bedford Interactive is at the forefront in redefining dance pedagogy through technology that provides teachers with flexible, easily navigated interactive resources and accompanying texts. She considers *Wild Child* (Bedford Interactive, 2001)

‘groundbreaking’ and observes that the resource enables Smith-Autard to put into practice resource-based methodologies associated with the midway model. Bannon (2000) observes that the use of technology in classrooms and studios had long been awaited by dance educators in the United Kingdom, having a marked impact on the environment of learning. Referring to the work of Smith-Autard and Schofield, she notes that the emergence of interactive technologies for educational purposes enables experienced dance educators, to share their research and expertise across the field. The *Wild Child Resource Pack* (Bedford Interactive, 2001) comprises a two hundred and seventy-two page booklet of teaching materials, including over eighty worksheets aimed at guiding development of concepts and understanding of the describing, analysing, interpreting and evaluating dance through the use of a professional dance work as a resource. These materials informed teaching and learning supports for the *Wild Child Mini-Resource Pack 1 – Step Dance* (Bedford Interactive, 2006) comprising a sixty-five page teacher resource handbook including teacher and student practical worksheets, ‘storyboard’ charts, sample lesson plans and evaluation sheets. Each of the published Bedford Interactive packs provides an extensive range of written materials for teachers. Killingbeck (2002) found the written materials produced as part of *Wild Child* (Bedford Interactive, 2001) particularly useful in developing students’ understanding of dance composition, and in developing an appreciation of aesthetic qualities. However, she contends that a thorough understanding of theories underpinning ‘art of dance’ and resource-based planning is a prerequisite for successful usage of the resource pack by teachers. Without such knowledge teachers will find it difficult to plan a route through its extensive contents and achieve the desired teaching and learning outcomes.

Wild Child (Bedford Interactive, 2001) and *Step Dance* (Bedford Interactive, 2006) use Ludus Dance Company’s *Wild Child* choreographed by Jane Scott-Barrett with music by James Mackie and set and costumes by Ashley Shairp. Founded in 1975 and based in Lancashire, England, the original company produced dance theatre performances and five-day residency programmes aimed at schools and first-time dance audiences that toured

throughout Britain and abroad. As noted in chapter two, Ludus visited Dublin in October 1985 as part of an Arts Council of Ireland and Dublin Theatre Festival initiative focussed on dance in education. The company was in-residence in Mount Temple Comprehensive School in Dublin. In addition to performances of *Early Warnings* by choreographer David Glass, the company ran a school-based workshop programme. More recently, the Ludus youth dance company performed at the 2010 Irish Youth Dance Festival in Dún laoghaire-Rathdown County. From July 2011, Ludus Dance ceased its touring strand in order to focus on developing a more robust, comprehensive dance-based infrastructure serving the Lancashire region (Ludus Dance, 2012). For *Wild Child*, Scott-Barrett collaborated with Jayachandran, a specialist in the South Indian martial art 'Kalari', with the intention of incorporating the animal-like movements, high kicks and leaps of this discipline into the choreography. Aimed at children from ten years upwards, the work was performed in many schools and colleges in the United Kingdom. Smith-Autard (2003) judged it an excellent work for Bedford Interactive because it incorporated a range of short dances suitable for teaching and learning dance composition, performance and viewing in a contemporary dance genre. *Step Dance* (Bedford Interactive, 2006) uses one of these short dances and was developed as a stand-alone resource pack for use with upper-level primary school children. The *Wild Child* resource pack has been implemented in schools and, or with teachers by Smith-Autard (2003) in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, Finland Australia, Canada and the United States of America. Based on her teaching experiences, she maintains that the resource is particularly effective in enabling students to produce work that shows an understanding of compositional concepts and principles such as abstraction, symbolism, motif, repetition, development and transition. Smith-Autard (1976, 2002, 2007) maintains that teaching composition is the most difficult aspect of dance as art pedagogy. In her view composition is best achieved when fully integrated with performance and viewing dance elements. The use of multimedia resources which enable integrated experiences of compositional learning with viewing and performing peer and professional works serve to enhance artistic insight and artistry.

A four-day seminar on multimedia and dance pedagogy led by Smith-Autard and Schofield took place in the University of Limerick (Leahy, 1997). Proceedings of the Limerick seminar comprise eleven papers, five presented by Smith-Autard and six presented by Schofield. The Schofield papers describe the process of developing multimedia products for dance education. The planning stage is emphasised as the 'essential cycle' of development, highlighting the need for the art discipline expert to work closely with the multimedia expert in the design of the product. This is to ensure that technology solutions are designed and built from the perspective of meeting the art form and pedagogic criteria. Filming requires meticulous pre-planning with the art form team, as use of the video material for dance education purposes will determine how footage is shot. Planning and assembling all 'primary assets' is required prior to filming, for example, camera angles, shots needed for simultaneous on-screen viewing, long shots needed to put another shot in context. Primary assets also include aspects such as voice-overs, dance notation, stills, music, drawings, diagrams, animations, written text, all of which need to be planned out in advance with the discipline team. All steps and requirements are itemised on a storyboard to direct the filming process, sequencing of events and time codes. Throughout, the multimedia team select or design software solutions which make filming and editing easier, more flexible, time efficient and cost effective. From 'primary assets', 'derivative assets' are created and stored in databases. Some derivatives are 'enhanced' where deemed necessary and/or opportune in terms of exploring an innovative response. Enhancement of software solutions built by Bedford Interactive include the use of *Historical Equal Interval Still Sequences* (HEISS) to trace pathway(s) of a movement or motif; and *Key Event Still Sequences* (KESS) to map sequencing of movement. These applications combine elements such as superimposing images taken at equal intervals, and overlaying a timeline of dots. At the time, Schofield was investigating the use of real-time on-screen 'drawing' by the teacher to draw attention to particular events within a dance. Both HEISS and KESS enhancements were thought useful for analysis and discussion of dance. Bedford Interactive has used CD-ROM, Video CD and CDi (Compact Disc Interactive). Schofield reports that CDi formatting had many advantages for pedagogical use

because it permitted immediate access to any point on a disc and ‘frame by frame’ access. The Schofield papers also detail the Bedford Interactive authoring process, taking primary and derivative ‘assets’ and collating and structuring them into a finished educational product. Once authored the product is prepared for publishing, packaging, marketing and distribution. Throughout, Schofield points to the importance of using high-quality media, emphasising professional media input rather than well-intentioned amateur involvement, which may bring about a heavier cost burden in the long run. Examples of project timelines, costings, funding partners and potential markets are offered. Schofield (cited in Leahy, 1997) comments that at that time, Bedford Interactive did not sell the software built for use in its dance education interactive resources. The main reason given is that such editing tools were not of interest to the commercial market, which was focussed on the ‘gaming’ industry, not the educational market. In that regard the toolkit software *FORmotion* (Bedford Interactive, 2013), which enables self-authoring of dance technology resources, is in receipt of Arts Council of England funding support. Smith-Autard (2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2010a) has presented Bedford Interactive resources internationally, most notably as a regular contributor at National Dance Education Organization conferences.

Chappell (2009), in exploring the nature of partnership between artists and teachers in developing the creativity of children, found contextual relevance in the midway model and acknowledges its role in dance education in the United Kingdom. Smith-Autard (2002) acknowledges that the promotion of any one model for teaching dance over and above others may appear overly prescriptive, particularly when set against the need for dynamic and constantly changing teaching approaches. Invoking the evolving nature of the ‘art’ model originally proposed some thirty years ago and subsequently advocated for by others, she claims continuing relevance for the midway model on grounds of the significant influence it continues to exert in schools and third level degree courses in the United Kingdom. The influence of the midway model in jurisdictions other than England and Wales is reported on in section 3.5.

3.5 The influence of the midway model on international curricula

As mentioned previously, Clark (2011) notes that in Scotland dance is now part of the expressive arts curriculum. She observes that content and methodologies are closely aligned with the ‘dance as art’ model articulated by Brinson (1991) and originally proposed in *Dance Composition* (Smith-Autard, 1976). In Northern Ireland dance is part of physical education which is statutory in primary school and non-statutory at Key Stage 3. The overall aim of the curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is ‘developing fundamental movement skills’. Physical education is statutory at Key Stage 4 but the dance and outdoor education elements of the programme are non statutory (Northern Ireland Curriculum, 2014). In some schools, GCSE options are available in dance. In the primary curriculum, the Laban-based approach is apparent whereby teachers are advised that in dance; ‘pupils should be given opportunities to respond to a variety of stimuli and the use of body movements to communicate ideas and express feelings’. Folk dance is also presented. Meiners (2001) reports that in Australia, the New South Wales Board of Studies now includes dance as a key strand of the creative arts syllabus having previously being a part of the personal development, health and physical education syllabus. Syllabus design looked at national and international dance education models including the Smith-Autard (2002) midway model. Meiners reports that the three-stranded approach - performing, composing and viewing, involving a range of genre was identified as the appropriate approach were identified as key experiences for primary school pupils. The Mullins (2004) study on dance education in New South Wales confirms the primacy of the ‘art of dance’ midway model in secondary dance education syllabi in Australia attributing the model to Redfern (1973) and Smith-Autard. Ausdance confirms that a seminal paper on dance education (Osmotherley, 1991) continues to inform developments in Australian schools. In the context of the evolutionary practice in the United Kingdom and with particular reference to Adshead (1981) and Brinson (1980), he advocates for dance to be understood as aesthetic education and elaborates on the ‘dance as art’ framework, providing significant information and exemplars in the approach. Melchior (2011) reports that in New Zealand, dance has been recognised as a discipline in its own right, along with other arts

education subjects, since the year 2000. Dance became an approved subject for third level entrance in 2006. According to Melchior, by 2008 dance was the fastest growing curriculum area in New Zealand schools and is now a senior scholarship subject at secondary level. Noting a shift from traditional technique-based transmission approaches, she points to Smith-Autard's (2002) midway model, which informs the New Zealand curriculum, as promoting diverse teaching strategies aimed at broadening the dance experience of students. However, Melchior (2011) points out that the generalist teacher is required to implement the dance curriculum regardless of the teacher's prior knowledge or experience. Furthermore, primary schools encourage teachers to integrate dance into their classroom programmes, and finding ways to motivate and engage pupils in dance as an artistic experience within integrated contexts for learning is a challenge. The situation in Canada varies across the ten provinces and two territories of the country. In some jurisdictions dance is located within physical education and in others in arts education. Of note, it was in Canada that the first dance and the Child international (daCi) conference was organised in 1978, held in the University of Alberta (Lynne-Hanna, 1982). It is widely recognised that Joyce Boorman, a former student at Laban's Art of Movement Studio in London who moved to Canada in the 1960s, was the driving force and organiser of the conference. The keynote address was given by Betty Redfern on the topic of 'the child as spectator', 'the child as creator', 'the child as performer'. Physical and Health Education Canada (2014) provide a wide range of supports for dance education including an exemplar curriculum. The Manitoba exemplar demonstrates influences of both the Laban-based and dance as art approaches, suggesting a synthesis of theories and practices although Smith-Autard's midway approach is not referenced.

The literature review found no evidence that 'dance as art' debates occurring in the United Kingdom had influence in Ireland. As outlined in chapter two, there is however, evidence of a three-stranded approach in the primary curriculum (Department of Education and Science, 1999b) although, content and methodologies are strongly aligned with the Laban-based approach. Fitzpatrick (2000), reports on unresolved tensions between the Laban (1948) and

the midway (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002) models and asserts that while curriculum materials make partial use of art of dance theory, Laban's art of movement principles inform the practice. There are no references to dance as art theory or practice in teacher guidelines (Department of Education and Science, 1999c) and the bibliography provided for dance is entirely Laban related. In addition, of particular interest to this study is the absence of art form mention in suggested resources for dance classes. Links to the art form are neither encouraged nor discouraged. Drury (2010) highlights the enrichment that such programmes can bring to the curriculum for example, arts experience beyond the normal scope of classroom practice, opportunities for relationship-building between artists, teachers and children, for connecting schools with their wider community and the possibility of developing lifelong interest and participation in the arts on the part of children. In encountering an artist, children encounter an art form tradition and someone who has a fluency in the language and processes of their art form. Drury (2010) points out that such aesthetic commitment on the part of artists is complementary to the pedagogical commitment of the teacher, seeing this as an important point of both distinction and alignment. The art of dance midway model promotes an understanding of dance as aesthetic teaching and learning. Its resource-based methodologies promote encounters of the nature suggested by Drury, and for similar reasons.

Of particular relevance to both the Irish and wider international context is a recent report published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD report *Art for Art's Sake* (Winner et al., 2013) examines research that has been conducted about the impact of arts education. The study is informed by a previous multifaceted study *The Qualities of Quality* (Seidel et al., 2009) conducted by Project Zero, of how arts educators define and strive to create high quality arts learning experiences for children and youth. With regard to dance, while some studies claimed that instruction in dance improves visual-spatial skills, the OECD study reports that they were too few in number and too limited in scope to be conclusive. The report found no evidence that dance education improves verbal or mathematical academic skills. Studies linking enhanced

creativity with drama and dance education were also limited in number and the statistical power of the positive evidence did not allow the generalisation of findings. The report cautions that how the arts are taught is significant - poor teaching is likely to generate poor learning outcomes and will not foster creativity. This underlines the importance of initial teacher education and the need to promote effective methodologies that lead to a quality engagement with the art form. Arguing that improvement in literacy and numeracy is more likely to come about if they are the direct focus of the curriculum: 'if one seeks first and foremost to develop skills in geometry, studying geometry – rather than music or dance – is always likely to be more effective', the report is emphatic that justification for arts education should not be in terms of skills in other, traditional academic subjects:

We argue that the main justification for arts education is clearly the acquisition of artistic skills. By artistic skills, we mean not only the technical skills developed in different arts forms (playing an instrument, composing a piece, dancing, choreographing, painting and drawing, acting, etc.) but also the habits of mind and behaviour that are developed in the arts. Arts education matters because people trained in the arts play a significant role in the innovation process in OECD countries. Ultimately, however, the arts are an essential part of human heritage and of what makes us human, and it is difficult to imagine an education for better lives without arts education. (Winner et al., 2013, 14)

3.6 Conclusion

The 1970s saw major changes in curricular dance in the United Kingdom. Dance as art emerged as a specialist area of study at third level argued on grounds of philosophical aesthetics (Curl, 1969; Redfern, 1973). The 'dance as art' paradigm was adopted into the curriculum in the United Kingdom in 1988, gradually becoming established as the consensus approach in primary, secondary and tertiary education. However, reforms brought to the fore polarities between somatic intention and artistic intention; feeling and cognition; content and form; symbolic representation and self-expression; cultural elitism and inclusivity. Tensions surfaced between programmes which were vested primarily in personal development and self-expression and those primarily vested in the acquisition of performance skills and techniques. Further elaboration of the 'art' model by Smith-Autard (1994) sought to accommodate both the educational and professional models with additional elements introduced. The resulting art of dance proposition became known as the midway model. This model has in-

formed teaching and learning in the United Kingdom and in a number of jurisdictions internationally. The midway model has not been implemented in the Irish curriculum or in initial teacher education programmes for primary school teachers. Pedagogy promoted by the model is strongly associated with resource-based teaching and learning methodologies. The development of new technologies enabled the exploration of ‘art of dance’ resources using new media. Smith-Autard and Schofield, trading as Bedford Interactive, are credited with publication of the first interactive CD-ROM for use in schools (*Wild Child*, Bedford Interactive, 2001). *Step Dance* (Bedford Interactive, 2006), a mini-version of the 2001 resource was authored specifically for use in primary education. The *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource, which claims to exemplify midway model pedagogy, informs an exploration of the model presented in chapter five, including consideration of the implications for, and use of technology-based teaching and learning.

Chapter Four

Research Methods

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines how this study was scoped and designed, the research methods selected and used, and the process of implementation. The chapter begins with an outline of the underpinning methodological approaches which framed and oriented the study, and which as themes run throughout its design and implementation. The chapter recounts the process through which the study evolved and any adaptations or changes which occurred throughout implementation. The strengths and limitations of the design are discussed in relation to the research questions, which were posed from an interpretive stance. The research used mixed-methods in data collection. With the exception of questionnaire, the study used qualitative instruments in data collection. The fieldwork process is described, and the various techniques employed, which include literature search, questionnaire, interview, observation and documentation, are discussed. Some reflections on the effectiveness of the methods in addressing the research questions are offered, and issues of triangulation, reliability, validity are discussed. Ethical considerations are also presented.

4.2 Dominant paradigms in educational research

Educational research aims to inform educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational action (Bassey, 1999). Cohen et al (2007) acknowledge that educational research, politics and decision-making are ineluctably intertwined, demonstrated by the move towards applied and evaluative modes and away from 'pure' research. O'Toole (2006, 66) contends that no one method is 'sacrosanct or pure'. Research undertaken in the educational domain may employ quantitative measures, which have their provenance in scientific research, or qualitative approaches, which derive from studies on human behaviour and social phenomena, or a mixture of both. Although some dance education researchers use

primarily quantitative methods, qualitative approaches have dominated dance education research. While there is debate within the field regarding the need to develop research methodology intrinsic to dance, current dance research emphasises interdisciplinarity (Stinson and Dils, cited in Given, 2008).

4.2.1 A qualitative approach

My epistemological stance in this study is based on my understanding of aesthetic and artistic education; and on a firm conviction that all children are entitled to dance education according to their needs as part of their educational experience. To view knowledge as 'personal, subjective, and unique' (Cohen et al, 2007) involves the researcher with their subjects leading to a qualitative approach. Researchers adopting a qualitative approach are 'concerned to understand individuals' perceptions of the world' (Bell, 2005, 7). Qualitative research 'is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, 3). It is undertaken in a natural setting, where the researcher is a means of data collection, analyses the data inductively, focuses on the meaning attributed by the participants, and describes a process that is expressive and persuasive (Creswell, 1998). Creswell placed emphasis on the capacity of the researcher to build a complex, holistic picture that takes the reader into the multiple dimensions of an issue. A qualitative approach is concerned with how sense making is achieved and how human beings come to attribute meaning to situations, events and relationships 'as social products formed through activities of people interacting' (Blumer, 1969, 5). The task of the researcher is to try to understand this process of interpreting or applying meaning to experience. Qualitative studies tend to employ flexible research designs capable of adaptation in order to suit the needs of particular participants or settings (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). This was particularly relevant in this study in eliciting responses from the children, where minimising the power imbalance inherent in the adult-child relationship, and removing the notion of 'right or wrong' answers was important. Marshall and Rossman (1998) argue that the qualitative approach to research is uniquely suited to uncovering the unexpected and exploring new avenues. It is a broad approach to the

study of social phenomena; the approach is naturalistic, interpretive, and draws on multiple methods of inquiry, and allows for more intuitive or emergent analysis (Lofland, 1995). Therefore, in this study an interpretive stance using a predominantly qualitative approach was employed which aimed to: 'emphasise authenticity, truthfulness and participation' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, 194). The purpose of the study, which explored a model of dance education not implemented in Ireland, was to gain understanding and to extract meaning from the data in order to ascertain the relevancy and viability of the concept of dance as art in the context of the primary school curriculum. The researcher, as a teaching researcher, played an instrumental role in most of the data collection. As the researcher's stance is central in a qualitative approach, and because the study focuses on relatively small population samples leading to fewer results which moreover, are based on specific contextual findings, caution is advised in attempting to locate this study within the 'wider world' of dance, or other educational research.

4.2.2 A quantitative approach

Quantitative research deals in numerical information and exactitudes. It uses scientific instruments that are likely to produce verifiable and ideally, generalisable results. According to Bell (2005, 7), the focus is to 'collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another'. A quantitative approach aims to elicit objective and value free 'truths' which can be universally applied regardless of location, time or culture (Cohen et al., 2007). In a quantitative research context, the researcher's role is one of impartial observer, requiring a neutral and scientific application of data collection techniques. Haslam and Garty (2003) recommend caution regarding the type of research questions that can plausibly be addressed within this paradigm, which need to be amenable to quantification, and deriving from general laws about the properties of matter. This predominantly qualitative study set out to examine a model of dance education not implemented in Ireland with newly qualified teachers. While a baseline questionnaire was utilised and provided useful background data, standardised

measures of educational attainment in dance education were not employed, nor were in-depth accounts of previous dance experience taken. Therefore the study's contribution should be seen as complementary to and illustrative of more quantitative work in the dance education research field.

4.2.3 A mixed methods approach

Although each has a distinct purpose, character and emphasis, there is overlap between quantitative and qualitative methodologies in both philosophical and practical terms (O'Toole, 2006, 66). Creswell (1998) points to complementarities between qualitative and quantitative methodologies and asserts that while important for the researcher to be familiar with the distinctive nature of each paradigm, methods and instruments from both can be employed within the same research process. Bell (2005) contends that a combination of both can accentuate the strengths of both methodologies whereby, for example, qualitative data can illustrate or explain quantitative data. This study sought to investigate newly qualified teachers' opinions and experiences of dance as part of the educational process. It sought to chart their engagement, and gain insight and understanding of their perceptions of dance, particularly dance as an art form. Therefore, a mixed methods approach with a predominantly qualitative focus, breaking down barriers between normative and interpretive methodologies (Cohen et al., 2007) was considered the most effective means of generating the data. A mix of, for example, questionnaires with both open and closed responses, qualitative data from course assignments, participant journals, and semi-structured interviews were employed. These methods are explored in greater detail in section 4.6.

4.3 Research questions

The issues which gave rise to this study are as follows.

- The need to develop dance as part of arts education in the primary school curriculum.
- The lack of access to best practice models that might inform developments in Ireland.
- The absence of teaching and learning resources for dance education in Irish primary schools.

The overarching research question under examination in this study is as follows:

- whether the concept of dance as art (Redfern, 1973) can inform development in dance education in the Irish primary school curriculum.

In order to undertake an in-depth examination of the research question it was considered essential to design methods which would facilitate the active participation of primary school teachers' which would, in turn, elicit accounts rich in detail and meaning. Therefore, two associated questions were posed, which were to explore:

- whether content and methodologies associated with the art of dance in education midway model (Smith-Autard, 2002) can usefully contribute to initial and continuing teacher education; and
- whether resource-based methodologies promoted by the midway model can provide the prototype for the development of dance education teaching and learning resources sourced in Ireland.

Arising from the central research questions, the following sub-questions were formulated in order to analyse themes identified from the literature and to provide a structure which would inform the research design.

- How do primary school teachers perceive dance – as education, and/or as an art form?
- What was their experience of dance as part of their initial teacher education?
- How is this reflected in their 'sense making' in terms of their classroom practice?
- What opportunities does the wider support environment afford teachers interested in dance, and how do they avail of these supports, and create opportunities for themselves?
- How can the midway model contribute to developing an understanding of dance as art in the Irish context?
- What is the status of the midway model in international curricula which have adopted a dance as art approach?
- How viable is the technology-based approach used in the model in an Irish classroom

context?

- How can digital resources suited to the dance as art approach be sourced or produced within Ireland?

4.4 Research context

The site of the study was the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin, and three primary schools, two located northside and one southside, within a twenty mile radius of Dublin city centre. The context for the research was a dance module specifically designed for purposes of this study. This was the first time that dance had been included as an option in the B.Ed.IV programme. The module was offered as a course option over three consecutive academic years – 2007-'08, 2008-'09, 2009-'10. The sample population, self-selected, comprised fifty-seven newly qualified teachers either teaching, or seeking work in the primary school sector. Newly qualified teacher (NQT) is a term applied to teachers who have been qualified for less than twelve months. NQTs all hold a primary degree qualifying them to apply for a teaching post in Irish primary schools to teach eleven subject areas, including the physical education and arts education syllabi. The NQTs taking part in this study had completed their three year undergraduate degree at three different Dublin-based teacher education colleges which were accredited by Trinity College Dublin. The NQT participants in the study were all registered for the Senior Sophister year of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.IV), a fourth year honours degree programme organised by Trinity's School of Education. They participated in a yearlong dance education module, which was offered as a course option. The module largely followed the midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002) and emphasised the dance as art (Redfern, 1973) approach. This is a non-random sample which will impact on the extent to which inferences can be drawn for a broader population of newly qualified teachers. In year two of the study, the midway model was implemented by the researcher in three Dublin-based primary schools. The three primary school class groups were volunteered by their class teachers who were participants in year two of the B.Ed.IV dance module. The pupil sample comprised fifty-seven children.

4.5 Participants

4.5.1 Newly qualified teachers

A total of 57 newly qualified teachers (NQTs) participated in this study, of which 51 were female and 6 were male. The majority (53) were aged between 18 and 24 years. All of the participants were Irish nationals. There were no significant differences between the three NQT cohorts. The typical NQT profile was female, of Irish nationality and between 18 and 24 years. Table 4.1 presents a profile of the NQTs who participated in this study. In the third year of the study, due to demand the number registered for the dance module option almost doubled. Methods were adjusted to accommodate the increase in number, the details of which are presented in section 4.6.

Table 4.1:
Participant profile – newly qualified teachers

Year One 2007-‘08 Number registered: 15	Year Two 2008-‘09 Number registered: 15	Year Three 2009-‘10 Number registered: 27
Female: 12 18-24 years (12) Male: 3 18-24 years (2) 25-34 years (1)	Female: 12 18-24 years (11) 35-44 years (1) Male: 3 18-24 years (1) 25-34 years (2)	<u>All 27 were:</u> Female Aged 18 - 24

4.5.2 Primary school children

A total of 57 children between the ages of 6 and 12 years participated in the in-school practice element of this study. Age clusters of 7 year olds (16), 8 year olds (17) and 11 year olds (10) participated. Of the 57 children, 35 were girls and 22 were boys, with a gender mix in each of the class groups.

Table 4.2:
Participant profile – primary school children

School	Number of children	Age range of children	Gender mix
School A	21	7 – 9 years (17 were aged 8 years)	Boys: 8 Girls: 13
School B	15	10 – 12 years (10 were aged 11 years)	Boys: 6 Girls: 9
School C	21	6 – 8 years (16 were aged 7 years)	Boys: 8 Girls: 13
Total	57		Boys: 22 Girls: 35

4.5.3 Sampling strategy

With both qualitative and quantitative data, the essential requirement is that the sample is representative of the population from which it is drawn (Cohen et al., 2007). The sampling strategy adopted was designed to fit the study focus of non-specialist teachers working with pupils between the ages of 7-14 years identified as the target population in the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource handbook (Bedford Interactive, 2006). The criteria identified for the population samples were:

- Teachers: a sample size of between 12 and 15 each year of the study, ideally representing the common gender mix of the primary school teacher sector, and regular access to the group over an extended period of time.
- Children: a sample size of between 15 – 25 in year two of the study, representing the common composition of a primary school class group; with an age range of 7 – 14 years, and ideally a gender representation within the range of 40% - 60%.

Situating this study in the School of Education at Trinity College Dublin was considered early on in the research design process. A dance module proposal, to be offered as a B.Ed.IV course option, was submitted in April 2007. The university course co-ordinating committee approved the module in May 2007 (see Appendix 1). A University of Limerick dance module designed by Smith-Autard (see Appendix 2) informed the B.Ed.IV module used in

this study. It was anticipated that the pupil sample for the in-school practice element in year two of the study might be sourced through the NQT cohort. It transpired that three NQTs volunteered their class groups.

4.6 Research methods

4.6.1 Literature search

In this study I carried out an extensive search of the available literature and documentation under the following topics:

- background and development of dance education in Ireland;
- background and development of the dance as art approach (Redfern, 1973);
- evaluation of and justification for the midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002);
- development of technology-based teaching and learning resources for dance education.

Retrieval methods included computer data-based searches of published items including for example, e-journals, library catalogues (Trinity College Dublin is a copyright library), and newspapers. Searches of relevant government databases, for example, Dáil debates in the Irish context and Ministry of Education Great Britain, were also conducted. Manual searches were carried out in particular files held in the archives of the Arts Council and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment; and unpublished theses. Given the dearth of published materials on the situation of dance education in Ireland, historical documentation held by key informants in the field was also sourced and examined.

4.6.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument providing structured data, often relatively straightforward to analyse (Cohen et al., 2007, 317). While the questionnaire facilitates the use of standardised questions in the same order, the information collected tends to describe rather than explain why things are the way they are, which can be limiting due to superficiality and little opportunity to verify/clarify responses (Bell, 2005). This

can be offset to a considerable degree by use of interviews. In this study, questionnaires were used to gather data from newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and from the children taking part in the in-school practice element of the study. A total of 145 questionnaires were distributed, with 137 returned, of which 80 were NQTs and 57 were from children. In the case of the NQTs, informed consent was given by the participants to distribute at least one questionnaire over the course of the dance module. Prior to distribution, the purpose for which questionnaire data were to be used was discussed with the NQTs, as was the process of analysis and storage (O'Toole, 2006, 119). Two NQT questionnaires, self-administered, were distributed and processed. The first provided a baseline assessment in the area of dance and dance pedagogy, and was distributed at the beginning of the first term in each of the three years of the study. The second gathered responses to the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource (Bedford Interactive, 2006), and was distributed in the second and third years of the study in the week following use of the resource. Closed and open questions were included in both questionnaires. Each of the questionnaires was distributed, self-administered and returned within a single 90 minute lecture period. The questionnaires underwent a number of drafts and revisions before the piloting stage (Cohen et al., 2007, 341; O'Toole, 2006, 118-121). Cohen et al. (2007) state that the process of piloting is of paramount importance, with the pre-testing stage being crucial to the success of the research process. Piloting the questionnaires established, as much as possible, that the format and content was clear and accessible to the reader. A reliable questionnaire is one which is generally understood in the same way by different readers, where specific questions convey the same meaning to all the people in the population being targeted (Bell, 2005). The final draft baseline questionnaire was piloted with four newly qualified teachers in May 2007. The final draft *Step Dance* questionnaire was piloted in March 2008 with three newly qualified teachers who did not participate in the study. Questionnaires included a range of closed response modes such as dichotomous, multiple choice and Likert rating scale. Rather than assuming knowledge or opinion, a 'don't know' option was included where relevant (Cohen et al., 2007, 322). Open-ended questions invited personal comment, and/or further elaboration on a question item. While irrelevant or

inappropriate comment is possible, open questions enable participants to respond in their own fashion and to explain and qualify their responses. While adding to time considerations for the respondent, open-ended responses provided opportunity for illumination, more in-depth and richer insight and thus inclusion 'has much to recommend it' (Cohen et al., 2007, 331). Copies of the two NQT questionnaires distributed are presented in Appendix 3.

Having gained access to the sample population, the issue of informed consent by the children and their parents was addressed. In undertaking research in which children are involved, a clear ethical framework needs to be established and implemented. The ethical approach and considerations required in dealing with children and young people are of a high order (Arts Council, 2006b). There is a risk of disclosure, which children may not either realise at the time or may later regret, especially if it is reported in ways that they feel are inaccurate or disrespectful. Therefore, ethical considerations must guide and inform research practice and dissemination (McAuley, 2002). A qualitative questionnaire approach was designed for use with the children involved in the in-school practice element of this study. Parental consent was confirmed in advance of the in-school visit. Immediately following the lesson using the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource (Bedford Interactive, 2006), the children were invited, and their agreement given, to respond to four questions. Each of the four questions was posed verbally by the researcher using age appropriate language. Following further discussion and clarification of the first question, the children responded using a purpose-designed response worksheet which offered three options - 'yes', 'no', 'don't know'. This process was repeated for the remaining three questions. The response worksheet also invited the children to report their age and gender. A copy of the response worksheet is presented in Appendix 4. A copy of the parent's consent form is presented in Appendix 5.

4.6.3 Interview

The interview is a complex data collection instrument and, as with any qualitative research technique, is not value-free (O'Toole, 2006). Data yielded by interviews is subjective, repre-

senting the interviewee's construction and presentation of meaning. However, the influence of the interviewer is also a contributory factor to interview outcomes and, therefore, it can be said that data gathered are jointly constructed by the interviewer and the interviewee (Cohen et al., 2007, 349). The researcher must strive to establish the trust of the interviewees, as an essential prerequisite to the collection of as near 'truthful' accounts as possible. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. Structured interview techniques have a fixed *modus operandi* whereby both content and scheduling of questions to be posed are pre-determined. All interviewees are asked the same questions in the same order, and response is provided within prescribed categories, which facilitates subsequent data analysis. Semi-structured formats allow more diverse responses, as the interviewee may expound on his or her views. However, the interviewer must bear in mind that the interviewee may not wish to elaborate on any or all of the questions posed. Unstructured interviews aim to establish non-directed exchange which can elicit greater breadth in the data yielded than with other methods. However, this method, by its nature, allows interviewees more control in terms of the amount and range of data yielded, which increases the burden of work during the subsequent analysis stage. In all cases, interviewers should aspire to achieving a positive experience for the interviewee. Skilled and attentive listening on the part of the interviewer is required (O'Toole, 2006). An interview is a social, interpersonal encounter, not merely a data gathering exercise (Cohen et al., 2007, 361).

Semi-structured and unstructured methods are the most widely used in qualitative educational research (Harris, 2010), which was the case in this study. Interview strategies designed for this study used focus group, small group discussion and one-to-one formats. A focus group discussion was organised at the end of the academic year with newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in year one and year two of the study as a means of collecting data on course evaluation. In year three, in order to accommodate the almost doubling of NQTs taking part in that year, twenty-five one-to-one interviews were organised, again at the end of academic year. The opportunity to gather feedback on the course in both focus group and one-to-one

scenarios provided a richer and more diverse perspective, as the dynamic within a focus group situation can sometimes persuade opinion (Bell, 2005). Course evaluation focus group sessions took place within the lecture schedule and in the dance teaching space, and lasted approximately fifty minutes in each case. One-to-one interviews were held in rooms in the School of Education and lasted approximately 20 minutes in each case. Course evaluation interviews posed two open-ended questions on the dance module in terms of its relevancy and/or viability for classroom practice and teaching; and course aspects which NQTs did not find relevant and/or viable.

Small group discussions took place with NQTs in years two and three immediately following implementation of the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource (Bedford Interactive, 2006). Two open-ended questions sought small-group consensus on aspects of the resource 'most liked' and aspects 'least liked'. Small group discussions were held in the dance teaching space, and lasted approximately 30 to 40 minutes in each case. Three one-to-one interviews were conducted with classroom teachers who took part in the in-school practice element using the *Step Dance* resource. A further one-to-one interview was conducted with a module participant who based her undergraduate dissertation on use of the *Step Dance* resource with her class group.

The interviews with classroom teachers were largely unstructured as they sought the teachers' observations and responses to the CD-ROM resource in practice. One-to-one interviews with the classroom teachers lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. Three of the interviews were conducted in the School of Education, and one in the NQT's place of work. All individual interviews (29) and focus group discussions (2) were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Rapporteur note-taking in each of the small group discussions (11), and researcher field notes were gathered, word processed, and stored.

**Table 4.3:
Interview Schedule**

Format	Purpose	Participants	Timeline	Location
Focus group	Course evaluation (year one)	10 NQTs	April 2008	School of Ed
Focus group	Course evaluation (year two)	14 NQTs	April 2009	School of Ed
One-to-one	Course evaluation	25 NQTs	April-May 2010	School of Ed
Small group discussion	Feedback on CD-ROM	13 NQTs	March 2009	School of Ed
Small group discussion	Feedback on CD-ROM	23 NQTs	October 2009	School of Ed
One-to-one	Feedback on CD-ROM in-school practice	3 Classroom teachers - NQT A, B, C.	June 2009	School of Ed
One-to-one	Feedback on CD-ROM	1 NQT D	September 2010	In School

Bell (2005) cautions that bias has to be recognised and controlled by the interviewer in order not ‘lead’ the interview situation. It is necessary to acknowledge bias, and make a conscious effort to address it rather than believe that it is possible to eliminate it entirely. In this study, the interview process was cognisant of bias, subjectivity and of the power issues at play. I was the course coordinator, their module lecturer and was responsible for assessing their course assignments. To limit the effect of power differences to the degree possible, every effort was made to position the interviews within the context of my own research. Having gained consent to audio-record the interviews and a time limit for the interview process was agreed, I explained how the data gathered would inform my research project, and indicated that there were no right or wrong answers to questions posed. I assured participants that confidentiality and anonymity would be respected at all stages of my research project, including dissemination. In the case of one-to-one interviews, progress of the interview was carefully monitored and adjustments or adaptations to the questions were made according to the nature of the responses of the participant. Transcriptions of the data took place shortly after the interviews. While recognising that video recording can produce richer data, it adds considerably to data analysis (Cohen et al., 2007, 367). The audio record assisted with accuracy of account and clarification of meaning was sought to the degree possible during

the analysis stage. Emotional subtexts, expressed by, for example, intonation, pauses, and/or emphasis, are important to the research (O'Toole, 2006, 111). Analysis of data was ongoing, involving the coding, categorising, interpretation and reinterpretation of findings.

4.6.4 Observation

Observation as a methodological instrument is distinctive in that it provides an opportunity to gather 'live' data *in situ* (Cohen et al., 2007). Creswell (2005, 211) describes observation as the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and events at a research site. Quantitative methods tend to have a small field of focus, gathering multiple data systematically on the observed that can subsequently be aggregated into a variable, and often occur in artificial settings. (Cohen et al., 2007). Qualitative methods position the researcher within the 'world' of the observed, whereby experiences, events, and incidents might be noticed and recorded as trends and patterns of intentionality and motivation over time. Structured approaches are useful in research contexts where the researcher is aware of what is to be observed, using a predetermined schedule of observational categories for later analysis. Semi-structured or unstructured approaches are more useful in contexts where the researcher wishes to be responsive to the situation as it unfolds within the natural setting. The former is primarily controlled by the observer, the latter by the observed (Lofland, 1995). Observation derives from anthropological studies, and encompasses a spectrum of strategies ranging from 'complete participation to complete detachment'. For the purposes of this qualitative study, a semi-structured approach was used in which the researcher adopted the mantle of 'participant' although, as a teaching researcher, the role was not at the extreme end of the participation spectrum. While objective documentation is 'out of the question' (O'Toole, 2006, 100), biases can be counterbalanced by effective triangulation.

Researcher observations were documented in field notes and journals, which were employed to record and reflect upon issues, events, critical incidents, changes, and ideas as they unfolded across the three years of the study. Research diaries are records or logs which can

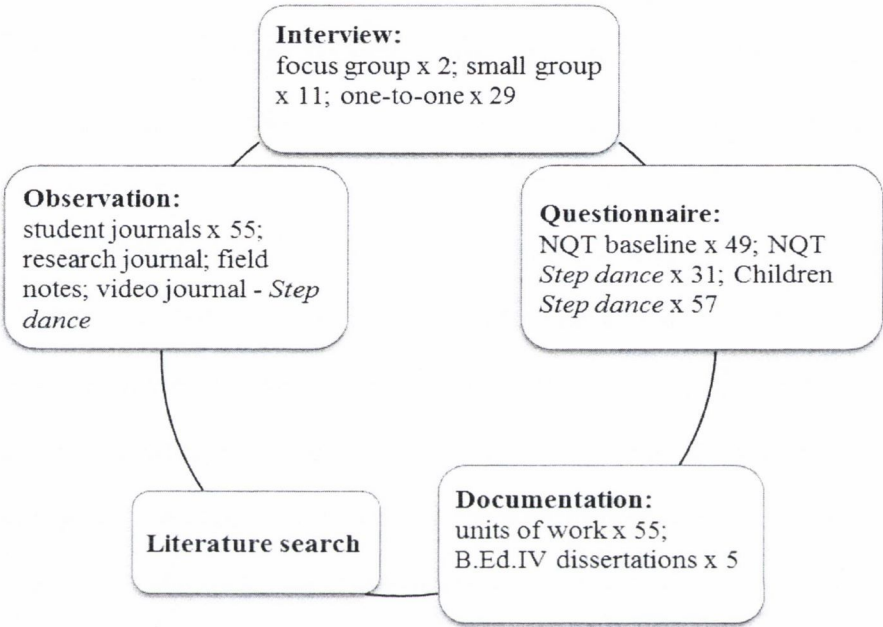
provide valuable information about work patterns and activities (Bell, 2005). The NQT participants recorded lecture activities and their own observations on a weekly basis in a student journal, which was submitted as part of the dance module's assessment procedure. Having gained consent from all participants – newly qualified teachers, classroom teachers, school principals, children and their parents – the *Step Dance* CD-ROM (Bedford Interactive, 2006) element of the study was recorded on video. The video journal made of the three NQT CD-ROM sessions each year, and the three CD-ROM lessons with the children in year two of the study was used exclusively by the researcher for purposes of reflection and analysis. A Sony handycam model DCR-HC35E was used. I configured the camera in a position that gave maximum coverage of the action in order to capture it for purposes of visual documentation. Recording took place during scheduled dance lectures in the dance teaching space, and in teaching spaces designated by the classroom teacher in the three schools taking part. Approximately nine hours of filming was digitally recorded. The visual information was transferred from the camera to a hard drive for archival and safety reasons. Visual documentation stored on hard drive was password protected.

4.6.5 Documentation

As mentioned previously, documentation included research journals, field notes and, for some elements, video documentation. Journals and field notes provided essential 'raw data' to be drawn from and to inform data analysis (O'Toole, 2006, 101). Two course assignments were set for the NQTs in each of the three years of the study. They comprised an A4 size journal that required participants to record and reflect upon the practical experience of coursework, formatted on a session by session basis; and to devise a unit of work (3/4 lessons) for primary school pupils, showing clear links with, and appropriate application of theories and practice studied on the course. The unit of work included selective use of resource-based methodologies. Course assignments were based on learning outcomes agreed for the dance module, and were submitted at the end of the academic year. Informed consent was given by the newly qualified teachers to use their assignments for the purposes of my

research. A total of 110 assignments were submitted, 55 for each assignment. In addition, five B.Ed.IV undergraduate dissertations considered to be of relevance to this study were also reviewed. Assignments and dissertations were submitted in hard copy. Relevant extracts were word processed and stored electronically.

Table 4.4:
Summary of research methods used in the study



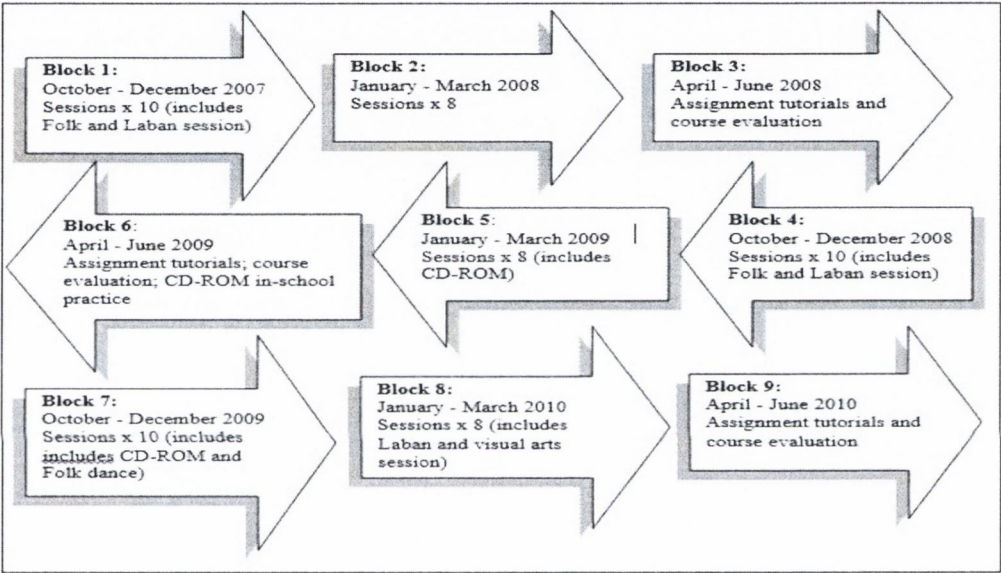
4.7 Fieldwork timeline

Fieldwork began in October 2007 and, with the exception of one interview, concluded in June 2010. The remaining interview was conducted in September 2010. Fieldwork took place across three academic years. Each dance module comprised 18 sessions of approximately 90 minutes each, a total of 81 hours. In June 2009, the second year of the study, an in-school practice element was conducted in three primary schools. Contact with the newly qualified teachers (NQTs) was on a weekly basis during academic terms (allowing for mid-term breaks and reading weeks). A central element of the field work design was the duration of contact with the NQTs. This was considered important for a number of reasons:

- It allowed for a build up of familiarity with each of the groups of NQTs, and the emergence of patterns or trends overall regarding whether dance as art might be relevant to their teaching practice.

- It allowed for an examination of the midway model over a sufficiently extended period to ensure a more comprehensive account of whether the model was viable within a primary school context.
- It enabled in-school exploration of the model to be facilitated by NQTs familiar with the broad aims of the research project.
- It allowed for flexibility in terms of changes to the dance module to be accommodated.

Table 4.5:
Fieldwork timeline



4.8 Data analysis

Due to the mixed methods approach used in this study, a large volume of data was amassed. O'Toole (2006) recommends that at the preliminary processing stage, the different types of data should be sorted and coded separately, as each is distinctive in nature. Harris (2010) urges caution about the potential hazards of assuming that qualitative research instruments carry similar data because they have been generated from a single source asserting that, for example, interview data may carry different messages than questionnaire data. Harris (2010) contends that instead, data generated by questionnaire and interview should be analysed separately, then results can be compared to see if any common messages resonate from both sets of data. Harris (2010) urges that similar caution is applied to focus group interview responses whereby participants' dialogue could influence what is said.

For the purposes of this study, data types were sorted and coded separately, the material was analysed within its particular domain and then categorised (Cohen et al., 2007). Cognisant of the overarching and related research questions, core themes and trends, and critical incidents, gradually emerged through comparing and contrasting findings across the data sets. An inductive approach was employed. Data was manually handled and the analysis process involved four phases: raw data was numerical coded; colour coding was used to record categories emerging from thematic analysis; distillation of these sub-categories yielded the major themes; and further processing and refinement of the information produced an overarching theme. The inferences made strived to achieve a coherent account of the phenomenon which would address the research questions (O'Toole, 2006). However, working as a sole researcher imposed limitations and restrictions on data processing. The visual documentation (video) gathered provided good data, and was used by the researcher as a record of events and to check engagement with, and response to the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource (Bedford Interactive, 2006). However, it was not possible to process visual documentation in detail. Had more time been available this might have been possible.

4.9 Triangulation

Triangulation can be achieved by comparing two or more views of the same thing so that data from different sources can be used to corroborate, elaborate or illuminate the research question (O'Toole, 2006). Multiple sources of data are used in order to assemble a complete picture as possible of the phenomenon being investigated. A mixed methods approach provides a 'richness and complexity' not offered by the more vulnerable single-method approach (Cohen et al., 2007, 141). For Harris (2010) the challenge for mixed method researchers is to demonstrate that triangulation by distinctly different methods can lead to confirmation and explain the circumstances that allow this to occur. In this mixed methods qualitative study, methodological triangulation (Cohen et al, 2007) was employed, whereby varied data types yielded different responses. For example, small discussion groups provided data on the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource (Bedford Interactive, 2006) not proffered in NQT

questionnaire responses. Data from baseline questionnaires (open and closed questions) and interviews provided a first hand account of certain issues which emerged through the literature search. Children's responses to the midway model negated concern expressed by some newly qualified teachers about its suitability for boys. The rich, qualitative nature of the data generated in this study provided forceful illumination of how dance as art was experienced by the newly qualified teachers and children taking part in this study.

4.10 Realisability and validity

Realisability is a process of applying the results or aspects of study or research in a particular situation to other related contexts should there be sufficient similarity between the two situations (Bell, 2005). While realisability applies to most research endeavour, the findings of qualitative research often are not transferable to a larger or different population. As a consequence, caution is recommended in this regard. As mentioned previously, this study aimed to gain understanding and to extract meaning from the data in order to ascertain the relevancy and viability of the concept of dance as art in the context of the primary school curriculum. While every effort was made to reduce and monitor bias throughout the study, for example, regular meetings with my supervisor, it is the case that the researcher played an instrumental role in most of the data collection. Furthermore, the study focuses on relatively small population samples leading to fewer results which are based on specific contextual findings. Therefore, caution is recommended in attempting to locate this study within the 'wider world' of dance, or other educational research. Cohen et al. (2007) describe the concepts of validity and reliability as multi-faceted. Validity is concerned with whether data presented gives a true and honest account of what it claims to be examining. Validity can be increased by careful design of instruments and triangulation of data (Bell, 2005). Reliability and credibility extend to the manner in which the analysis of data generated is managed. O'Toole (2007, 128) urges the qualitative researcher to acknowledge subjectivity and to manage and monitor it as best as possible. The study utilised multiple methods of data generation, which were triangulated with a view to minimising bias and distortion. Checks

and balances were put in place to ensure the findings resonated with both the wider research in the field, and that it represented the views and opinions of the cohort involved in the study.

4.11 Ethical considerations

As mentioned previously, a clear ethical framework needs to be established and implemented, with particular regard to the requirements of consent and respect when working with children (McAuley, 2002; Arts Council, 2006b). Information letters and consent forms used in this study are presented in Appendix 5. The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Education. The following chapter presents the results of data analysis.

Chapter Five

Presentation of Data

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data gathered to inform the research questions posed in this study. A review of the literature found serious deficits in the area of dance education in Ireland resulting in a cycle of poor provision within the Irish education system. The cycle of deficit which emerged from the literature review can be summarised as follows:

- low status and poor recognition of dance as an area of arts education;
- limited teaching and learning occurring in educational settings;
- few teaching and learning resources;
- little progression in student learning at primary and secondary level;
- limited access to dance at tertiary level as part of physical education courses or arts programmes;
- poor knowledge and understanding of dance as art within education policy-making, curriculum design, and teacher development programmes.

The cycle of poor provision in dance education in Ireland informs the salient issues and research questions identified for this study, which are presented in section 5.1.1. From an interpretive stance, I posed the research questions from the viewpoint of an experienced dance educator in order to examine the application of the midway model in an Irish context, particularly in the areas of initial and continuing teacher education; and, in so doing, attempt an evaluation of the model's usefulness as a prototype for the development of teaching and learning resources sourced in Ireland that promoted a dance as art stance. As part of the study, an interactive CD-ROM resource (Bedford Interactive, 2006) which claims to exemplify the midway model was explored.

Baseline data on the sample cohort is presented in section 5.2. Data on the B.Ed.IV dance module is presented in section 5.3. Data on the Bedford Interactive CD-ROM – as part of the dance module and in-school practice, is presented in section 5.4. Data on B.Ed.IV undergraduate dissertations of relevance to this study is presented in section 5.5. An observation on the current situation of research and practice in dance education in Ireland concludes section 5.5.

5.1.1 Research questions

The salient issues which gave rise to this study are as follows:

- The need to develop dance as part of arts education in the primary school curriculum.
- The lack of access to best practice models that might inform developments in Ireland.
- The absence of teaching and learning resources for dance education in Irish primary schools.

The overarching research question under examination in this study is as follows:

- whether the concept of dance as art (Redfern, 1973) can inform development of dance education in the Irish primary school curriculum.

Two associated questions informed and guided the inquiry, which were as follows:

- whether content and methodologies associated with the art of dance in education midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994) can usefully contribute to initial and continuing teacher education; and
- whether resource-based methodologies promoted by the midway model can provide the prototype for the development of dance education teaching and learning resources sourced in Ireland.

The methods used to address the overarching question and sub-questions posed, were discussed in chapter four.

5.2 Baseline data – Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)

At the outset of each of the three academic years of my study (2007-'08, 2008-'09, 2009-

‘10) a questionnaire was distributed to B.Ed.IV newly qualified teachers (NQTs) registered for the dance module option. The questionnaire gathered data on:

- Personal details – gender, age, nationality.
- Initial teacher education - College of Education attended.
- Dance education experience at primary, secondary and tertiary level.
- Experience of teaching dance as part of initial teacher education.
- Wider engagement with dance – participation and/or attendance – carried out on a voluntary basis within the previous twelve to eighteen months.

5.2.1 NQT baseline data – questionnaire response rate

Of the 57 NQTs who registered for the dance module option, 49 (86%) responded to the baseline questionnaire. Of the 15 registered in year one, 8 (53%) responded. Of the 15 registered in year two, 15 (100%) responded. Of the 27 registered in year three, 26 (93%) responded. An increase in the number registered from 15 in years one and two to 27 in year three is explained by a growing awareness of the dance module as a course option which led to a demand by NQTs for more places to be made available.

5.2.2 NQT baseline data – profile of respondents

Table 5.1:
NQT baseline data – profile of respondents

Year one 2007-‘08 Number registered: 15	Year two 2008-‘09 Number registered: 15	Year three 2009-‘10 Number registered: 27
8 NQTs surveyed <u>All were:</u> Female Aged 18 - 24 Irish	15 NQTs surveyed Female: 12 18-24, Irish (11) 35-44, Irish (1) Male: 3 18-24, Irish (1) 25-34, Irish (2)	26 NQTs surveyed <u>All were:</u> Female Aged 18 - 24 Irish

5.2.3 College of education attended

Of the 8 respondents in year one, 6 had attended Marino Institute of Education, 1 Froebel College, and 1 Church of Ireland, Rathmines. Of the 15 respondents in year two, 9 had attended Marino, 4 Froebel and 2 Rathmines. Of the 26 respondents in year three, 17 had attended Marino, 6 Froebel and 3 Rathmines. Overall, 32 (65%) had attended Marino, 11 (23%) Froebel, and 6 (12%) Rathmines - reflecting the relative size of each college. At the time of the study, Marino Institute had approximately twice the number of student teachers that Froebel had, and three times that of Rathmines.

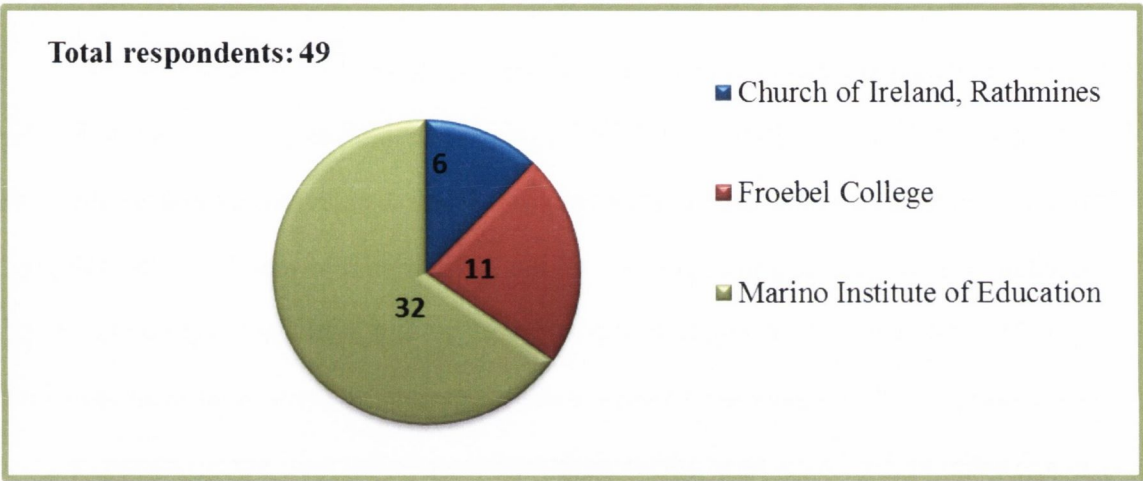


Figure 5.1: College of Education attended

5.2.4 Dance education experience

Of the 49 respondents, 37 had experienced dance as part of their primary school education, and 12 had not. In an almost reversed situation, of the 49 respondents 35 did not experience dance in secondary education, and 14 had been taught dance. All 49 respondents reported that they had experienced dance as part of their college of education physical education programme. At primary level, the predominant types of dance experienced were Irish and folk dance; other types listed were hip hop, line dancing, modern and contemporary dance. No respondent had experienced creative dance in primary school. Frequency and duration of sessions were reported as varying greatly, ranging from ‘once a year (St. Patrick’s Day)’ to ‘1 hour a week for 1 term per year’. At second level the predominant types of dance

experienced were social dance styles (hip hop, line dancing, ballroom) and musical theatre; other types indicated were modern, creative dance, jazz and céili. Again, frequency and duration varied enormously with individual responses ranging from ‘two hours in total’ to ‘had dance class for 6 years’. At third level, the predominant types of dance experienced were Irish dance, European folk dance and creative dance. Respondents indicated that dance was taught in each of the three years of their initial teacher education physical education course. Frequency ranged from one to six sessions per year of between 45 minutes to 1 hour per session. The minimum undergraduate experience of dance stated was approximately 3 hours, the maximum approximately 18 hours, which includes dance electives. Dance sessions were predominantly practical. Of the 49 respondents, 16 (33%) indicated that they had opted for a dance elective in second or third year, offered by the physical education department. Only two of the colleges had offered a dance elective.

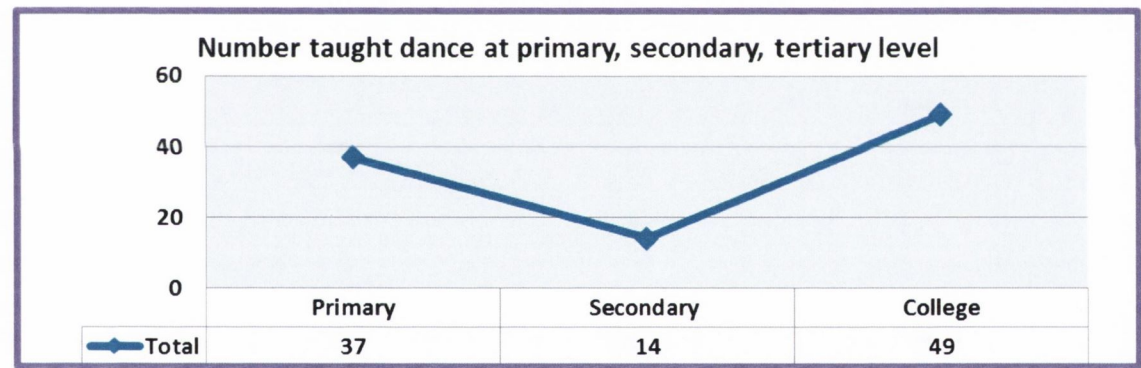


Figure 5.2: Dance education experience

5.2.5 Experience of teaching dance

Of the 49 respondents, 36 (73%) reported that they had taught dance while on teaching practice. Where frequency was specified, it ranged from 1 to 6 classes, the average number was 3. Most taught more than one type of dance - creative dance, Irish and folk dance being the most commonly reported. Of the 36 who had taught dance, 5 (14%) reported that they found it ‘very easy’ to teach; 24 (67%) reported that it was ‘fairly easy’ to teach; with the remaining 7 (19%) reporting teaching dance as ‘not easy’. Of the 49 respondents, 13 (27%) reported that they had not taught dance while on teaching practice. Of the 13 who had not

taught dance, 11 respondents noted a lack of confidence and 2 noted a lack of knowledge as the main reasons for not teaching dance.

5.2.6 Obstacles to teaching dance in school

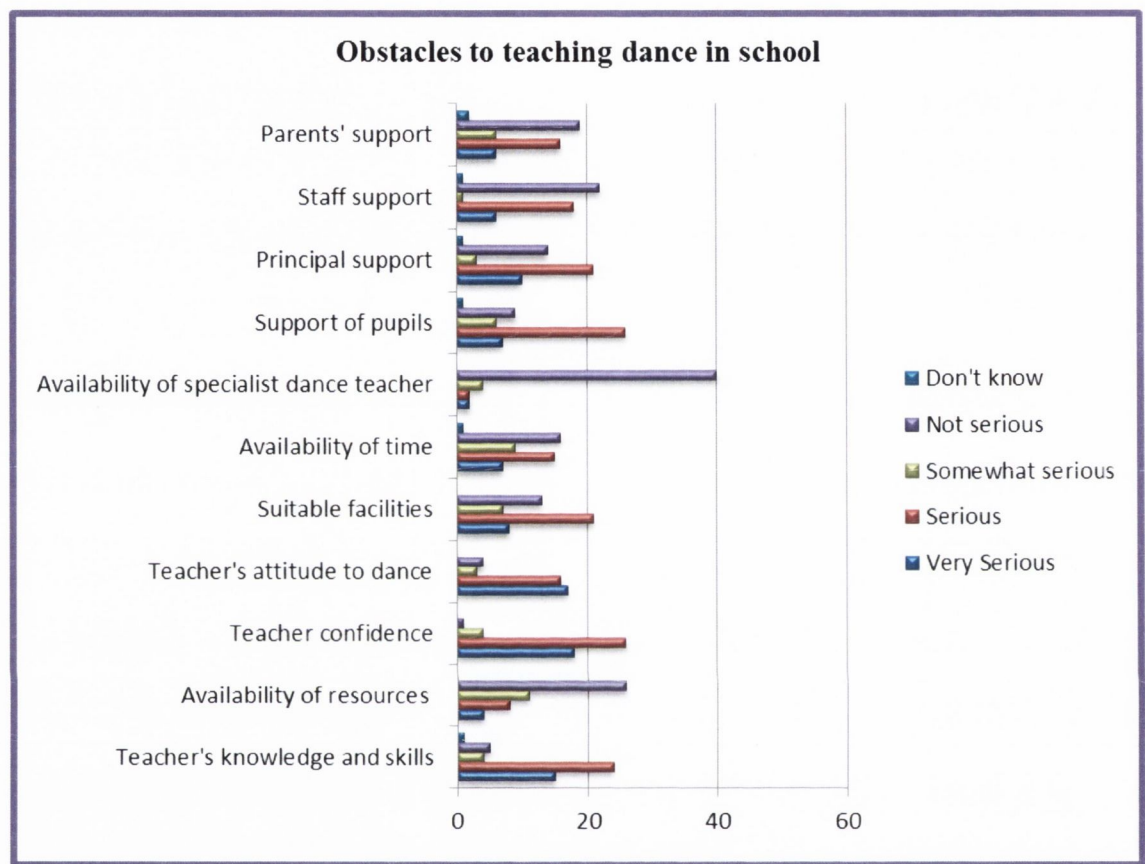


Figure 5.3: Obstacles to teaching dance in school

Of the 49 respondents, 44 (90%) reported that the biggest obstacle to teaching dance is teacher confidence describing this as either 'very serious' or 'serious'; followed by teacher knowledge and skill - 39 (80%) described this as either 'very serious' or 'serious'. Other significant obstacles include teacher attitude, with 33 (67%) seeing this as 'very serious' or 'serious'. Responses indicate that the least serious obstacle to teaching dance in school is the availability of a specialist dance teacher – only 12 (24%) respondents reported this as either 'very serious' or 'serious'; with 26 (53%) considering this 'not serious'. This finding suggests recognition on the part of this NQT cohort that responsibility for teaching dance in school lies with the classroom teacher.

5.2.7 Wider experience of dance

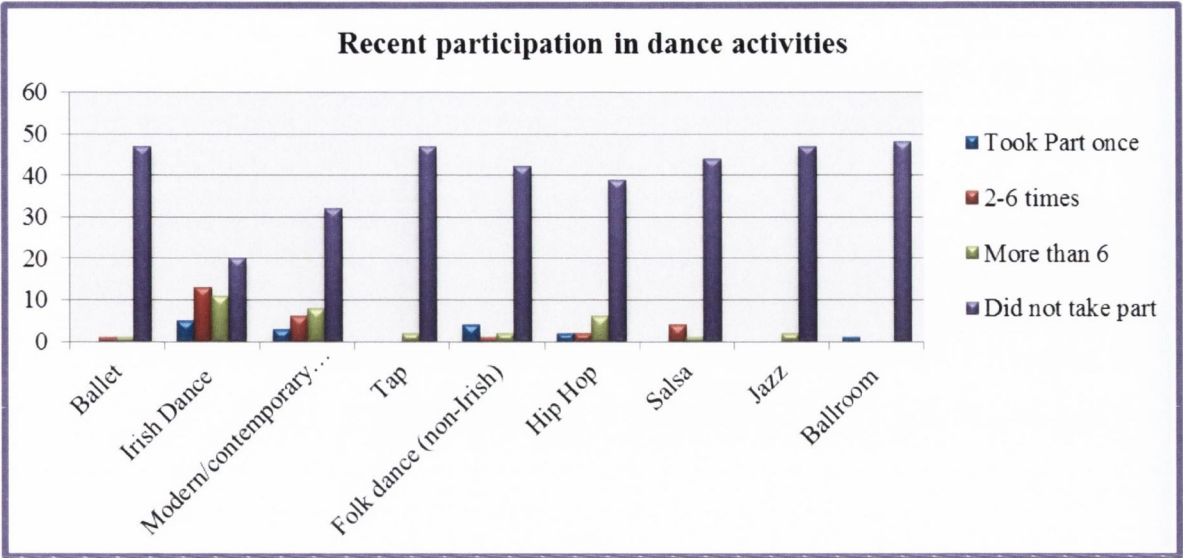


Figure 5.4: Participation in dance activities in the previous 18 months

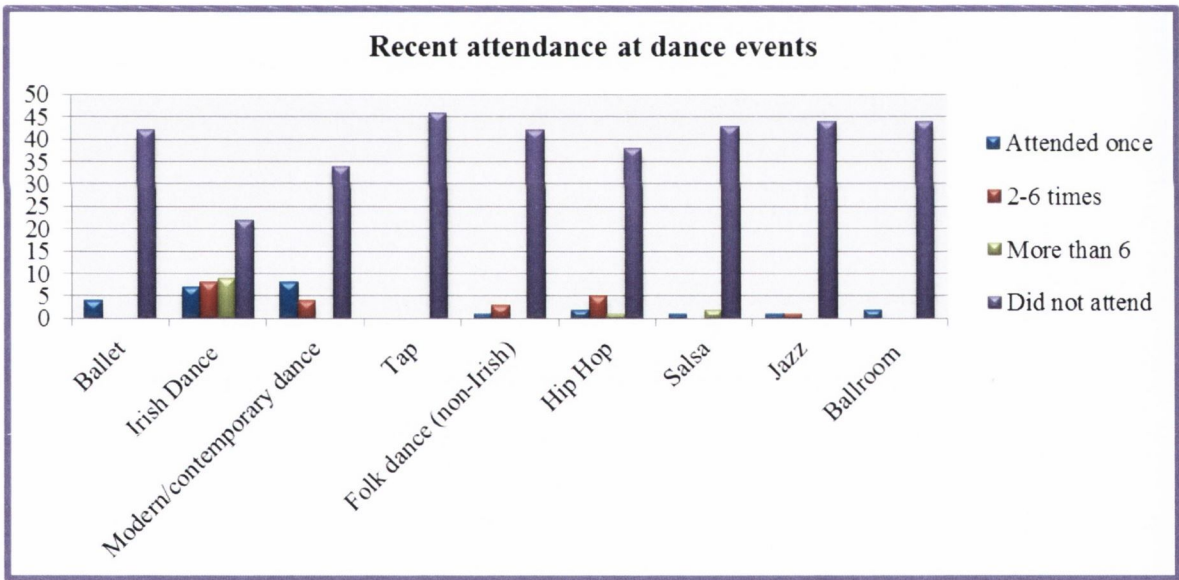


Figure 5.5: Attendance at dance events in the previous 18 months

Voluntary participation in dance activities and attendance at dance events in recent months are presented in Figures 5.4 and 5.5 respectively. Participation and attendance levels in the previous 18 months shows that the numbers not attending or participating are the most prominent (the purple lines), and the regularity for those who did is low over the given period of time. Irish dance was the predominant form experienced - 29 (59%) respondents had participated in Irish dance at some level; and 24 (49%) had attended at least 1 Irish dance performance. Modern/contemporary dance also featured -17 (35%) had participated, and 12 (24%) had attended performances.

5.2.8 NQT baseline data – summary of findings

There were no significant differences between the three NQT cohorts. The typical NQT profile was female, of Irish nationality, between 18 and 24 years and likely to have attended the Marino Institute of Education. Their own experience of dance education was likely to have been Irish dance in primary school, and none in secondary education. Their first exposure to creative dance was as a student teacher, experienced as part of the college's physical education programme. The duration, nature and scope of the typical dance experience as a student teacher was 4 to 6 hours of practical work which included both folk and creative dance. The typical NQT teaching experience was three dance lessons while on school placement; a mix of folk and creative dance was taught. It is unlikely that dance will have been experienced on a voluntary basis, and should this have occurred it was probably attendance at an Irish dance performance or participation in Irish dance activities.

A significant proportion of the NQT cohort (76%) had been taught dance in primary education with the inverse occurring in secondary education where 71% were not taught dance. As almost all members of the NQT cohort had recently been in the education system given their age profile, this suggests that access to dance as part of secondary education is extremely limited. In primary education, the predominant dance experience was Irish and folk dance. For the majority of NQTs, their first experience of creative dance was in tertiary education.

First-time engagement with creative dance can be demanding for students unaccustomed to, for example, improvisation, movement exploration and motif development. A wider experience of dance could assist in contextualising first-time experiences of creative dance within an art form understanding. However, the data reveals that a minority of NQTs had accessed dance on a voluntary basis as either participants or consumers. While some NQTs had attended performances or participated in activities in the previous 18 months, the numbers not attending or participating are prominent, and for those that did have experiences, regularity was low over the given period of time. In addition to enhancing their own learning, participation in dance activities and attending dance performances can inform and enhance classroom practice, whereby ideas and content experienced might be used or adapted for educational purposes.

The three biggest barriers to teaching dance in school identified by this NQT cohort were all teacher related – teacher confidence ((90%); teacher knowledge and skills (80%); and teacher attitude (67%). The least serious obstacle was the availability of a specialist teacher, indicating that NQTs recognise and accept it is their responsibility to deliver dance as part of the curriculum. Not all NQTs had taught dance while on teaching practice - 13 (27%) indicated that they had not taught any dance. Of the 13, 11 had attended one college - representing 34% of the group from that particular college, with 17% and 9% from the remaining two colleges. The school placement experience of graduate populations from the colleges is not known however, data from this particular cohort raises concerns about the regulation and monitoring of teaching practice in the area of dance. For the 36 (73%) respondents who did teach dance, it comprised an average of 3 classes using a mix of creative dance, Irish and folk dance. While 24 (67%) NQTs reported that teaching dance was ‘fairly easy’, the nature of the experience suggests limited opportunity to engage with lesson planning of a progressive nature in either genre. It’s unlikely that NQTs will have explored integrated approaches or have used resource-based methodologies to any significant degree. The dominant mode of engagement with dance as student teachers was practical, which suggests that there was

little opportunity to engage with the theoretical and philosophical frameworks informing concepts and principles underpinning syllabus content. Teacher engagement with the practical and theoretical aspects of dance strand is essential to progressing dance education. Without it, educational and art form propositions and claims are unlikely to be explored and challenged, and content and methodologies will not evolve. The cycle of deficit described in section 5.1 will remain unchanged.

5.3 Data from the B.Ed.IV Dance Module

The dance education module aimed to develop a knowledge and understanding of dance as art (Redfern, 1978). Course content and methodologies were based on the midway model (Smith-Autard, 2002). The module, comprising 18 sessions of approximately 90 minutes each (27 hours), was led by the researcher. In each year, specialist input from an Irish traditional musician was organised for a session on Irish and European folk dance, the only element of the course not related to the midway model. A dance specialist led one session on an application of Laban’s movement analysis to dance education contexts and in year three, a visual arts teacher contributed to a cross-curriculum session which explored links between the creative dance strand and the primary school visual art syllabus.

The B.Ed.IV module was informed by a dance education module designed by Jacqueline Smith-Autard for the University of Limerick’s Graduate Diploma/Masters in Dance programme. Course learning outcomes for the B.Ed.IV course are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2:
B.Ed.IV - dance module outcomes

Course participants will have: • Investigated the artistic, aesthetic, and cultural nature of dance in education. • Enhanced their appreciation of dance as an art form discipline. • Deepened their knowledge and understanding of dance in educational contexts. • Examined and debated current teaching, learning and assessment practices in dance education. • Increased their ability to work purposefully, efficiently and creatively in group and individual situations with given and found movement ideas and tasks. • Increased their ability to design a scheme of work suited to their own teaching needs.

In year one and year two course enrolment was 15, with an average weekly attendance rate of 11 and 12 respectively. Course enrolment in year three was 27, with an average weekly attendance per session of 23, almost double than that of previous years. To facilitate the increased number of course participants, evaluation in year three used semi-structured interviews. Where relevant, links are made between data from the NQT cohort and data extracted from the researcher's journal and field notes. This is to explore possible correlation between the researcher's teaching approach and trends in course assignment results. Data on the dance module is presented from:

- Course assignments.
- Course evaluations:
 - ◊ Feedback from year one and year two NQTs;
 - ◊ Semi-structured interviews with year three NQTs.
- Research journal and field notes.

5.3.1 Course assignments

Two course assignments were set in each of the three years of the study. Assignments were based on learning outcomes agreed for the course.

Assignment one: An A4 size journal that accurately records and adequately reflects upon the practical experience of coursework, presented in a session by session format. Course handouts should be included and supplementary materials may be included (40%).

Assignment two: Design a unit of work (3/4 lessons) for primary school pupils. The unit will show clear links with, and appropriate application of theories and practice studied on the course. The unit will include selective use of resource-based methodologies and demonstrate an appropriately academic standard in both the structure and style of written work (60%).

Table 5.3:
Number of assignments submitted

Academic year	Number of NQTs registered for dance	Assignment one – number submitted	Assignment two – number submitted
2007/2008	15	15	15
2008/2009	15	14	14
2009/2010	27	26	26
Total	57	55	55

In year two (2008/2009), one NQT followed the course but did not submit assignments. In year three (2009/2010) one NQT left the course following the first session and did not submit course assignments.

Data from assignment one

The journal assignment required course participants to record and reflect on the practical elements of the module. Where a reflective comment was entered, these mostly demonstrated whether or how they might apply session content to a classroom setting, for example:

I thought the warm-up activities were fun and I could imagine using them in the classroom with children of all age groups, perhaps as an introduction to lessons like drama or PE or else as a transition between lessons (NQT journal, 08/11/2007).

Using the 'Happy Feet' clip is an excellent idea for teaching dance. Most children would know the film...and won't be distracted by the story so they can focus on creating their own dance routine (NQT journal, 23/10/2008).

Describing the dance and allowing the children to choose elements of a dance that they could use in their own routines would increase their understanding of dance terminology and develop their ability to distinguish between different actions, deepening their appreciation of dance as an art form. Naming a movement encourages familiarity with it and improves the likelihood that the child will recall the movement when they encounter it again in the future (NQT journal, 03/12/2009).

Comments on cross-curricular approaches used, and reflection on the implications of applying these strategies in the classroom was evident, for example:

I found it surprising to realise that a topic as simple as numbers or letters can provide so many worthwhile and imaginative opportunities for dance. These activities could easily be used with younger children...introducing an element of challenge for older children, e.g., guessing phone numbers or experimenting with the longest word possible – the ideas are endless (NQT journal, 24/01/2008).

Using art materials to enhance the children's dance is a great way for the children to express themselves. It also makes the story of the dance more realistic and interesting for the audience to watch. Limiting the amount of materials....could enhance the dance creation. In my opinion, it would be best to let the groups plan their dances completely before they are given the materials and I would probably give each group the exact same materials so that there are no arguments over the most popular art materials (NQT journal, 25/03/2010).

Journals noted learning opportunities for both pupils and teacher through group work methodology:

Performing in a group setting prevents shy people from being put in the spotlight and allows them to freely express themselves without the sense that they are being watched....when applying this to the classroom setting it creates a comfortable, safe environment for every child to participate in activities without fear and inhibition (NQT journal, 04/02/2010).

Teaching our group dance to another group allowed us to identify areas of difficulty in the routine which we and others might need extra or clearer instruction in if we were to use our dance with a class...therefore, this is a vitally important activity for assessing a teacher's ability to teach a dance lesson and for helping us to develop our teaching language, skills and style (NQT journal, 06/11/2008).

Observations on their own dance learning were recorded, usually commenting on new discoveries:

The dance framework was an entirely new concept for me so I found it interesting to learn about...dance is not just a series of steps to music (NQT journal, 17/01/2008).

Learning a section of a dance routine by following the dancers in the video clip was a new experience for me. It was very constructive to be able to view the clip as many times as we needed and I learned the steps more easily and quickly as a result. I hadn't realised that there were digital resources for teaching dance (NQT journal, 26/11/2009).

Journal entries recorded on a session by session basis indicated that the course structure remained much the same throughout the three years. Of particular relevance to the study was a year-on-year increase in the use of technology-based resources. Three different ICT resources were used. A DVD resource made up of short clips sourced from dance footage thought suitable for use in primary school was produced with the assistance of a film editor.

In year one, the DVD resource was introduced in session three, and used in four subsequent sessions; in year two, it was introduced in the first session and used in five subsequent sessions; and in year three, it was introduced in the first session and used in eight sessions. An interactive CD-ROM (Bedford Interactive, 2006) which claimed to exemplify content and methodologies of the midway model was used across three consecutive sessions in year two and year three. Data on the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource is presented in section 5.4. The third resource was a folk dance resource which was available online (Professional Development Service for Teachers, 2008). This resource displays children performing Irish and European folk dances dressed in their physical education uniform. Journals show that it was accessed in year three. As many primary schools block YouTube, this facility was not accessed for the course.

Use of cross-curriculum strategies also increased. While learning outcomes remained focussed on dance as art concepts, methodologies which explored the use of literacy, numeracy and visual arts concepts were explored. Two sessions – one using mathematical concepts (numbers and shape) and one using language concepts (letters, words and sentences) – were presented in each of the three years. In year three, a session exploring integration with visual arts was added to the course. Journals demonstrated a positive response from NQTs to these sessions. The need for further exploration was noted, particularly in the area of music as a reliance on a narrow range of music - ‘pop’ or television musicals, to accompany dance lessons became apparent (Research journal, 12/05/2010). Feedback suggested that this NQT cohort saw the journal assignment as a useful and realistic form of assessment:

You always look back to what you know because you’ve been shown how to use it and because you’ve experienced it yourself...I definitely recommend keeping the journal as part of the assessment. It’s not pointless doing a scheme but we’ve done it so many times. The journal will be beneficial, it will be a resource and we’ll see what we’ve taken from the lectures. I think it’s the most beneficial form of assessment (NQT feedback, 10/04/2008).

It’s a brilliant form of assessment. I know it’s a pain to do, but we won’t remember those classes that we’ve been to here which were very valuable. We just don’t have time to record the classes whereas when it’s compulsory you do it, and it’s also a resource for us in the future (NQT feedback, 23/04/2009).

I think the journal assessment is a good idea because you're doing it every week so it's not a lot of pressure coming at the end. It's not an exam. That was good (NQT number 17, Interview, 06/05/2010).

Data from assignment two

Assignment two was structured around five elements associated with the midway model, used as indicators of NQT knowledge and understanding of dance as art. NQTs were asked to apply the elements to a unit of work comprising 3 lesson plans which included appropriate use of a visual resource. A technology-based dance resource was the recommended approach, although, where lack of equipment or skills proved evident, a non-ICT resource for example, photographs or posters was permitted. Application levels of the five elements by NQTs in each of the three years are presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4:
Assignment two – application of midway model elements to unit of work

Midway model element	Year 1- of 15	Year 2 – of 14	Year 3 – of 26	Total 55
Learning outcomes matrix: performing, composing and viewing	5	8	17	30
Dance framework	13	14	26	53
Lesson plans x 3 comprising:	14	14	26	54
<i>Performance tasks</i>	14	14	26	
<i>Composition tasks</i>	14	14	26	
<i>Viewing tasks</i>	12	12	26	
<i>Teaching points</i>	7	9	22	
Visual resource:				50
ICT-based	3	11	22	
Non-ICT	9	2	3	
Teacher-led ‘viewing’ worksheet	2	5	10	17

Of the 55 assignments submitted, 17 NQTs (31%) applied all elements of the model; 13 (24%) applied 4 elements; 20 (36%) applied 3 elements; 4 (7%) applied 2 elements; and 1 (2%) did not apply any element of the model. The least applied element was the teacher-led 'viewing' worksheet - a set of questions used strategically by the teacher in order to deepen the pupils' viewing experience. The low application rate overall of this element, suggests that the course did not provide sufficient supports and techniques to embed critical viewing as part of lesson planning. It's also possible that module participants saw the value of visual resources more as a means of generating ideas and less as a means of critical appraisal. The artistic benefit was understood more than the aesthetic benefit. This could indicate a lack of critical engagement with dance 'products' and subsequently, of how the art form repertoire can be used in developing an appreciation of dance. Data collected from 15 year one assignments revealed that only 2 NQTs applied all of the elements of the model; 3 applied 4 elements; and 9 NQTs applied 3 or 2 elements. The remaining 1 NQT did not apply any element of the model choosing instead to submit three class plans rooted in the content and methodologies associated with the Laban framework. The poorer results overall in year one, could relate to the researcher's lack of experience with the midway model in practice:

It was a demanding teaching year. I struggled to achieve coherence between theory, content and methods, particularly working with the technology. Also, teaching from the standpoint of predetermined choreographic outcomes, albeit skeletal, was counter intuitive. The tightly structured approach may provide welcome security to beginner or non-specialist teachers but for me, at this point in my teaching career it feels overly prescriptive (Research journal, 21/03/2008).

Technical and practical issues were also evident. While not a dance studio, the teaching space was adequate in terms of room dimensions and floor quality (see Appendix 6). However, the weekly task of having to clear desks and chairs, and clean the floor of the teaching space is noted. Difficulties are also reported in year one regarding the supply of visual and audio equipment:

...equipment which needs to be transported (up three flights of stairs) and rigged for each session in the Regent House teaching space: laptop, LCD projector, speakers and woofer, cables, extension leads and for certain sessions, video and audio recording equipment (Research journal, 10/10/2007).

The teaching space received a digital upgrade in the summer of 2009. An LCD projector and audio equipment were installed (Research journal, 01/10/2009). The upgrade did not include an interactive whiteboard which is the recommended method of display for the *Step Dance* CD-ROM (Bedford Interactive, 2006). However, the evidence shows that the use of ICT-based resources as part of course assignments increased significantly, from 3 (20%) in year one to 11 (78%) in year two to 22 (85%) in year three. This might be accounted for by the researcher's growing familiarity with resource-based methodologies and the increasing use of ICT, together with the somewhat better facilities provided in the teaching space in year three. While year one assignments did not represent adequate use of midway model elements, there was evidence that by year three, NQTs had a better understanding of what was required in both assignments:

At this stage I am completely clear about what is expected of us in the assignment tasks due to the fact that we have often discussed them, examined samples and created our own dance frameworks (NQT journal, 25/02/2010).

5.3.2 Course evaluation – year one and year two

On completion of the dance module in each of the three years of the study, NQTs were asked for their views on the course in terms of its relevancy to teaching and classroom practice, and on how content and methodologies might be improved. This section presents data on year one and year two. Year three data is presented in section 5.3.3. A brief summary of course evaluation data is presented in section 5.3.4. In year one and year two, feedback was sought in a session organised at the end of the module in each year.

Data reveals that the aspect of the course most reported on by NQTs in year one and year two was an enjoyment and appreciation of the practical nature of the course:

I enjoyed the practical activities and learnt new aspects to bring into my teaching. It is an interesting subject, much easier to approach the idea of teaching dance now, and I've expanded my knowledge of different types of dance (NQT feedback, Year One, 10/04/2008).

We were never left sitting down for the whole lecture which I thought was very good and really important. It was much more effective the fact that we were doing it as opposed to talking about it so everybody had a chance to practice what you

would be teaching the kids so you yourself as the teacher, you were given that chance to practice so you had a better idea yourself (NQT feedback, Year Two, 23/04/2009).

Discussion of theory and content also featured and often revealed the lack of opportunity during initial teacher education to develop meaningful content and strategies for dance teaching and learning. This is likely to have been due to the severe time restrictions on dance and possibly, the skills set available in college of education physical education departments:

In PE we only had two or three lectures in dance over the three years. It was mainly free expressive movement. I think this [course] gives you a good grounding in what you should be teaching for the purpose of dance, it's got more structure in it. It's not just letting them move how they want to move and fulfilling the objectives of the curriculum. I think that was good (NQT feedback, Year One, 10/04/2008).

In college we look at the dance strands but we don't really think about what we are doing and what we are achieving at the end of it so that's what this course has definitely helped with (NQT feedback, Year One, 10/04/2008).

It's one of the areas of the PE curriculum that is not really touched on. Not a lot of time is spent on it and not a lot of people really do it in school. We just learnt a dance and the children would follow. This makes it more clear, what it's about and the different ways that you could do dance (NQT feedback, Year Two, 23/04/2009).

Some understanding of dance as art concepts and midway methodologies was shown:

Learning about the staged approach to a scheme of work and what elements to include, and focus on the 'doing, making, looking' is really good. When I'm putting a PE scheme together I wouldn't really think of those things in dance...so it was good that was highlighted and very relevant (NQT feedback, Year Two, 23/04/2009).

In addition to assisting with a more strategic and structured approach to lesson planning, feedback on the midway model's use of visual resources as a means of deepening learning and enhancing teaching was noted:

I think especially the 'looking' aspect, just seeing other people, the dancers doing it properly (NQT feedback, Year One, 10/04/2008).

It's one thing getting up yourself and showing the children but if they can actually see it themselves on a good big screen like we had it's a very good visual for them to see how the dance goes (NQT feedback, Year Two, 23/04/2009).

NQTs from both years noted an increase in confidence in teaching dance in school. Reference to midway model elements in this context is also evident, particularly in the use of a teacher prepared dance framework as a teaching strategy:

The course has provided me with the confidence and 'know how' to teach dance effectively – breaking down the dance into stages and seeing the clips, that was really useful (NQT feedback, Year One, 10/04/2008).

I love dance but wasn't confident teaching it. I wanted to explore the creative side of it. I've more confidence in creating dance. I've more ability in breaking down dances and for developing a sequence of lessons (NQT feedback, Year Two, 23/04/2009).

It offered me the chance to be artistic. It was lots of fun. It has definitely improved my confidence in the area of dance. It gave me useful ideas for teaching dance in school so I feel I can teach it to the pupils with confidence (NQT feedback, Year Two, 23/04/2009).

With regard to folk dance, the only aspect of the course which did not relate to the midway model, a range of Irish and European folk dances were presented but the evidence shows an NQT focus on Irish dance, and a mixed response to the folk dance experience overall:

Irish dancing is very important for the children to know and it might not be available for all of them to partake in extra-curricular activities. With Seachtain na Gaeilge it's a big aspect in my school and it's also part of the PE curriculum. It was nice too that it wasn't a CD, the musician was there and she was playing the actual fiddle herself and that one of the girls played concertina as well (NQT feedback, Year One, 10/04/2008).

Irish dancing may be a bit difficult, the way they can't freestyle, that there are actual steps to it. They may have more fun creating the dance themselves. You know the way some kids don't like abiding by the rules, so they can do their own thing (NQT feedback, Year Two, 23/04/2009).

NQT feedback on how to improve the course identifies a gap in the provision of content and strategies specifically designed for younger age groups – junior and senior infants:

I think some of it was a bit more advanced, maybe a bit much for the younger classes up to senior infants but for the older classes definitely, it would be very good (NQT feedback, Year One, 10/04/2008).

I thought a lot of the stuff was good but it might be good for the senior classes rather than junior and senior infants. With junior and senior infants you'd have to think 'how will I do it with them' (NQT feedback, Year Two, 23/04/2009).

Data reveals that only 1 NQT considered the course materials applicable across the full range of primary school classes. However, as the comment does not identify the age group taught by this respondent, the extent to which the adaptation suggested might work in practice with younger children is not conclusive:

I've used a few of them already within my teaching and the children really enjoyed them. They are very easily adapted from junior infants right up to sixth class. It's up to yourself really to adapt them to the level of difficulty or beginner stage (NQT feedback, Year Two, 23/04/2009).

Other feedback on course improvements mostly took the form of non-specific requests for 'more content'; 'more ideas'; 'more teaching strategies'. Some consensus is evident across a small number of NQTs who had identified specific areas which they reported (via post-its) would enhance the module:

- ideas for teaching in a culturally diverse classroom;
- more music resources for use in primary school;
- more teaching strategies for 'all boys' classes;
- more cross-curricular strategies.

5.3.3 Course evaluation – year three

In April and May 2010, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with 25 of the 27 year three NQTs registered for the dance module. As mentioned in section 5.3, one module participant did not complete the course. The other participant, henceforth called NQT D, gave an extended interview in September 2010. NQT D had based her undergraduate dissertation on in-school practice using the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource and the interview was conducted following the completion of her research. An analysis of NQT D's interview and dissertation is given in section 5.5.1. The semi-structured interview posed two open-ended questions on the dance module in terms of its relevancy for classroom practice and teaching; and course aspects which NQTs did not find relevant.

Question 1 data: relevance of dance module to classroom practice and teaching

As in year one and year two, data shows that the vast majority of course participants enjoyed the practical nature of the module. Data reveals that year three NQTs had also experienced very little dance as student teachers. Several responses show that a dance elective option was appreciated, for example:

I enjoyed all the classes thoroughly and thought they were all relevant. We really didn't spend a lot of time in college, only a bit of third year focusing on dance and it can be hard to teach sometimes (NQT number 6, 15/04/2010).

We had dance for two lectures in the entire year in second year and it was only because I did the PE elective in the third year that I got to do dance properly (NQT number 18, 06/05/2010).

Interview data demonstrates that NQTs found relevance in the use of dance frameworks as a strategy for dance teaching and learning. Thirteen NQTs highlighted specific dance frameworks used during the module which they considered particularly relevant for primary school children - 5 commented on the 'Hello Dance' (*Signes* and *Happy Feet* extracts); 5 on the 'Sports Dance' (*Step Dance* CD-ROM) and 3 on the 'Toys Dance' (*Coppélia* extract), for example:

...the greeting dance, especially for primary school children, they have no idea how much non-verbal communication they have. We came up with a sequence with gestures. I thought it was really good for the children to do. It's so easy to come up with the gestures it's something they already know. There is so much communication you can do without speaking, so I really like that one (NQT number 14, 22/04/2010).

... the one on sports, that's a good idea for creating a dance especially if you are teaching boys. I'm in a boys' school at the moment so I thought that was a brilliant idea to get the boys interested in dance. That worked out really well. They came up with a lot of their own ideas and when they saw one or two ideas that we had used in the lecture, they came up with loads more different ones (NQT number 10, 22/04/2010).

...the one that stood out for me was the dance in the toy shop...it brought out creativity that I think I never really knew I had. I found that really interesting. I've taught that with first class, they went mad for it. They wanted to do it every day. They loved it. (NQT number 18, 06/05/2010).

The use of ICT was highlighted by 6 NQTs. However, an awareness of the implications of using technology is evident in the data. For example, one NQT mentioned that 'viewing' would precede the dance lesson, perhaps because ICT facilities were only available in the classroom and not in the space where the lesson would be conducted:

I loved the viewing clips because it would give you an idea of what to show the children prior to teaching a lesson (NQT number 1, 08/04/2010).

Another NQT highlighted the need for careful planning if using technology-based resources:

I liked dealing with all of the resources. It was really, really different but you'd have to be well prepared to do that in school (NQT number 12, 22/04/2010).

Of the 25 respondents, 13 highlighted the relevancy of cross-curriculum activities. A session taught by the researcher and a visual arts teacher, introduced in year three; was reported on by 8 NQTs as being particularly relevant, for example:

...the visual arts, I thought that was amazing. It would never have crossed my mind to make something like that up. I really enjoyed it and I know my children would love it as well. It integrated so well, the fact that it wasn't just 'ok we did a dance now let's draw a picture about dance or do a collage based on what our dance was about', it was more like visual arts were used within the dance which was fantastic (NQT number 25, 13/05/2010).

Another 5 NQTs commented on the use of literacy and/or numeracy as an approach to developing dance materials, for example:

...the parts where we took words like 'roll', 'stretch', 'scatter', and turned them into a sequence. I think something dawned on me that night when we did that, that dance is not just standing up straight and doing 1,2,3s or going around the floor in jives and waltzes...any movement you do can become a dance and I think those words that we had to portray made me feel like it's not complicated, it's not rigid (NQT number 11, 22/04/2010).

...the maths one, 'cos it gets them thinking outside the box, brilliant....I'd definitely use that. Integration is great (NQT number 17, 06/05/2010).

The course overall was mentioned by 9 NQTs and in some instances clearly demonstrates an impact on classroom practice; and for 1 NQT, a level of surprise that the module had been relevant:

I thought it was all very useful. I have used a few of them already within my teaching and the children really enjoyed them (NQT number 24, 13/05/2010).

Not any one thing. It was very diverse; there were lots of different aspects. I thought I'd enjoy it but didn't realise it was going to be very useful, I didn't think it was going to be something that we could use in the classroom. I thought it would just improve our own dancing ability (NQT number 20, 06/05/2010).

Five NQTs highlighted the session on folk dance. While the content presented a balance between Irish and other European folk dances, it is interesting to note that as in years one and

two, comments related only to the Irish dances:

...the Irish dancing because I take an interest in that myself. I've been teaching that in the school myself over the last few weeks with Seachtain na Gaeilge (NQT number 15, 22/04/2010).

I think the Irish dancing is really good because it's not something that maybe everyone would have a basis in and we're not really doing it in college and you're supposed to teach Irish as part of PE as well, so I think it's important that you can (NQT number 25, 13/05/2010).

Question 2 data – aspects of the module not relevant to teaching

Of the 25 respondents to this question, 22 NQTs found all aspects of the course relevant to their teaching. Of these 22, 8 suggested ways in which the course could be improved. The data shows that, as in years one and two, the course did not sufficiently address the needs of teachers working with infant classes - NQTs mentioned that the material was less suited to junior and senior infants:

Sometimes I felt where we were put into groups and had to come up with new things. I have senior infants and I think they would find that a bit difficult, having to come up with their own dance, especially at that age. They would need more direction from their teacher about what to do next (NQT number 13, 22/04/2010).

I think the senior end of the school would love to come up with something creative themselves and to show what they can do and maybe bring in something like a new step that they hadn't necessarily learnt in class...but infants should be given a more structured approach even if they were started in pairs and gradually build up to working in a group (NQT number 14, 22/04/2010).

While feedback on younger classes was primarily seeking more assistance, there is evidence to suggest that some NQTs were finding material suited to their teaching practice. Use of a visual resource is evident, although the comment suggests a prescriptive rather than discovery-based approach, adding weight to feedback requesting more open-ended content and methodologies appropriate this age group:

The dance I'm doing with senior infants is 'Skip to my Lou' which is very simple but I showed them a DVD of it and played it twice and we talked through how to do it twice beforehand so once they had seen it twice they knew the steps involved and it made it so much easier for them to learn and for me to teach. Watching the video they knew what was ahead of them (NQT number 4, 08/04/2010).

Sourcing suitable music for use with primary school children was highlighted. NQTs sought more assistance with this and data reveals that for some, a reliance on popular television musicals is shown:

....if we were given more music, sometimes it's so hard to find music that's modern but without bad words. I think if we were given more modern, up to date music that was suitable to teach in a primary school it would be very helpful as well, sometimes I think it's hard to source (NQT number 25, 13/05/2010).

I think children would really enjoy music that they could relate to. I know we used, was it 'Ice Age' but I think the idea of say 'High School Musical', things they can really relate to and can carry that outside class as well (NQT number 20, 06/05/2010).

I did a 'High School Musical' theme with kids that I had in third class but that was basically from watching the DVD myself and it wasn't something that we were actually told and I suppose it didn't really fit into what they are supposed to be learning in the curriculum (NQT number 7, 15/04/2010).

Of the 25 respondents to the second question, 3 identified aspects of less relevance to their teaching. NQTs noted that folk dance had been studied during their initial teacher education:

In college we focused a lot on the folk dance and I didn't really learn a lot more from the folk dance one here (NQT number 2, 08/04/2010).

I knew the dances as we had done a lot of that before...that's probably the only thing I would leave out, everything else was new (NQT number 10, 22/04/2010).

Of note is a comment on the session led by the Laban specialist. This NQT inadvertently summed up many of the issues identified in the midway approach regarding the need for a dance pedagogy that is both process and product oriented:

Personally I found the Laban very interesting but if you were doing it with a class you would have to have a more structured framework for them. We were so free, but some children might find that difficult. Some children love structure and instructions. Maybe you should start off with some structure and then have it free in the middle and then go back to structure again. I love to know what I'm going to do and I think that would be a bit too free (NQT number 24, 13/05/2010).

5.3.4 Course evaluation data - summary of findings across all three years

Course evaluation by the newly qualified teachers (NQTs) was almost completely positive. While bias is an obvious factor, a positive response might also be accounted for by the absence of previous experience. Data shows that for the majority of this NQT cohort, the experience of dance in school and as student teachers was minimal. With no similar experi-

ence to compare it to the dance module would have had novelty value, contributing to the high level of enjoyment reported. Use of cross-curriculum strategies as part of the module increased year on year. Integration with curriculum areas such as maths, literacy and visual arts, is explicitly recommended in the dance strand of the primary school physical education curriculum (Department of Education and Science, 1999b). Data reveals that integrated approaches involving dance had not been explored by this NQT cohort as part of their initial teacher education. NQTs highlighted the relevancy of cross-curriculum strategies used, in particular the visual arts collaboration. Feedback demonstrates that integrated approaches enhanced their understanding of dance; had some impact on classroom practice; and prompted engagement with lesson planning. This is an area which dance might usefully explore to a greater degree in primary education. Engagement with other arts education areas could have mutual benefits and perhaps in a tangential way, might address some of the music ‘sourcing’ concerns raised. Gaps were identified in content and methodologies for use with infant classes. Any further iterations of the course would need to address deficits in providing materials for this age group, and should be informed by developments in early childhood arts education. The session on folk dance received mixed response and demonstrates an emphasis on this syllabus strand in physical education programmes. Of note is that NQT feedback on this session was almost wholly concentrated on the Irish dance content. The emphasis on Irish dance, clearly evident in the dance experiences of this NQT cohort, suggests that the capacity of dance as a means of exploring socio-cultural identities is under-utilised in the primary school curriculum. While ‘cultural diversity’ was not identified by NQTs as a course omission, a request for ‘more’ content was shown. The absence of specific requests could indicate a lack of awareness on the part of NQTs, and of attention on the part of course design to ensure that the needs of diverse cultural traditions are addressed within both folk dance and creative dance.

Course feedback suggests that a reasonable level of knowledge and understanding about the midway model was achieved, and in that context the use of dance frameworks was seen as a

particularly valuable teaching strategy. There is clear and conclusive evidence that the use of visual resources was thought relevant to dance pedagogy. However, the use of ICT in a dance education context was a new experience for this NQT cohort, and the additional demands on planning and the availability of technology in dance teaching spaces were raised as concerns. For many NQTs an increase in confidence in teaching dance in school was demonstrated, and for some there was evidence that course content had been applied to classroom practice. However, the researcher records an absence of basic dance skills and experiences which, had they been acquired during their school years, would have provided a more secure basis for learning and for embedding future use of dance as art pedagogy:

Response to creative tasks is limited, they're finding it difficult to explore and develop a dance idea. Physical skills in dance are limited. It's taking a great deal of effort and input from me to keep the energy and motivation going in the group. I need to adjust my expectations around this (Field note, 25/10/2007).

Overall, they had little or no experience to bring to creative dance. Also, the lack of exposure to theatre dance meant there was very little understanding of the art form within the group dynamic. Therefore, they've few dance resources to draw on to assist them in developing their own material and ideas, and to inform their teaching. Sustaining what they've learnt and experienced on the modules will likely be difficult for them (Research journal, 06/07/2010).

5.4 The Step Dance CD-ROM resource

Data in this section reports on an interactive CD-ROM resource entitled *Step Dance – a mini resource pack* which claims to exemplify the midway model (Bedford Interactive, 2006). The CD-ROM resource was specifically designed for use by non-specialist teachers working with 7 – 14 year olds. The resource handbook presents dance as art as the consensus theory underpinning dance syllabi in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Bedford Interactive, 2006). The pack provides detailed information on the three-stranded 'art' approach and advice for the non-specialist teacher on the contents of the CD-ROM and how to use it. The published aims and objectives of the resource, which have informed data collection, are summarised in Table 5.5.

Data on the CD-ROM resource is presented from:

- B.Ed.IV dance module participants (NQTs) - based on 3 dedicated sessions taught by the researcher organised in year two and year three of the study. Data from small group discussions immediately following the third session is presented in section 5.4.1. Data from a questionnaire distributed to NQTs the week following the third session is presented in section 5.4.2.
- In-school practice in three primary schools located in Dublin city - one session in each school was led by the researcher. Data on the children's response to working with the resource is presented in section 5.4.4. Data from semi-structured interviews with the three classroom teachers is presented in section 5.4.5.

Data from the researcher's journal and field notes are presented where links are relevant.

Table 5.5:
Aims and objectives of the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource (Bedford Interactive, 2006)

Aim 1: promote in-depth dance education experiences for pupils aged 7-14 years
Objectives: ✦ Provide information on the use of dance as art concepts that permeate national (UK) and international syllabi. ✦ Provide three units of work made up of three detailed lesson plans catering progressively for three different age groups: 7-9, 9-11 and 11-14 year olds. ✦ Enable study of dance composition and performance; music; and design through analysis of a dance work. ✦ Provide a lively and accessible piece of choreography. Achieve progression towards the final outcome – a complete dance – as the most important planning objective.
Aim 2: embed the use of technology in delivery of practical dance lessons
Objectives: ✦ Provide an effective, easy to use dance resource. ✦ Promote resource-based teaching methodology. ✦ Provide initial and more specific help with how to incorporate use of CD-ROM based resources in practical teaching contexts – especially for non-specialist teachers of young pupils. ✦ Provide lessons that demonstrate in detail ways in which teachers can use interactive technology to support and enhance their teaching of dance in the school curriculum.

5.4.1 *Step Dance* CD-ROM – NQT small-group discussions

At the beginning of each exploration, NQTs were asked about previous knowledge or experience of the resource. No respondent reported having had previous experience or prior knowledge of the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource, or of the *Wild Child* resource pack from which it was produced. The resource was implemented towards the end of the second term in year two (March, 2009) and in the first term in year three (October, 2009). By minimising the interval of time between the two applications the researcher had intended to maximise her own experience and familiarity with the resource gained in year two (Research journal, 11/09/2009). However, it transpired that there were some differences in the experience reported on by the two groups, which were evident in the NQT's questionnaire responses. Where significant differences occur, these are discussed in section 5.4.2 which reports the data gathered from the questionnaires.

This section presents data on small-group discussions held immediately following the three sessions with the CD-ROM. A total of 36 NQTs took part in the discussions; 5 of the 36 participants did not attend all three of the CD-ROM sessions. In year two, 13 NQTs participated in the small group discussions, and 23 in year three. Each small group comprised three or four members. In year two there were 4 groups and in year three, there were 7 groups. Each small group was asked to reach a consensus, as much as possible, on two or three aspects that they particularly liked, and two or three aspects that they did not particularly like about the resource. Each small group reported back to the full year group in plenary fashion. The same procedure was applied in both years. There was no significant difference between the two years in the information reported. The following is an overall summary of the aspects of the resource on which consensus was reached across the two years.

We particularly liked:

- The interactive layout. The 'make', 'do', 'look' sections are immediately obvious and easily accessed.

- The movement ideas are simple but with varying levels of work presented, so teachers can use the ideas with different age groups.
- The music is great. Good beat and simple to follow.
- Great warm-up ideas - adaptable for different age groups and abilities.
- The 'wild child' storyline is a good dramatic idea. Having the character of a child who is new to the class will interest the children, and many of them will relate to this.
- Sports moves – throwing, catching and kicking. The children will recognise the movements and will enjoy making a dance with these ideas.
- Whole group/class performance approach. No group (or child) is asked to perform on their own in front of the class. .
- Guided viewing – good to have specific things for the children to look for when watching the professional dancers.
- Virtual teacher/dancer – having the steps broken down is helpful, and children would enjoy copying the dancer, its different and fun to do (like Wii).
- It's a visual resource – good for getting the children interested in dance.

We particularly did not like:

- ICT difficulties – teachers may not be able to show the video or play the music in the school hall or gym. Use might be confined to the classroom.
- It's too complicated - there are too many options for the teacher and too many choices for the children.
- It would take too much time to figure out how to navigate and limit the options.
- There's too much information for the teacher – a lot to take in, it would need careful planning.
- The CD-ROM needs to be clearer about the how to find the options for each of the age groups – navigation issues.
- There needs to be more opportunities for the children's' own creative work – it's too specific.

- It's not suitable for younger children – the design (colours) of the video is too dark and the story is too 'scary' for them.
- It would not be suitable for use in Gaelscoileanna – it would need to be produced in the Irish language or, at least have a translation of the handbook made available.

The evidence here suggests that the NQTs found the content, materials and strategies used in the lesson plans to be mostly appropriate and accessible, for example, the storyline, the three-stranded approach, the use of guided viewing, the virtual teacher and the music. However, reservations were expressed regarding appropriateness for the younger age group and its specificity for all age groups. Lack of availability of the resource in the Irish language was identified as an issue for some schools. The evidence also suggests serious reservations regarding its use by primary school teachers, for example, 'too complicated', 'take too much time', 'too much information', and limited availability of ICT equipment in schools.

5.4.2 *Step Dance* CD-ROM - NQT questionnaire data

In year two and in year three of the study, a questionnaire based on the published aims and objectives of the resource was distributed in the week following the third session dedicated to working with the CD-ROM. The questionnaire was distributed to 31 NQTs who had attended all three of the dedicated sessions. This comprised 11 NQTs in year two and 20 NQTs in year three. Of note is that, unlike the data reported on from the small group discussions conducted immediately following, and as part of the final session with the *Step Dance* resource, data gathered from the questionnaires reveals that there were some differences in outcomes for the two NQT year groups. Where significant differences between the two groups occur these are noted. Possible influences on the varying responses are considered in the summary of questionnaire data.

Relevance of the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource

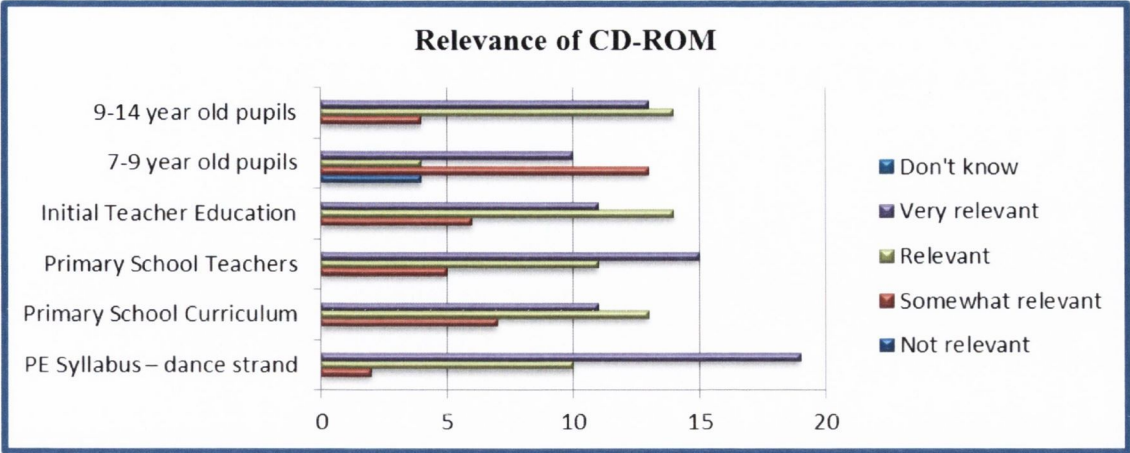


Figure 5.6: Relevance of the CD-ROM

The majority of the 31 respondents felt that the CD-ROM was either ‘relevant’ or ‘very relevant’ to five of the six categories identified in this question. The resource was deemed most relevant to the dance strand of the PE syllabus (29 out of 31). It was considered least relevant to 7-9 year old pupils, with 4 NQTs reporting it as ‘not relevant’ for this age group. Reasons given were that it was either too advanced or too demanding for this category. There was a difference between the responses of both year groups to this question. In year two 8 (73%) respondents selected either ‘not relevant’ or ‘somewhat relevant’ for this age group. In year three, 8 (45%) respondents selected these options. In general, year three respondents were more inclined to describe the resource as ‘very relevant’ in all of the categories, whereas year two respondents tended to be more conservative, describing it as ‘relevant’ more often than ‘very relevant’.

Accessibility of the storyline and sports theme

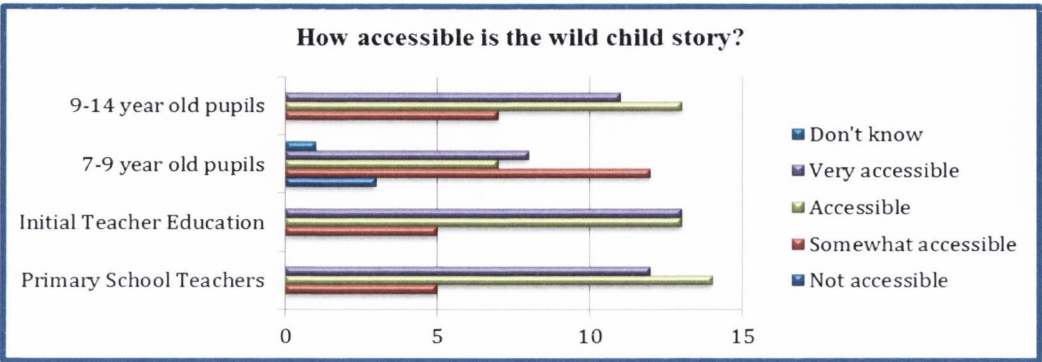


Figure 5.7: Wild child storyline

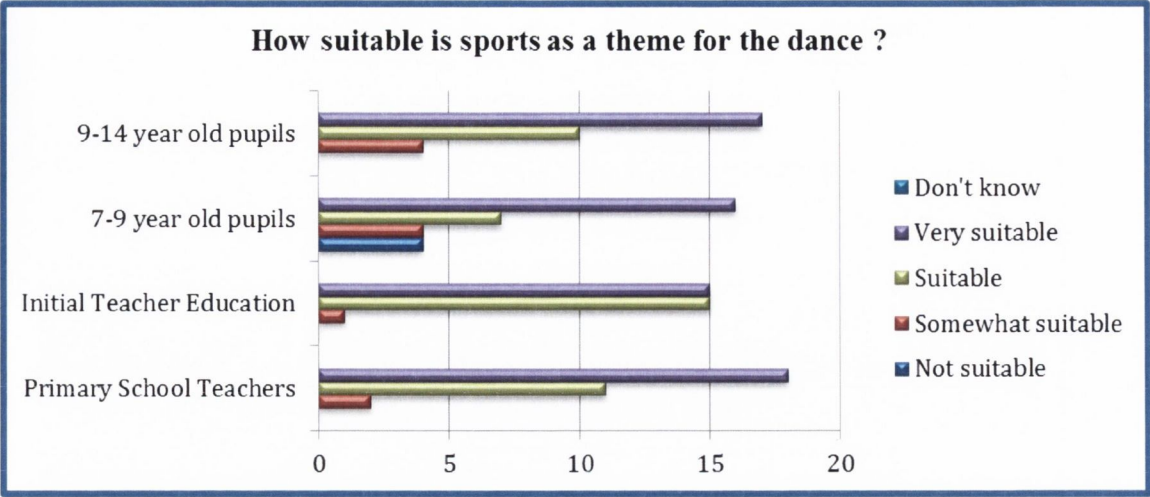


Figure 5.8: Sports theme

The storyline was considered to be either ‘accessible’ or ‘very accessible’ to 3 of the 4 categories identified. It was deemed most accessible to teachers and student teachers - 26 of the 31 reported it as either ‘accessible’ or ‘very accessible’. It was thought least accessible to 7-9 year old pupils - 12 reported it as ‘somewhat accessible’ and 3 as ‘not accessible’. Of these 15 NQTs, 7 (64%) were year two respondents and 8 (40%) were year three. Overall, year three NQTs were more inclined to describe the story as ‘very accessible’ whereas year two NQTs selected ‘accessible’ more often than ‘very accessible’.

The majority of the total cohort considered the sports theme to be either ‘suitable’ or ‘very suitable’ for 3 of the 4 categories identified. It was deemed most suited to student teachers (30 out of 31). It was thought least suited to 7-9 year olds. The majority of year three respondents considered the theme as ‘very suitable’ to all of the categories and none of this group selected ‘not suitable’ for any category. The majority year two respondents considered the sports theme ‘suitable’ or ‘very suitable’ for three of the categories; with 4 (36%) reporting it as ‘not suitable ’for 7-9 year old pupils.

Enables study of dance as art, music, and design

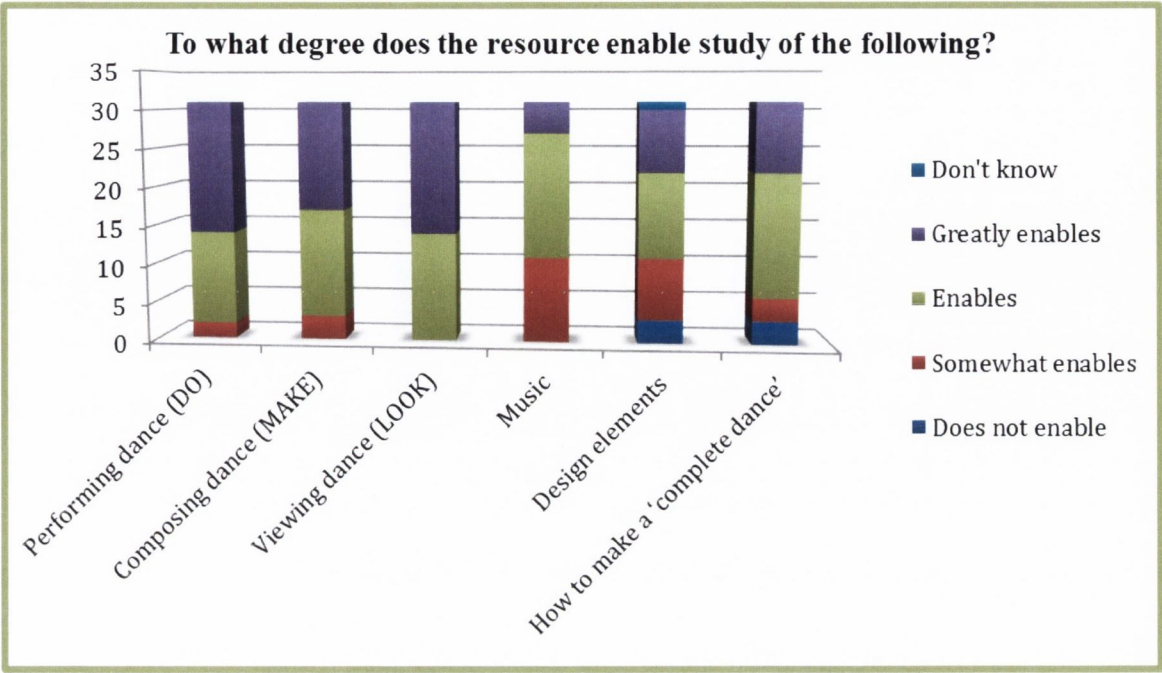


Figure 5.9: Study of dance as art, music, and design

All year two (11) and all year three (20) respondents reported that the resource either ‘enables’ or ‘greatly enables’ viewing dance. All of year two and 18 (90%) year three respondents felt the resource either ‘enables’ or ‘greatly enables’ learning in performance. All year two and 17 (85%) year three respondents felt the resource either ‘enables’ or ‘greatly enables’ learning in composition. There was a similarly mixed response in the year groups to making a ‘complete dance’. In year two, 2 (18%) respondents opted for ‘does not enable’ or ‘somewhat enables’; and in year three, 4 (20%) selected either of these two options. In year two 9 (82%) respondents opted for either ‘enables’ or ‘greatly enables’; and in year three 16 (80%) selected either of these two options. Enabling an experience of completing a dance is identified in the resource handbook as the most important learning objective. While 3 (10%) of the total cohort selected ‘does not enable’, 9 (29%) opted for ‘greatly enables’, and 16 (52%) opted for ‘enables’, indicating that the majority of NQTs considered the CD-ROM effective in this regard.

Responses to the music and design elements of the resource showed a greater disparity between the two year groups. Of the total cohort 51% (16) selected ‘enables’ the study of music – 4 (36%) in year two and 12 (60%) in year three. Only 1 (9%) year two respondent selected ‘greatly enables’ the study of music; 6 (55%) selected ‘somewhat enables’. In year three, 3 (15%) respondents selected ‘greatly enables’; 5 (25%) selected ‘somewhat enables’. Of the total cohort 35% (11) selected ‘enables’ the study of design – 4 (36%) in year two and 7 (35%) in year three. Only 1 (9%) year two respondent selected ‘greatly enables’ the study of design; 3 (27%) selected ‘does not enable’. In year three, 7 (35%) respondents selected ‘greatly enables’; no year three respondents selected ‘does not enable’, although 1 NQT opted for ‘don’t know’.

Usability of the CD-ROM

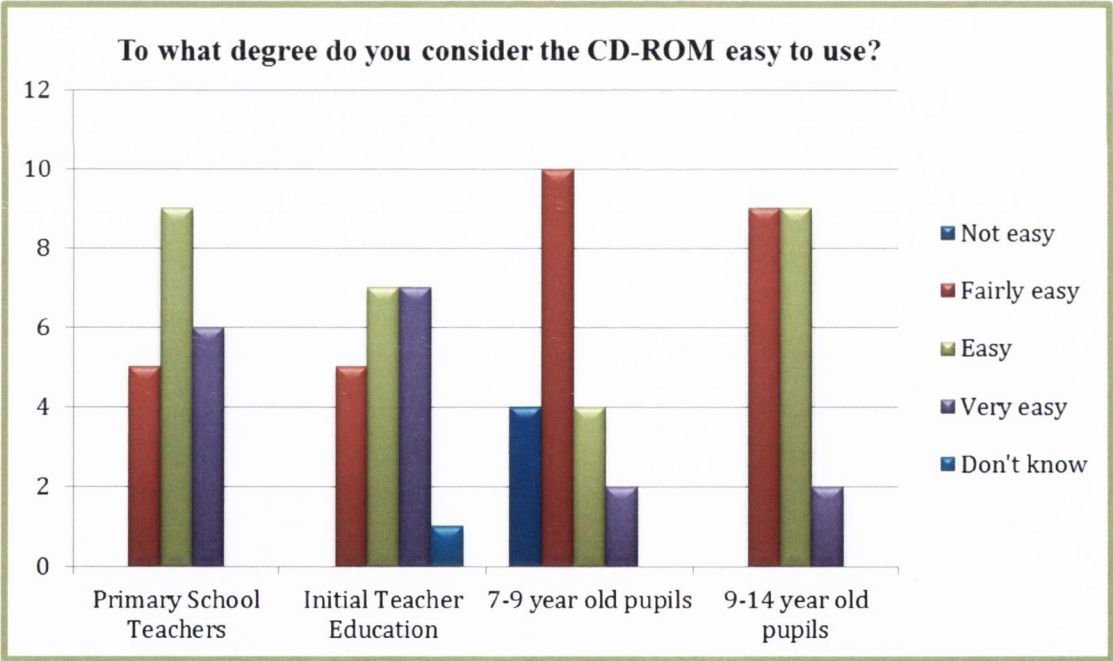


Figure 5.10: Easy and effective to use

Of interest, when compared to the consensus position reported from the small group discussions, the majority of respondents (25 out of 31) thought that teachers and student teachers would find the resource ‘very easy’ or ‘easy’ to use. The remaining 6 reported that these

groups would find it ‘fairly easy’ or ‘not easy’ to use. The dynamic within small groups possibly influenced the consensus opinion. All NQTs (31) felt that 9-14 year olds would find the resource ‘easy’ or ‘fairly easy’ to use. Interestingly, while data indicates that the NQT cohort considered that the CD-ROM material was unsuitable for use with 7-9 year olds, 19 (61%) reported that the younger age group would find the resource ‘easy’ or ‘fairly easy’ to use. Of note, is that the most significant difference between the two year groups was on usability. In year two, 8 (72%) respondents reported the resource ‘not easy’ for 7-9 year olds. In year three 4 (20%) respondents reported the resource as ‘not easy’ to use for this age category. A higher percentage of year three respondents selected the most positive option of ‘very easy’ in each category.

Design and presentation of the CD-ROM

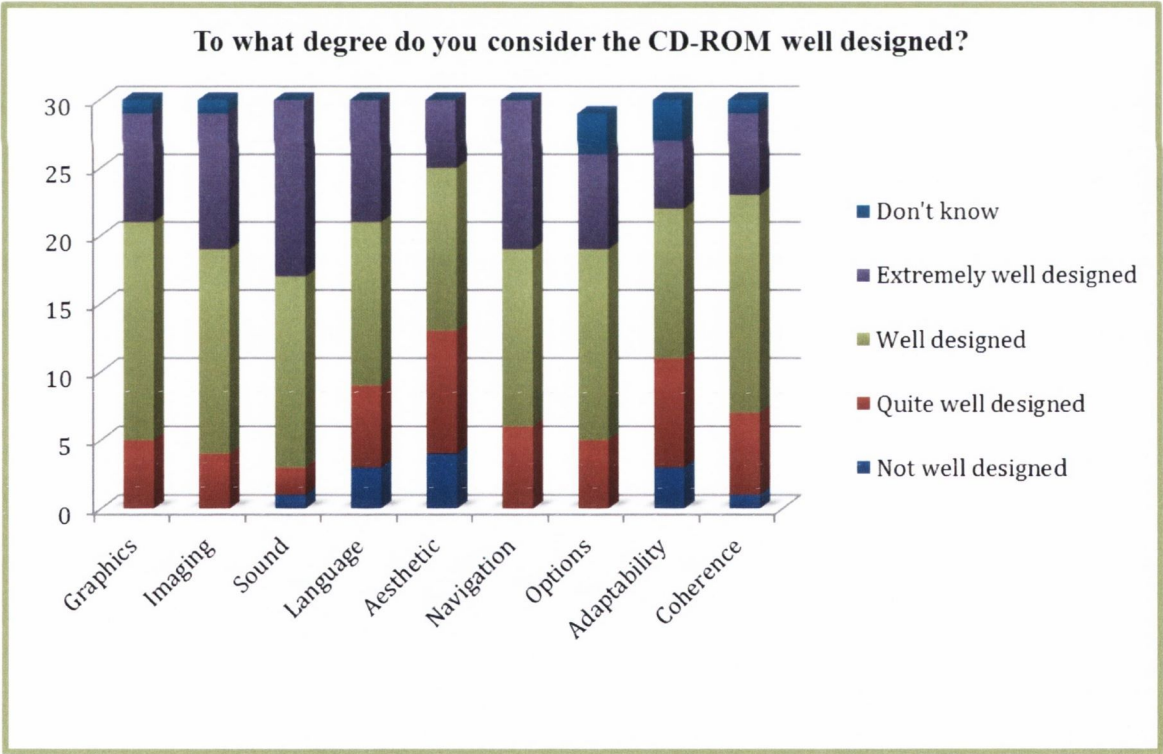


Figure 5.11: Design and presentation

The majority of respondents gave positive feedback on design aspects of the CD-ROM. Both groups agreed that Graphics, Imaging, Sound and Navigation Cues were either ‘well

designed' or 'extremely well designed'. In year two, respondents reported the Language component as least well designed. In year three, respondents reported the Aesthetic aspect as least well designed. A small proportion of year three respondents selected 'don't know' in response to 5 of the 9 CD-ROM categories; 1 left out the 'options' category and 1 did not respond to this question. In contrast, in year two no respondents selected 'don't know' in response to any of the categories.

Suitability for use in all primary schools

Module participants were asked about the suitability of the CD-ROM for use in all primary schools. Of the total cohort, 17 (55%) reported that resource was suitable for use in all primary schools. The main reasons reported were as follows:

- it was visual and active;
- had an appealing storyline;
- used sports related content – attractive to children;
- broke down the dance steps;
- could be used as a stimulus for cross-curriculum activities;
- it would be different from anything the children had done before;
- watching professional dancers would be a new experience for children;
- lots of ideas - would encourage the children's creativity;
- the music would appeal to children - steady beat and more modern than other music used in the classroom.

Of the total cohort, 14 (45%) reported that the resource was not suited for use in all primary schools. The main reasons reported were as follows:

- would be difficult to use because of the lack of ICT facilities in schools;
- too complicated for some teachers and pupils to use;
- the story is about children but there are no actual children in the dance;
- the design uses dark colours throughout - would appeal more to the older children;

- it would be very difficult to get boys to engage with resource;
- not available in the Irish language.

There was a significant difference between the two year groups in response to this question. Only 4 (36%) year two respondents considered the resource suitable for use in all primary schools. In year three, 13 (65%) respondents considered the resource suitable for use in all primary schools.

Suitability for use by newly qualified teachers (NQTs)

Module participants were asked whether or not they would use the CD-ROM in their teaching practice. Of the total cohort, 23 (74%) said they would use the resource. Reasons identified placed emphasis on: support in teaching creative dance; integration with other areas of the curriculum; and children's enjoyment. Of the total cohort, 8 (26%) reported that they would not use the resource. Reasons identified place emphasis on: not available in the Irish language; complicated to use; and not personally appealing. Again, there was a significant difference between the two cohorts in response to this question. In year two, 6 (55%) respondents reported that they would use the resource. In year three, 17 (85%) respondents reported that they would use the CD-ROM.

***Step Dance* CD-ROM: NQT questionnaire data – summary of findings**

The highest level of agreement reached between the two year groups was that the resource was of least relevance for teachers working with the 7-9 year old age group. The main reasons given were that it was too advanced or too demanding for younger children. Ludus' *Wild Child* was produced for a teenage audience and the CD-ROM, from which the *Step Dance* resource is extracted, was authored for use in secondary education. This might explain the lack of relevancy and accessibility reported for younger children. However, the resource was deemed appropriate for use with 9-14 year olds and all other categories defined.

The storyline and the sports theme were considered by the majority to be accessible and suitable for working with 9-14 year olds, and with student teachers. Both groups agreed that the resource enables learning in performance, composition and critical viewing, the latter aspect to a high degree. Of note, is that while a small proportion of the total cohort reported that the resource does not enable an experience of completing a dance, the majority of NQTs considered the CD-ROM effective in this regard. While most NQTs thought the music would appeal to children, only just over half of the total cohort reported that the study of music would be enabled; and just over one-third that the resource would enable the study of design. While these elements of the resource were considered the least successful by this NQT cohort, the lack of contact with professional dance 'products' - which usually incorporate design and music/soundscapes, could be a contributory factor to this outcome. Also, as mentioned previously, cross-curriculum strategies which might bring elements of dance, music and/or visual arts together had not been explored during their initial teacher education. Technical aspects of the resource were considered by the majority to be easy and effective for use by teachers, student teachers and 9-14 year olds. The majority of NQTs also gave positive feedback on the overall design of the CD-ROM, with some hesitancy reported about the 'language' and 'aesthetic' components. Regarding the former, this related to the non-availability of an Irish language version and the latter, the overall aesthetic of the resource was thought unappealing by some, the reason given that the colour of the costumes and lighting design were 'too dark'. These comments are useful and would need to inform development of similar resources in an Irish context.

Of particular interest is that only a little over half of the total cohort considered the resource was suitable for use in all primary schools. Amongst the reasons reported was that the resource provided a new experience in dance learning, and offered opportunities in for example, cross-curriculum activities. Reasons for unsuitability highlighted the lack of ICT facilities in schools, teacher competency in ICT and again, the need for resources to be made available in the Irish language was emphasised by some respondents. While many NQTs

were not convinced of the suitability of the resource for all schools, the majority of the cohort reported that they would use it themselves in their teaching practice. Reasons emphasised support in teaching creative dance, cross-curriculum opportunities and children's enjoyment. A small proportion of NQTs would not use the resource mainly because it was technically complicated, lacked appeal and again, non-availability in the Irish language was highlighted. There are over 3,000 primary schools in Ireland and approximately 144 of these operate through the medium of Irish (Gaelscoileanna Teo, 2014).

In year three, respondents were more inclined to describe the CD-ROM resource positively than year two respondents. While the resource was deemed least relevant to 7-9 year old pupils by this NQT cohort, two-thirds (64%) in year two compared with less than half (45%) in year three reported it as not suited to this age group. There was a significant difference between the two groups in response to use in all primary schools. Two-thirds (65%) in year three compared with just over one-third (36%) in year two judged the resource suitable for use in all primary schools. In addition, just over half (55%) in year two compared with the majority (85%) in year three reported that they would use the CD-ROM in their own teaching practice. The scheduling of the sessions with the CD-ROM might be a contributory factor to these differences. The year two group had almost completed the dance module when they experienced the CD-ROM material. Familiarity with the midway model and prior use of other visual resources were possible influences on this group's responses. The year three group experienced the CD-ROM at the beginning of their dance module. An exploration of the midway model and regular use of other visual resources had not taken place in advance of the sessions with the CD-ROM. It's possible, therefore, that the more positive responses overall in year three were influenced by a lack of experience in dance, and in the use of visual resources for dance education. Of interest is the more conservative response of a year three participant – NQT D, who having completed the dance module based her undergraduate dissertation on use of the CD-ROM in a classroom setting. NQT D data is presented in section 5.5.1.

5.4.3 Data from in-school practice

Data in this section is presented from an exploration of the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource in three primary schools in the Dublin city region, which took place in June 2009. Three year two (2008/2009) module participants, henceforth called NQT A, B and C, volunteered their class groups for the in-school practice exploration. NQT A worked with a 7-9 year old class group in School A; NQT B with a 10-12 year old class in School B; and NQT C with a 6-8 year old class in School C. In terms of previous dance experience, NQT A had least experience and at the time of the in-school exploration lesson had not taught any creative dance. NQT B graduated first in class of the year two dance module and was the most experienced of the three in teaching creative dance. NQT C had taught dance on teaching practice, but had not taught any dance with this class group. One session was taught in each school, led by the researcher. The school visits utilised sample lesson plans recommended in the resource handbook for the particular age group involved. The CD-ROM was uploaded to the researcher's laptop and used throughout the visits. ICT viewing facilities varied in each school. School A had an interactive whiteboard (IWB) in the school hall. School B had a non-interactive board in the classroom and no ICT facilities in the hall. The school projector was made available for the lesson and the resource was projected on to a white wall in the hall. School C had an IWB in the classroom and no ICT facilities in the hall. In School C, work with the resource took place in the classroom prior to the lesson in the hall. Data on the children's experience is presented in section 5.4.4. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the three classroom teachers following the school visits. Data from NQT A, B, and C interviews is presented in section 5.4.5.

5.4.4 *Step Dance* CD-ROM - children's questionnaire data

Across the three schools, a total 57 children took part in the in-school practice component of this study. The pupil sample comprised 22 boys and 35 girls, between the ages of 6 to 12 years.

Table 5.6:
Number and profile of pupil respondents

School	Age range of children	Gender mix	Number of children	Number of responses collected
School A	7 – 9 years (17 were aged 8 years)	Boys: 8 Girls: 13	21	21
School B	10 – 12 years (10 were aged 11 years)	Boys: 6 Girls: 9	15	15
School C	6 – 8 years (16 were aged 7 years)	Boys: 8 Girls: 13	21	21
Total		Boys: 22 Girls: 35	57	57

At the end of each lesson pupils were asked by the researcher to respond to four questions with one of three possible responses: Yes, No, Don’t know/not sure. The four questions posed to the children were as follows.

- Question 1:** Did you learn anything new about dance today?
- Question 2:** Did the DVD help you in making your partner/group dance today?
- Question 3:** Did you enjoy the lesson today?
- Question 4:** Would you do creative dance again?

Following a discussion of each question, an age appropriate response sheet, self-administered by the children, was used to indicate their individual response to each question. For the younger children, age appropriate language was used to assist them in responding to the questions. Throughout the visits, with all age groups, the CD-ROM was referred to as a DVD as this is a term the children are more familiar with.

Question 1 New learning

Of the 57 children, 48 (84%) felt they had learned something new about dance during the lesson; 2 (4%) felt they hadn’t learnt anything new, while 7 (12%) felt unsure. The break-

down between boys and girls shows that 30 girls (86%) felt they had learned something new about dance, while 18 boys (82%) reported that they had learned something new.

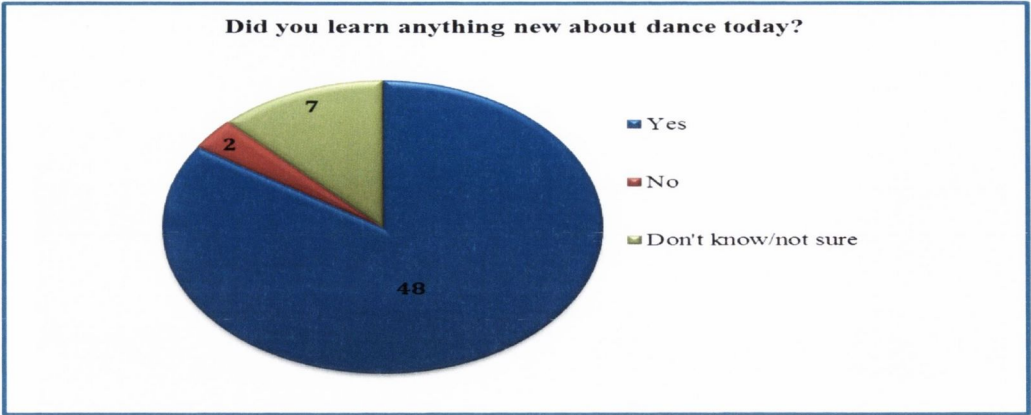


Figure 5.12: Did you learn anything new about dance today?

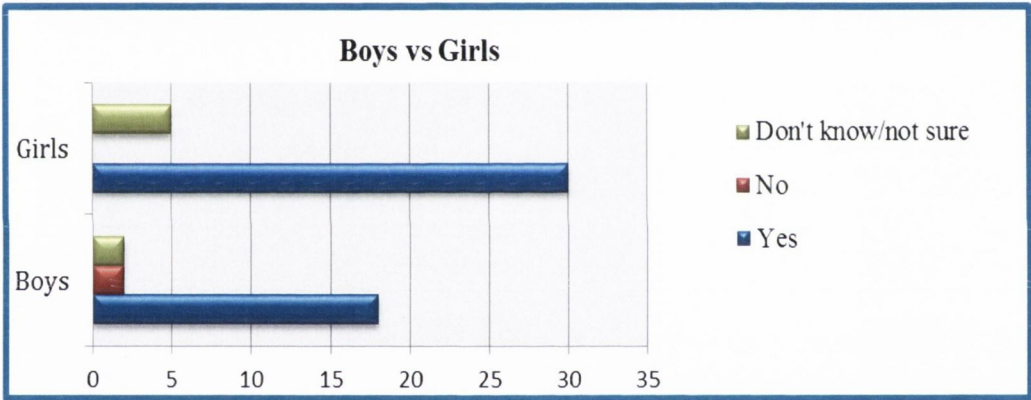


Figure 5.13: Boys versus Girls (new dance learning)

Question 2 Use of CD-ROM

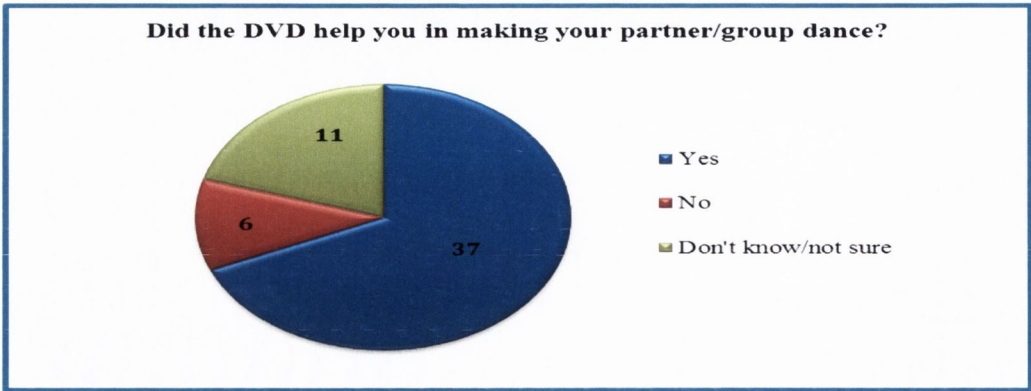


Figure 5.14: Did the DVD help you in making your dance?

Of the 57 children, 37 (69%) felt the CD-ROM had helped in making their dance. Six (11%) felt it did not help and 11(20%) were unsure. A school by school breakdown shows that the 17 children who selected ‘did not help’ or were ‘unsure’ were all in the younger age category. Of note, is that 11 (65%) of these younger children were in the same school. This school did not have ICT facilities in the dance teaching space. Elements of the CD-ROM were shown to the children on an interactive whiteboard in the classroom before going to the hall for the practical dance lesson. However, the music was the only element of the resource accessed in the hall. Therefore, the impact of the CD-ROM as a teaching and learning resource was reduced as the children could not interact with the visual content during the lesson (Research journal, 11/06/2009). However, of note is that a further 6 pupils of similar young age in another school which had the optimum ICT facility (interactive whiteboard in the gym) also reported that the resource had ‘not helped’ or were ‘unsure’. This substantiates reservations on the part of NQTs reported in section 5.4.2 regarding suitability of the resource for the younger children. All of the older children reported that the resource had helped them. The breakdown between boys and girls shows that 24 girls (69%) and 15 boys (68%) felt the resource had helped their dance; with 4 girls (11%) and 3 boys (14%) reporting it did not help. A further 7 girls (20%) and 4 boys (18%) were unsure. This was the only question that received a negative response from the girls and as previously mentioned, all of which were in the youngest age group.

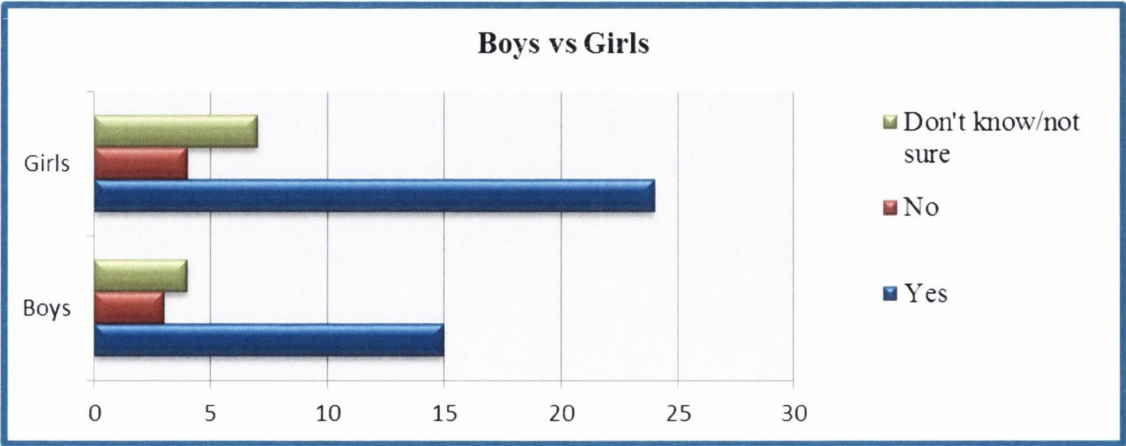


Figure 5.15: Boys versus Girls (help in making your dance)

Question 3 Enjoyment

Of the 57 children, 49 (86%) reported that they had enjoyed the lesson. Only 2 (3%) reported that they did not enjoy the lesson, while 6 (11%) felt unsure. Enjoyment ranked highest of the four questions posed to the children. Of note, is that the entire older age category – boys and girls - reported that they had enjoyed the lesson. The breakdown between boys and girls) shows that 31 girls (89%) and 18 boys (82%) reported that they had enjoyed the session. None of the girls said they did not enjoy the session but 4 (11%) were unsure. The journal also reports that 2 girls in one of the schools struggled in understanding the English language which is likely to have influenced their experience of the lesson. This was also the view of their classroom teacher (Research journal, 08/06/2009). Of the boys, 2 (9%) indicated that they were unsure and a further 2 (9%) that they had not enjoyed the lesson. The research journal notes that one of the two boys who indicated that they had not enjoyed the lesson had not fully engaged with the lesson. It is possible that this boy had exerted influence on another boy who sat beside him while answering the questionnaire. This was also the view of the classroom teacher (Research journal, 09/06/2009).

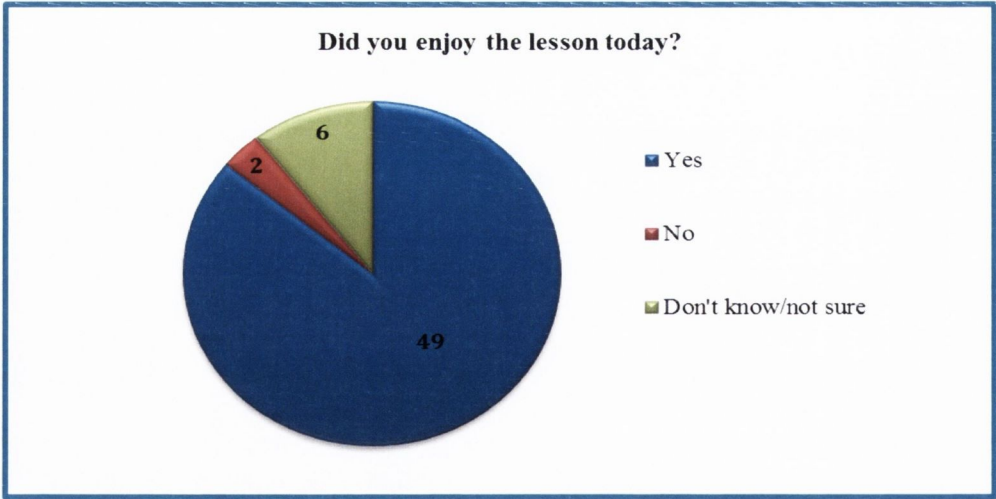


Figure 5.16: Did you enjoy the lesson today?

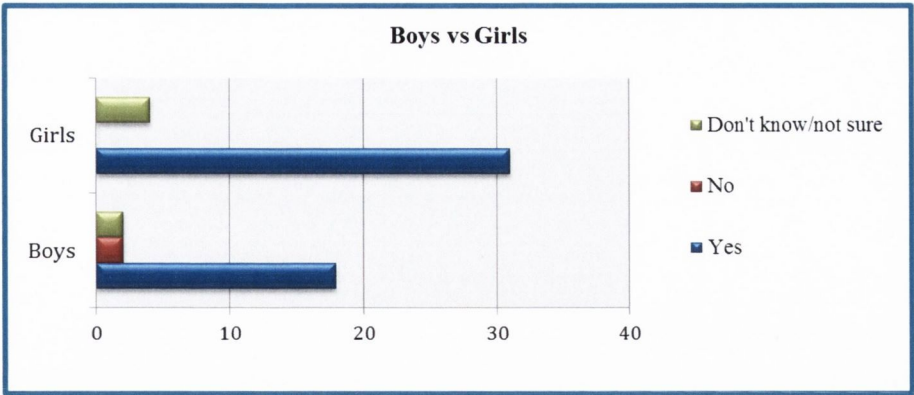


Figure 5.17: Boys versus Girls (enjoyment of lesson)

Question 4 Creative dance

Of the 57 children, 46 (81%) indicated that they would do creative dance again. Only 3 (5%) reported that they would not, while 8 (14%) felt unsure. Overall, this is a positive response and when seen alongside their responses to the previous question, presents clear and conclusive evidence of the children’s enjoyment of working with the resource and of their willingness to take part in more creative dance lessons. The breakdown between boys and girls (Figure 5.18) shows that 32 (91%) girls and 14 (64%) indicated that they would do creative dance again. While none of the girls said they would not do creative dance again, 3 (9%) were unsure. Of the 22 boys, 5 (23%) felt unsure, and 3 (14%) of the boys said they would not do creative dance again. A school by school breakdown of this question shows that the 3 boys who responded ‘no’ were members of the same class group and all were in the younger age group. All of the boys in the older age group responded ‘yes’ to this question, none selected ‘unsure’. This further confirms the suitability of the resource for the older age group.

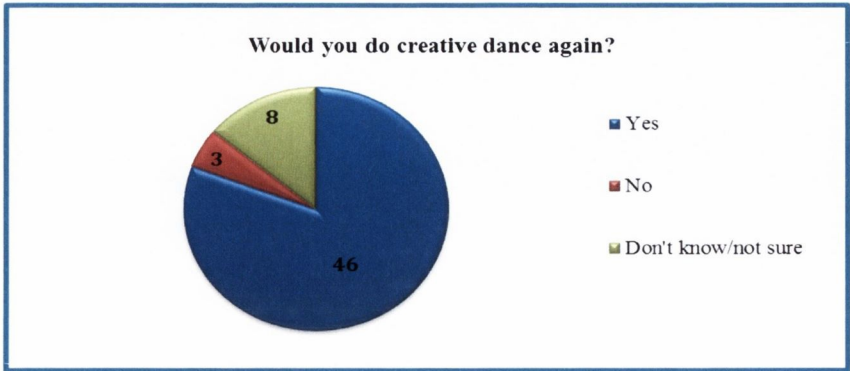


Figure 5.18: Would you do creative dance again?

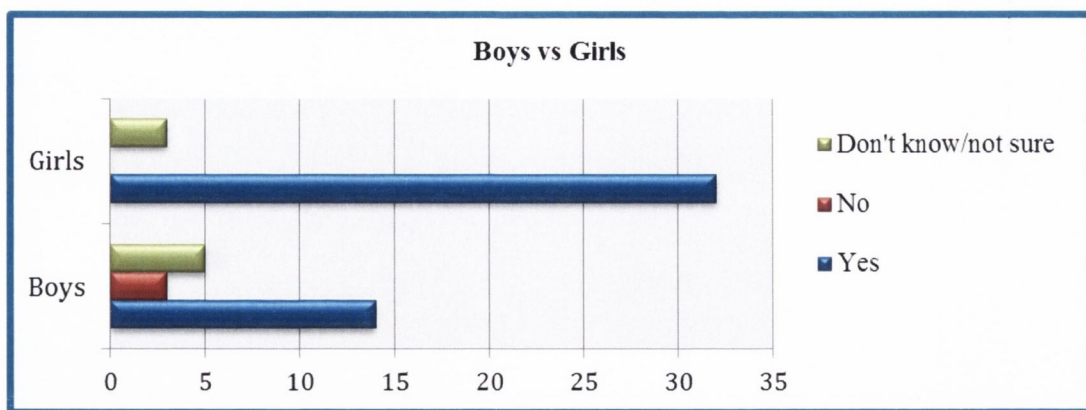


Figure 5.19: Boys versus Girls (would you do creative dance again?)

***Step Dance* CD-ROM: children’s questionnaire – summary of findings**

Overall, the children responded positively to the lessons, ranking enjoyment (86%) and new learning (84%) highest. Interest in taking part in more creative dance lessons (81%) was also evident. Usefulness of the resource in helping them to make their dance ranked lowest (69%), largely influenced by the views of the youngest children who reported the resource not useful in that regard. The school by school breakdown shows that children in the 10-12 year old age group - boys and girls - were more positive in general about the resource than the younger children. All (100%) of the older children reported that the resource had helped them in composing their dance. In terms of producing similar resources sourced in Ireland, the views of the youngest group of children - who found the resource less accessible, are of particular relevance. While accessibility was clearly an issue for the younger group, it is the case that the one 6 year old, the only one of his age in the pupil sample, reported a positive response to all four questions.

5.4.5 Interviews with the classroom teachers

Data in this section reports on semi-structured interviews conducted with NQT A, NQT B and NQT C who were the classroom teachers of the children who took part in *Step Dance* CD-ROM lessons. The interviews were carried out approximately ten days after the school visit. This allowed the three NQTs an opportunity to reflect on the experience in the interim

period. Data from the interview is organised under four headings, as follows:

- the children's response to the lesson;
- the children's response to the CD-ROM;
- the classroom teacher's response to the in-school experience;
- relevance of the CD-ROM for initial teacher education.

Children's response to the lesson

Data shows that each of the three NQTs commented on the children's enjoyment of the lesson, with two of the teachers reporting a level of surprise at the degree to which the children had enjoyed the lesson:

I had done Irish dancing. I hadn't actually gone for creative dance as I didn't think they would take to it. But they did. They were asking were you going to come back, so they did want you to come back. The thing that surprised me was that actually, the boys were definitely doing it, no problems. They did the Irish dancing, but it took a while to get them into it. I was surprised that they thought that you were coming back and that there was no problem with it (NQT A, Interview, 18/06/2009).

NQT C referenced the storyline perhaps unsurprisingly, as this was the school in which there was no ICT facility in the hall:

They enjoyed it. I was surprised with two of the girls in particular; they were really excited about it. The children wanted to know more about the story. We had to go through the story afterwards. We had to look it up - I googled it. It featured in our news the next day. They loved what they learnt about it. We'd heard about it in college, so I think even for adults it's interesting (NQT C, Interview, 19/06/2009).

NQT B's greater level of personal interest and teaching experience in creative dance explains perhaps, this teacher's lack of surprise that the older class group reported a high level of enjoyment:

The children all wanted to do more they wanted to know when you would be coming back. Certainly from the children's perspective, it's something that they like, something that they want to do, that they are very interested in (NQT B, Interview, 19/06/2009).

Children's response to the CD-ROM

Two of the classroom teachers reported a very positive reaction from the children to working with the *Step Dance* CD-ROM. NQT B demonstrated an understanding of the teaching and

learning benefits of working with the resource, particularly the virtual teacher function which is recommended in lesson plans designed for the older age group:

They loved looking at the dancers and wanted to be as good as them. I think that is a really motivating thing for the children, to see the dancers. If the steps hadn't been broken down for them they would say 'oh, we'll never be able to do that' but the fact that it's broken down, that they can follow it [virtual teacher] and learn how to manage the movements...I think that is a very important element of the resource (NQT B, Interview, 19/06/2009).

For NQT A, observation of the children's interactions with the CD-ROM in making their own dance had a significant impact, particularly with regard to the use of 'viewing' materials as methodology:

They really liked watching it, they wanted to copy the moves and make their own dance from it. Yes ...they have to see it...just talking about it doesn't cut it, they have to see it. It's like talking about music without hearing it. You can talk about it after (NQT A, Interview, 18/06/2009)

Understandably, NQT C focussed on the difficulties of not having access to ICT in the school hall and while this was a problem on the day of the visit, this teacher was solutions focussed rather than dismissing the use of digital resources:

They did like seeing it on the interactive board. Not all schools will have a white-board in the hall, or in the classroom. I don't think many schools would even have a laptop they could upload the resource on to. They'll have a telly though, and a DVD player and a trolley that they can bring into each class. Surely they could change the technology to have it [Step Dance] as a DVD. I think schools would [buy it] and should, if you have someone in the school who knows how to use it (NQT C, Interview, 19/06/2009).

Classroom teachers' response to the school visit

Each of the NQTs commented on whether and how the in-school practice experience had impacted on their own dance teaching practice. NQT A and NQT B had both taught a dance class in the period between the visit and the interview. In School B, a projector had been made available for the visit and regrettably, this was not available for the subsequent lesson. Not surprisingly therefore, NQT B highlighted the difficulties of not having ICT equipment in the teaching space:

I used my own work with them, the course assignment, because the format was very similar. I used my own resource, a piece called 'the Quest' from Northern Ireland Dance United. This was probably not right at all, but I had to do the [viewing] work in the classroom, we'd go back upstairs and watch it on video and back down, you know (NQT B, Interview, 19/06/2009).

NQT B's reflections on the experience of working with a visual resource brought an awareness of how guided viewing can contribute to dance learning; reference to 'compose and view' and 'perform' demonstrates a good understanding of the dance as art approach:

If I do dance again with them, I'd make sure that I had something for the children to look at. Before, I would just teach the movements and let everyone compose and view each other and perform...and you know you could say to them 'oh but you might have seen Happy Feet and what kind of moves do you remember from that...' but they have to actually see it again, and analyse it (NQT B, Interview, 19/06/2009).

In the case of NQT A, data shows that the experience of observing the lesson with the children had an unexpected outcome. As mentioned earlier, this teacher had not taught creative dance before. Prompted by the children's response to the lesson and CD-ROM, NQT A taught a lesson in the following week. The use of 'we' suggests good engagement on the part of the teacher and reference to a 'beginning, middle and end' suggests some understanding of how to achieve 'a complete dance', which is the main learning outcome of the midway model approach. Having access to an interactive whiteboard in the teaching space is likely to have contributed to a successful outcome for this teacher:

I tried my assignment out on my class, the same class. It did go well...I used Fat-boy Slim's 'Crazy'. I showed it on the whiteboard as well. I downloaded it onto real player on my laptop. I showed it to them, and then we made individual pieces, and then we put it all together. Yes, there was loads of stuff going on and they wanted to try the moves straight away, they didn't want to wait. I should have known. There's a simple structure to it – a starting point, middle and end and joining the moves together - transitions and moves, that's it (NQT A, Interview, 18/06/2009).

While NQT C did not teach dance in the time between the visit and the interview, this teacher had reflected on the implications of incorporating viewing materials into creative dance lessons:

The schools have no 'youtube' so what could you show them? There's very little you could show them and how would you show it? So yes, when I thought about buying the resource, you would have to be somebody who's familiar with the resource and knows the whole format of creative dance because without that, you wouldn't really know how to use it. I know you'd follow the lesson plans but we've had the training throughout the year. All I remember of creative dance in college was 'shapes' and making different moves and then linking them together. That's not creative dance compared to this approach (NQT C, Interview, 19/06/2009).

Each of the classroom teachers reported that it would be useful to have experience of the resource as part of their initial teacher education:

The resource would be very relevant to undergraduate students because the colleges are always promoting the use of ICT and visual learning. There's so much you can go into about breaking down the dance and what you can do with the children. I think a lot of undergraduates would find that useful (NQT B, Interview, 19/06/2009).

Yes, it brings IT into the PE lectures. We never had that before. The ideas were really good and it's a different take on dance, very useful (NQT A, Interview, 18/06/2009).

It would be useful because it's something that a teacher can follow and it's a resource that they can show as a stimulus for the lesson (NQT C, Interview, 19/06/2009).

The three classroom teachers also pointed to the need for greater access to visual resources as part of continuing professional development, for example:

If it couldn't be included as part of the teacher education maybe it could be part of a summer course. It could be offered with something else, and if people have a particular interest in doing a workshop in creative dance then this [Step Dance CD-ROM] could be the resource (NQT B, Interview, 19/06/2009).

Interviews with the classroom teachers – summary of findings

Data from interviews with the three classroom teachers supports the proposition that use of a visual resource is an effective methodology in dance education. For NQT A, the purpose and use of a dance framework became clearer and, prompted by his observation of the lesson, was encouraged to teach a creative dance lesson himself. NQT B data reveals deeper learning on her part of the usefulness of the *Step Dance* CD-ROM in compositional work – ‘breaking down the dance’ for the children and teacher. While NQT C did not observe the full capacity of the resource, the work on the storyline and theme carried out in the classroom prior to the dance lesson had a subsequent impact on her classroom practice. All three classroom teachers supported the use of visual resources as part of initial teacher education. Two of the teachers raised concerns about the availability of ICT facilities in primary schools and teacher competency in technology-based resources, further highlighting this as an issue in use of the CD-ROM. This section reported the views of three NQTs who had completed the B.Ed.IV dance module in year two of the study, and had allowed the

researcher to teach a lesson with the resource in each of their schools. Data presented in section 5.5.1 reports on a dance module participant, referred to as NQT D, who completed the B.Ed.IV module in year three of the study. NQT D based her undergraduate dissertation on use of the CD-ROM resource in a school setting and, therefore, had studied the midway model in greater depth. Where relevant, links are made between NQT D data and the experiences of the three classroom teachers.

5.5 Data from B.Ed.IV undergraduate dissertations of relevance to this study

Table 5.7:
B.Ed.IV undergraduate dissertations of relevance to this study

NQT	Academic year	Title of undergraduate thesis
NQT D	Year three 2009-‘10	<i>An examination of the attitudes of children between the ages of ten to thirteen years to dance education</i>
NQT E	Year three 2009-‘10	<i>Are the aims for Dance as outlined in the PE curriculum achievable when teaching dance to boys in disadvantaged schools</i>
NQT F	Year two 2008-‘09	<i>Creative Dance – expressive movement or authentic art form? An investigation into whole school attitudes towards creative dance within the Physical Education syllabus</i>
NQT G	Year two 2008-‘09	<i>An investigation into the delivery of the Physical Education Curriculum in selected primary schools</i>
NQT H	Year two 2008-‘09	<i>Is Physical Education being implemented to its potential within the Irish Primary School Curriculum?</i>

In the timeframe of this study, a total of 532 NQTs submitted a B.Ed.IV undergraduate dissertation. Of these, only 5 (0.9%) NQTs selected topics related to the physical education curriculum. This section presents data of relevance to my study from these 5 dissertations. In addition to NQT D, 2 others, referred to here as NQT E and NQT F, focussed on the creative dance strand. Another 2, NQT G and NQT H, based their study on the physical education programme overall. Data on NQT D’s dissertation is presented in section 5.5.1. Data on the remaining 4 dissertations is presented in section 5.5.2.

5.5.1 NQT D - undergraduate dissertation and interview data

NQT D completed the dance module in 2010 and graduated with a first class honours in both the dance module and the B.Ed.IV course overall. Her undergraduate dissertation was supervised by the researcher and submitted in July 2010. The study found that children's attitudes towards dance education were determined by three main factors – the school environment; the class teacher; and the children's interest in dance. With regard to the latter, the study proposed that appropriate use of popular culture could be a positive influence. The study implemented the lessons from Unit 2 (for pupils 9-11 years) of the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource pack. All recommended elements for the three lessons - dance frameworks, lesson plans, teaching points, teacher/pupil resource sheets and CD-ROM viewing material, were utilised by NQT D for the study. The lessons were taught in an urban primary school with a mixed gender class of 24 pupils aged between 10 and 12 years. A semi-structured interview with NQT was conducted in September 2010, based on the findings of the study. Data from the interview and dissertation are presented under the following two headings:

- experience of using the *Step Dance* CD-ROM; and
- relevance of the *Step Dance* CD-ROM for initial teacher education.

Experience of using the *Step Dance* CD-ROM

Data shows that 18 (75%) of the 24 children enjoyed all elements of the three lessons, while 4 (17%) enjoyed most of the elements. There were 2 (8%) children who did not enjoy any elements of the lessons. The reason given by these two children was that they had no interest in dance. The 22 children who enjoyed all or most of the lessons identified 'making their own dance' as the most enjoyable aspect. The 4 children who enjoyed only parts of the lessons identified the 'wild child' story and the virtual teacher function - which they described as 'moving too fast', as the parts they did not like (NQT D, B.Ed.IV Dissertation, 2010). The virtual teacher function shows a dancer demonstrating specific skills and short motifs with a 'voice-over teacher' giving teaching points. The function was designed to assist non-specialist teachers with the physical skills included in the teaching materials for fifth and

sixth classes. However, NQT D reports that she needed to provide additional assistance to some of the children when using this function of the resource. The researcher's own experience of using this function of the resource with dance module participants supports this view. Teacher support was needed for module participants who had no previous experience of dance techniques and/or were not adept in following visual instructions (Research Journal, 16/04/2009). This was also the case when working with the older children in School B (Researcher field notes, 09/06/2009). Providing assistance with the skills displayed should not be an issue for an experienced dance teacher, as the content is drawn from the standard contemporary dance vocabulary. However, not all children and teachers with experience in dance are also skilled in following visual directions. Therefore, it is likely that use of the visual teacher function in most educational settings will require some degree of assistance from the teacher. NQT D's study determined that use of the virtual teacher function by non-specialist teachers with little experience in dance would be demanding. NQT D noted that similar dance content had been covered as part of the B.Ed.IV dance module, and observed that while she was able to assist the children with the movements, teachers with less confidence in dance and who had not participated in specialist training might not be able to provide this support:

If the teacher had been nervous and uncertain about how to approach the dance, the children may have lost interest and feel overwhelmed. It is imperative that serious consideration is given to the type of resources being considered for use in the dance lesson (NQT D, B.Ed.IV Dissertation, 2010, 31-32).

Interview data demonstrates a particular emphasis on allowing sufficient time to prepare the three lessons, as additional time was required to become familiar with the resource:

It does lay it out well for you, but there's a lot of content in it and you wouldn't want to think this is only going to take an hour, it took longer than I'd planned (NQT D, Interview, 22/09/2010).

In addition to planning time, NQT D found that many of the elements to be covered in the 35 minute lesson plans took longer than the timings indicated in the resource handbook. In addition, management was not always straightforward. As reported elsewhere, there were

considerable technical and practical demands when using the CD-ROM in technology poor environments. NQT D's classroom had an interactive whiteboard but not in the hall. As the classroom was judged to be large enough for dance, chairs and tables were removed from the classroom for the lessons. In addition to practical issues, some technical difficulties were encountered:

In the first lesson I experienced a problem with the programme. Dragging the pointer to bring it to a certain point, it went straight back to the start and I wanted to bring it to a different part so that was kind of difficult to deal with. You definitely need to go through it yourself with the laptop first, you can't just upload it and use it with a class straightaway (NQT D, Interview, 22/09/2010).

NQT D was a regular and confident user of ICT in the classroom but she reported that she hadn't used software akin to the *Step Dance* CD-ROM. Therefore, first-time use of the resource by a teacher less technologically skilled might be daunting. For example, the researcher reports that in the first year of the study, skilful manipulation of less complex, non-interactive ICT 'viewing' resources took a number of months for her to master, and was initially burdensome (Research journal, 09/12/2007). The CD-ROM, while providing many more viewing and audio possibilities than the DVD footage, added considerably to planning time and to the management and coordination of ICT inputs during the practical work. The *Step Dance* resource pack was implemented by the researcher for the first time as part of the B.Ed.IV dance module almost 18 months following purchase (Research journal, 22/02/2008). It is possible that a teacher already competent in the use of interactive ICT resource-based methodologies may have the skills and confidence to work with the CD-ROM without a long lead-in time. While this was the case in the study undertaken by NQT D to a degree, some technical issues were still reported. NQT D concluded that she would use the resource again but qualified this by adding that a more selective approach would be adopted:

I wouldn't do everything exactly as it says in the book (NQT D, Interview, 22/09/2010).

While challenges were encountered with some elements of the CD-ROM, data from the study suggests that dance as art concepts, which underpin the principles and practices advo-

cated in the resource, are relevant to the Irish context:

Children are exposed to the creativity of dance and use of their imagination as well as appropriate aspects of the professional model where the focus is on technique, skill and artistry. The model's three-stranded approach allows children to create, perform and view dance. This broader approach allows children to develop their own attitudes, positive or negative, to dance (NQT D, B.Ed.IV Dissertation, 2010, 7-8).

Relevance of the *Step Dance* CD-ROM for initial teacher education

Interview data reveals that NQT D recommended use of the resource with student teachers, as did the three classroom teachers, as presented in section 5.5.2. However, NQT D adds the caveat that the resource should only be made available during the final year of teacher education programmes. Reasons reported are that the resource is too prescriptive and could dissuade student teachers from developing the knowledge and skills necessary to create their own teaching materials for dance:

... because they're not very confident in teaching dance, they might say this is it, this is the way I have to do all my lessons, you mightn't want teachers to feel that that's the only way to plan (NQT D, Interview, 22/09/2010).

With regard to visual resources per se, the dissertation pointed to an over reliance on the part of some teachers on television musicals such as 'High School Musical' and 'America's Next Dance Crew' to accompany dance lessons. NQT D expressed the view that while children's interests in popular culture might be usefully explored in developing positive attitudes to dance, over-dependence on music from television and popular DVDs holds back teacher creativity and 'runs the risk of lessons becoming tedious and out of date' (NQT D, B.Ed.IV Dissertation, 2010, 12). Exposure to a range of dance frameworks which used viewing materials from various dance styles, including popular idioms, was identified by NQT D as an important experience:

The [DVD] resources were very good and easy to work with. I don't think you're going to become dependent on those ideas because it's not laid out step by step. You're being creative. It's nicer to be able to think up ideas ourselves or build something from your own topic or theme. If you can have the experience of doing out your own dance frameworks, then bring in the 'wild child' as another way of doing it, as a resource that's available to teachers, that's a better way (NQT D, Interview, 22/09/2010).

For NQT D, the ability to develop teaching materials for dance on their own initiative is important in building teacher confidence in dance. Teacher confidence was identified as the biggest barrier to teaching dance in schools by the NQT cohort. Similarly, the NQT D study found that teacher attitude was an important factor influencing children's attitudes to dance, and was identified by the entire NQT cohort as a serious barrier to dance in schools. The relationship between teacher confidence and teacher attitude is highlighted in NQT D's dissertation in an interview with the school principal. According to the principal:

One of the main challenges facing teachers is that they lack confidence in themselves. Some teachers feel they have to be a dancer in order to teach dance effectively. More often than not, this negativity can transfer onto the children. A positive attitude needs to be fostered and developed in order to teach an effective and enjoyable dance lesson (NQT D, B.Ed.IV Dissertation, 2010, 32).

NQT D dissertation and interview data – summary of findings

NQT D data revealed that even for regular users of technology in the classroom, technical and practical demands were encountered when using the CD-ROM. In particular, use of the 'virtual teacher' raised questions about the accessibility of this function by non-specialist teachers, particularly teachers without an experience of dance technique. NQT D had completed two terms of the dance module before undertaking the in-school practice element for her study and was familiar with the content demonstrated. Teachers with less knowledge and skills in dance might not be able provide the support needed in using this function. Lack of teacher knowledge and skills in dance education was identified by the NQT cohort as a very serious barrier to teaching dance in schools and in NQT D data, was linked to teacher confidence in teaching dance. Use of the resource in initial teacher education was recommended in the final year, as earlier use could dissuade student teachers from developing their own teaching materials - seen as important in building teacher confidence in dance. Exposure to a range of dance frameworks and viewing materials from various dance styles, including popular idioms, was recommended in advance of work with the CD-ROM resource.

A good level of knowledge and understanding of the midway model is evident in the data. The experience gained during the dance module is likely to have been a contributory factor in NQT D's decision to explore the *Step Dance* CD-ROM with a class group. Of note, is that dance as art concepts and principles advocated by the resource, were thought relevant to the Irish context. NQT D data suggested interrelatedness between knowledge and skills in dance education, confidence in teaching dance, and teacher attitude towards dance. The importance of these factors in influencing the outcome of whether and how dance is accessed in primary education was highlighted.

5.5.2 Other B.Ed.IV dissertations of relevance to this study

NQT E's dissertation identified four primary school physical education syllabus aims which were explored in a disadvantaged urban school over the course of three lessons with fifth class boys. The aims identified were as follows.

- To promote enjoyment and positive attitudes towards physical activity.
- Observe, describe and discuss their own dance and the dance of others.
- Develop work within a group.
- Perform dances showing concentration and awareness.

Lesson content used in the study focussed on the creative dance strand however, teaching methodologies or resource materials used were not provided so data in this regard was not retrievable. The stated aims appear to have been achieved:

I have come to the conclusion that for this disadvantaged school and with these boys it is true to say that the chosen aims outlined in the PE curriculum were achieved during the three dance lessons taught. Although, all aims were not achieved by all boys in the class (NQT E, Dissertation, 2010, 32).

Of interest here, is an interview which NQT E conducted with Ciaran Gray, a primary school teacher noted for his work in the field of boys and dance. Gray was asked about differences in teaching boys and girls. He reported that while teachers are often apprehensive about teaching boys, in his experience there is no gender difference:

Many people suggest that you make dance as macho and energetic as possible in order to persuade boys to dance and that when teaching girls they adapt more

easily. However in my experience this is not the case. I would teach boys in the same way that I would teach girls (NQT E, Dissertation, 2010, 54).

Asked if teacher education courses were more readily available, would dance play a bigger role in schools, Gray responded that teacher confidence is critical to accessing dance in schools. He also pointed out the marginal position dance holds in the curriculum:

I do feel that a teacher's confidence has significant impact. If they have the confidence, teachers will approach teaching dance. Because it is only a part of the PE curriculum I feel from my experience that many teachers tend not to teach dance. If dance was recognised as a bigger part of the curriculum, and there were more courses available for teachers, then dance might have a bigger role to play in schools (NQT E, Dissertation, 2010, 57).

NQT F's dissertation explored whole school attitudes to creative dance from the standpoint of querying its location within the physical education syllabus. Of particular relevance here, is that the dissertation assumed a move towards dance as art and the midway model (Smith-Autard, 2002). NQT F's study asked whether and how the creative dance strand was being implemented in an urban primary school, and evaluated 10 teachers' attitudes on its positioning within the PE curriculum. Of interest is that baseline data reports that of the 10 teachers, 5 had some experience of dance and all experiences were in Irish traditional dance. The dissertation further confirmed the lack of contact with dance during initial teacher education. Of the 10, 8 reported that teaching creative dance was either 'not easy' or 'difficult'. Of relevance is that NQT F endorses a move towards the midway model however, notes the lack of readiness on the part of teachers for such a move, particularly with regard to resource-based methodologies:

Although 8 of 10 teachers questioned currently incorporate an observation element in their dance lesson, none of these include observation of a professional dance resource. Furthermore, 5 rated this factor 'unimportant' and 4 responded 'don't know', confirming that they are unaware of any value attributed to this observation element though it is a fundamental part of the 'art of dance' model (NQT F, Dissertation, 2009, 35).

NQT F concluded that a shift out of physical education would require a major reorganisation of the curriculum, and that teacher understanding was the critical issue facing the development of dance as art in schools. The dissertation recommended cross-curricular approaches,

in particular with arts education subjects, and access to appropriate dance teaching resources either through visiting dance specialists or video-based resources, seen as enabling and encouraging teacher knowledge and understanding. This concurs well with data presented earlier.

NQT G and NQT H's dissertations explored implementation of the 6 physical education strands. Of relevance here is that in both dissertations the weak position of dance in schools and in teacher education is clearly evident. NQT G surveyed 21 primary school teachers on implementation; findings for dance are stark:

In the strand of gymnastics, 71% of teachers were 'unsure to not confident' in teaching the strand...The strand of dance shows similar figures with an extraordinary 76% of teachers 'unsure to 'not confident' teaching this strand...71% chose games as the strand they felt most confident teaching (NQT G, Dissertation, 2009, 38-39).

The dissertation examined how implementation might become more balanced across all strands of the physical education curriculum. Findings demonstrate that schools need to engage with elements other than games:

Teachers desired most help in teaching gymnastics, dance and aquatics, yet the majority of coaches hired [by the 15 schools interviewed] were associated with the games strand....schools need to analyse what they are doing in relation to the delivery of physical education (NQT G, Dissertation, 2009, 48-49).

Interestingly, NQT G asserts that specialist teachers are not the solution to implementation issues. This concurs with views of dance module participants presented in section 5.2.1 of this study, who ranked 'access to specialist dance teachers' lowest out of 8 possible barriers to teaching dance in school. NQT G concludes that:

The solution I feel, is not to hire in [coaches] but to focus on teacher training (NQT G, Dissertation, 2009, 48-49).

NQT H's dissertation also looked at implementation issues, with a particular focus on the aquatics strand. Of relevance to my study is that findings further confirm the prevalence of games in the delivery of the curriculum:

There seems to be a focus on the strand of games. This is contrary to the theory of a broad and balanced curriculum (NQT H, Dissertation, 2009, 10).

The separate strands, other than aquatics, do not feature prominently. However, in analysing an interview with 1 of the teachers surveyed, NQT H (2009, 46) quoted the teacher's remark on dance: 'dance can be difficult to teach, and unpopular'; and noted the necessity for 'breaking down misconceptions about dance.

Data presented from undergraduate dissertations resonates with findings reported in previous sections. Key messages emerging here strongly suggest that the creative dance strand of the physical education syllabus is rarely experienced by children in primary school and that the biggest barrier to improving this situation is a lack of teacher confidence in dance.

5.5.3 Research and practice in dance education - national context

As part of this study, an audit of doctorate registers in the five teacher education Colleges of Education was carried out to determine the prevalence of dance education research in Ireland. Contact was also made with the staff members responsible for dance education in each of the five colleges. Data suggests that to date no doctorates have been awarded in this area of research, and other than this study, no research is currently underway in dance education in these five teacher education colleges. The Department of Physical Education and Sports Science, and the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick both offer Masters in Dance programmes. Dissertations submitted include dance education topics, although according to course directors for these programmes, no doctoral research has yet been pursued in this field. The audit did not include all third level institutions throughout Ireland. Therefore, it is possible that dance education research could be underway in the national context. As stated earlier, the B.Ed.IV dance module was designed and organised for the purposes of this study and is no longer being offered. The absence of either a research community or community of practice in the area of curriculum dance is notable in Ireland. In year two of the study, a small community of five dance education practitioners met with a view to facilitating debate and discussion. The practitioners met twice, however due to pressures of work and geographic location further meetings did not material-

ise (Research journal, 14/05/2009). Notwithstanding the immense benefit gained from engagement with Brigitte Moody, Lecturer in Dance and Dance Pedagogy at the University of Limerick and staff at the School of Education, Trinity College, the absence of wider debate, together with a paucity of published and unpublished literature on dance education locally, makes it difficult to locate this study within the dance education field, or wider field of arts education, in Ireland.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the data gathered to inform key research questions arising from issues identified in my study. The next chapter identifies the major themes which have emerged from the data and offers a detailed analysis and discussion of each theme with reference to, and in consideration of the literature reviewed earlier.

Chapter Six

Thematic Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The literature chapters discussed the background and development of dance education in Ireland and explored challenges and changes in the United Kingdom which saw the introduction of a dance as art approach to the curriculum in the 1980s, an approach not implemented in the Irish context. In particular, the emergence and details of Smith-Autard's (1994) midway model was investigated with a view to informing an application of this model in an Irish setting. While chapter five considered the data gathered to inform the key research questions posed in the study, this chapter presents four overarching themes arising from the relevant literature and the data gathered. Responding to the overarching research question and the two associated questions, discussion of each of the themes builds on the evidence and summaries of findings presented in chapter five. Discussion of these themes is based on the premise that dance education in the Irish curriculum should be based on a concept of dance as art. Central to the issues raised is the apparent lack of understanding of dance as art in primary education in Ireland generally and in particular, in teacher education programmes. Themes to be discussed in this chapter are as follows:

- Teacher preparedness to teach dance as art.
- The absence of a community of practice.
- Positive response to the dance as art approach.
- Assessment of the art of dance midway model.

6.2 Teacher preparedness to teach dance as art

Findings suggest that teachers have limited awareness and understanding of dance as an area of arts education, they are poorly prepared to teach dance in school, and lack confidence in this area of the curriculum. There is a disconnect between the aims and objectives of

physical education and the aims and objectives of arts education, and findings suggest that physical education is the dominant ethos informing dance elements of the primary school curriculum in Ireland. This complicates the educational aims of physical education, which focus on ‘achievement’ in the human movement domain and social learning (Bailey, 2009); and denies the contribution of dance to arts education aims, which focus on ‘communication’ in a range of media, including human movement (Benson, 1979; Brinson, 1985). There appeared to be little alignment or integration of dance with other areas of the arts curriculum in the teacher education colleges from which the cohort of newly qualified teachers taking part in the dance module had recently graduated. Dance was frequently referred to by these participants as being a part of physical education. This is understandable, given the ambiguity of its stated position in the curriculum – as an area of arts education delivered within physical education (Department of Education and Science, 1999a).

The evidence strongly suggests that the creative dance strand retains an almost exclusive emphasis on Laban, albeit a much reduced interpretation of his 1948 framework and subsequent developments. A rudimentary presentation of Laban’s analysis and codification of human movement informs the overarching aims of the dance strand in the Irish primary school curriculum – an enjoyment and appreciation of dance (Department of Education and Science, 1999b). There appears to be minimal knowledge and understanding of Laban’s original thematic approach which provided a rationale and structure to his educational proposition. Without the boundaries within which art of movement content and ‘free dance’ methodologies were to have been explored and developed, creative dance would seem open-ended and meaningless, particularly to an inexperienced teacher, and this was the case with this newly qualified teacher cohort. Moreover, it was found that most of the cohort had not encountered creative dance as part of their own school experience and few were regular attendees or participants in dance activities. Conceptual understanding of dance overall was poor and there was little appreciation of art form processes and traditions apparent within the cohort. The presentation of dance in undergraduate teacher education programmes

appears to lack intellectual enterprise or challenge, as does the physical experience. Acquisition of physical skill is focussed on simple folk dance steps and patterns. Attainment of a technical vocabulary in either art of movement or more contemporary dance idioms appears to be unimportant. The national organisation representing the primary school teaching profession (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2007) concluded that teachers are poorly prepared in the area of dance, posing challenges for the colleges of education and continuing professional development. In the five main teacher education colleges, it seems that neither the practical or theoretical complexities of dance surface in the student teacher's experience of dance education. The rich heritage of folk traditions, theatre dance idioms or, importantly, of developments in dance education of relevance to the Irish curriculum, do not inform initial teacher education programmes. Moreover, there is little evidence of attention being given to the potential role and contribution of dance to the wider curriculum priorities identified. For example, it seems that the use of digital technology and cross-curriculum strategies are not implemented in dance programmes as part of initial teacher education. Experience in New Zealand (Melchior, 2011) found that generalist teachers who have sufficient knowledge and skills in dance as art processes and practices are able to make connections across and within the curriculum. This enables them to meet the aims of the dance syllabus and devise teaching and learning strategies which use dance in an integrated context. However, in order to explore linkages and strategies within and across the curriculum it is first necessary to understand the capacities of dance in this regard. Limited engagement with dance as an educational force in its own right, or as part of an integrated approach, could be a contributing factor to the dearth of academic research in the field of dance education in Ireland. A lack of research contributes to poor knowledge and understanding of educational impacts and outcomes, and maintains a situation which sees little progression in dance teaching and learning. When coupled with 'light touch' evaluation and assessment modes, the result is that children do not experience dance as a developmental learning process. From the evidence provided in this study it seems that dance is viewed in primary education as mainly, if not solely, a recreational and leisure activity.

Given the inattention to structured and progressive approaches to content and methodologies, poor knowledge and understanding of dance education, and minimal exposure to dance generally, the identification in this study of teacher confidence as a major barrier to teaching dance is unsurprising. The lack of teacher confidence in the area of dance, in particular creative dance, is starkly evident in the literature. The data gathered found that some student teachers qualify without any experience of teaching dance and for those who had – which was the majority, only some found the experience to be an easy one. The evidence shows that the cohort of newly qualified teachers enjoyed taking part in the dance module. They also considered specialist teachers as unnecessary to teaching dance in school – a perspective confirmed in the literature, implying an understanding and acceptance of the classroom teacher's responsibility in this regard. However, experience in the United Kingdom (Rolfe, 2001) determined that an enjoyable experience within teacher education does not automatically translate into confidence to teach dance as art in schools. Rolfe found that only fifty per cent of the selected student teacher sample taught dance in their school placements and of these, fifty per cent elected to teach folk dance. For those who didn't teach at all, a lack of confidence emerged as a main reason. In Rolfe's study, significant factors impacting on student teachers' confidence were the students' own dance experiences in primary, secondary and tertiary education, and the attitude of the classroom teacher towards dance while on their school placement. In Ireland, the literature demonstrates that public attitudes and behaviours towards the arts are determined by the formal educational experience (Lunn, 2008). Given the current situation of dance education in terms of the amount of time afforded to the area, the nature and scope of syllabus content, and limited availability of teaching resources, serious issues arise concerning its status within initial teacher education, and consequently access to quality dance experiences as part of arts education provision in the primary school curriculum.

6.3 Absence of a community of practice

Findings suggest that there is a compelling need to reinvigorate and re-establish the

discourse on dance and education in Ireland. The absence of debate on matters pertaining to the role and contribution of dance to education which, in turn, might generate much needed research, is starkly evident. Attention to dance education, active in the 1960s and notably active during the 1980s seems dormant since the last recorded conference on the topic in 1993 (Leahy, 1993). Of note, is that trends and developments in the United Kingdom, which previously had exerted significant influence on dance education developments in Ireland, appear not to have informed the most recent primary school curriculum. While there are clear distinctions between the two jurisdictions and different requirements needed in a dance curriculum, this suggests that expertise from abroad was not sought, and that international models of practice were not reviewed as part of curriculum revisions in the dance area. It seems possible that the demise of the Dance Council of Ireland in the early 1990s, which, *inter alia*, had a remit in education and organised summer courses and events of relevance to teachers, has had significant impact in this regard. The successor agency, Dance Ireland, is primarily focussed on the development needs of professional dance practitioners.

The need to establish a community of practice for teachers with an interest in dance is evident in the research and reflected in the researcher's experience. Unlike jurisdictions elsewhere, there is no organising entity which brings together teachers to discuss and share their practice and experiences with each other. There is little access to Irish-based professional development opportunities for teachers in the area of dance education. Opportunities to engage with other relevant practitioners, for example, dance artists with experience of working in schools, youth dance leaders, dance festival programmers, policy-makers and other arts professionals with an interest in this area, are not apparent in the Irish context. Dance is a marginal area of educational practice and there are very few full-time or part-time posts established in the field. Notwithstanding the difficulties of location and time constraints, the need for existing expertise to provide leadership and offer guidance to teachers interested in dance, and engage with the wider arts education community on behalf of dance is essential to establishing standards and maintaining quality within the practice. For example, in the

United Kingdom the National Dance Teachers Association (2014b) was formed in response to concerns arising from the Education Reform Act 1988 and the proposed national curriculum which at that time did not mention dance. Since then, the association has been actively promoting and advocating on behalf of dance education, and supports teachers at all stages of the national curriculum, and in initial teacher education. In the United States of America, the National Dance Education Organization (2014c) was formed in 1998 with support from leaders in the dance education field to address the needs of dance as art in both education and in private schools of dance. The organization is recognised among its peers as an informed voice and leader for dance education centred in the arts, and has initiated an on-going dialogue with other professional organisations and legislative bodies to address the issues and policy decisions that impact quality dance education in schools, studios and universities. Given the limited human and other resources within the dance education field in Ireland, the cultivation of a sustainable community of practice is likely to require the support of relevant parties in colleges of education, professional teacher support agencies and centres, and the professional dance community.

6.4 Positive response to the dance as art approach

While a mixed response is evident with regard to folk dance elements, findings suggest that the newly qualified teacher cohort taking part in the dance module enjoyed the course overall which, with the exception of folk dance, was based on dance as art principles and practices. Although a large majority had no prior knowledge of the concept of dance as art, findings demonstrate that module participants engaged with content and methodologies which define the ‘art’ approach. Notwithstanding the potential impact of novelty, and Rolfe’s (2001) note of caution regarding the tenuous links between enjoyment at undergraduate level and confidence in the classroom, the high levels of enjoyment imply positive engagement, connection with the materials, and significant comfort with the dance as art experiences in performing, composing and viewing. A similarly high level of enjoyment is evident in the schoolchildren’s experience of working with the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource. The children’s enjoy-

ment was confirmed by the classroom teachers in each of the schools involved. An undergraduate student in this study [NQT D, B.Ed1V Dissertation, 2010] who implemented the CD-ROM as part of classroom practice, found that the children taking part greatly enjoyed the experience particularly ‘making their own dance’, which is the main dance learning outcome of the dance as art approach (Redfearn, 1978; Smith-Autard, 2002). A structured, coherent exploration of dance as art, which yields a finished dance having meaning for both teacher and pupil, worked on either individually or collaboratively, appears to be an enjoyable teaching and learning experience as evidenced in this study. A study on the impact of collaborative engagement in early childhood education (Whelen, 2012) found that ‘enjoyment’ of dance enabled and connected learning dispositions identified in the *Aistear* framework (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2014) for this age group. The dance experience enjoyed by these young children was informed by content and methodologies promoted in Smith-Autard’s art of dance midway model. No similar research was found regarding teaching and learning criteria established for older children in an Irish context. However, it appears from findings in my own study that teaching and learning in dance as art is a viable and accessible approach for primary school teachers and pupils. Findings also resonate with the curriculum which states the aim of arts education as being to develop in children an appreciation and enjoyment of aesthetic activities including music, visual arts, dance, drama and language (Department of Education and Science, 1999a). Regarding jurisdictions elsewhere, the three-stranded dance as art approach appears to be the consensus model informing curriculum dance in England and Wales (Smith-Autard, 2002, 2010b); Scotland (Clark, 2011); New Zealand (Melchior, 2011); Australia (Meiners, 2001); and Canada (Physical and Health Education, Canada, 2014).

While not confined to dance as art, evidence of ‘enjoyment’ of dance by all age groups can be inferred from the high levels of voluntary participation found in recreational settings, in both Irish (Office of the Minister for Children, 2007) and international contexts (Hibernian Consulting, 2006). However, potential connectivity between enjoyment of dance in social

environments and enjoyment and appreciation of dance in teaching and learning settings appears to be unexplored in the Irish context.

6.5 Assessment of the art of dance in education midway model

6.5.1 The model in general

Findings suggest that implementation of the midway model in an Irish context is a viable option. However certain claims, including its contribution to cultural education were not met and certain expectations, in particular its use of technology would need adjustment in an Irish setting. Fundamental to the concept of dance as art as elaborated on in Smith-Autard's (1994) midway model is its association with western theatre dance as the primary aesthetic influence. While content and methodologies adequately address artistic and aesthetic education within this construct, limitations were found regarding claimed outcomes in the area of cultural education. The capacity inherent in art, and therefore dance, to introduce children to wider cultural experiences is underdeveloped in the midway model. In an Irish context, the influence of traditional dance was found to be a major force in dance education and, in terms of folk dance, other cultures are poorly served. While the treatment of dance in any educational framework purporting to explore the 'art' domain needs to observe the traditions and processes of artistic endeavour, in an Irish context this needs to include work deriving from, or influenced by the folk tradition. Theatrical presentations of such a nature are now available, as is the case with other heritages such as, for example, Indian and Asian traditions. The folk dance elements of the primary school curriculum were found to be rudimentary and restricted in terms of content. Experience in the United Kingdom demonstrated that a wider concept of dance as art which embraces, *inter alia*, folk traditions is a valid and viable proposal for dance as education (Adshead, 1981; Brinson, 1986). Dance education in Ireland might benefit from the inclusion of folk dance in an overarching 'dance as art' approach to curriculum planning. Links between folk traditions and artistic endeavour are easily made, the lineage of ballet for example, extends back to village and court dances of sixteenth century France (Au, 1988). Connections of this nature exist and inform other areas of the

performing arts included in the primary school curriculum for example, music. Opening up the background and history of folk dance whereby the events and occasions, the beliefs and folklore which inspired the original makers of the dances, would add greater educational potential. Folk dance might even lead the way into creative dance where in turn, heritage material could be re-imagined for present times, or new folk dances created. To paraphrase one of the newly qualified teachers in this study – dance is more than learning how to execute steps and figures, it's about learning how to communicate ideas and feelings.

6.5.2 Relevance to the Irish context

Time constraints, limitations in terms of dance expertise and a lack of teaching supports, particularly technology-based resources, suggest that a full exposition of the midway model as described by Smith-Autard (2002), is unlikely to be achieved in the short term within current dance programmes organised in teacher education colleges in Ireland. However, certain elements could be introduced in the immediate term. Dance module participants found the structured approach to lesson planning and delivery proposed in the midway model to be extremely useful, in particular its recommended use of a dance framework. Devised by the teacher, a choreographic outline guiding the work to be undertaken over two or three lessons was found to provide clarity of purpose to creative dance learning outcomes, and to provide a structure around which progression across the lesson plans, and within each lesson, could be achieved. This meets to some degree, a serious deficit found in the Irish curriculum regarding the fundamental purpose of creative dance which currently places emphasis on knowledge and understanding of Laban's movement vocabulary and excludes his thematic schema. The midway model introduces a more eclectic approach to compositional experiences, framed within the curriculum aims and objectives of artistic and aesthetic teaching and learning, in this case stated for England and Wales (Smith-Autard, 2002). The model explores artistic and aesthetic learning which draws on a range of dance influences, albeit within the western theatre dance realm. This is in marked contrast to the Irish situation which, in the creative dance strand, focuses almost exclusively on one source. - Laban. The

equivalent in music education would be a curriculum focused entirely on for example Kodaly.

Findings show that the newly qualified teachers taking part in the dance module broadened their personal appreciation of the art form. However, the least applied element of lesson planning materials proposed by the midway model was a teacher prepared worksheet used to assist children's experience of viewing dance. Experiences in guided viewing range from work composed and performed by the children themselves to appropriately selected exemplars from the professional repertoire which, within borders set by the midway model, would have a provenance in western theatre dance (Smith-Autard, 2002). Regarding the latter experience, bringing the work of dance artists into the classroom engages the children personally and critically with the art form. Critical enquiry, ideally explores and leads to an understanding of references, techniques, materials used, where the work 'sits' within the catalogue of work produced by the particular artist(s) involved, and the wider context for the work which can reach into and investigate social, political and cultural phenomena in age appropriate fashion and as relevant to the particular teaching and learning circumstances. Findings suggest that newly qualified teachers engaged with the viewing materials used throughout the dance module. Dance frameworks which incorporated footage from the custom-made DVD, seemed useful as findings suggest that some of the course participants applied these frameworks to their own practice. However, poor use of guided viewing as a teaching and learning methodology is evident in course assignments, suggesting that the module did not provide sufficient opportunities for viewing materials to be critically appraised and discussed by course participants. It might also suggest that the skills-set currently available to dance education in primary school teacher education does not include competency in this methodology or if available, is under-utilised. Experience in Ireland demonstrates the paucity of instruments available to the generalist teacher that might support critical enquiry processes to support aesthetic development in dance education contexts (O'Donnell, 2004). Research currently underway in other performing arts areas, for example, teacher and pupil engagement with and responses to contemporary theatre practice (Ni Bhriain, 2014), could inform

initial teacher education in the dance area. A more informed personal and critical appreciation of dance and its ensuing educational and developmental value, will in time impact on how dance is accessed and experienced in primary schools.

6.5.3 Resource-based methodologies

The midway model promotes a resource-based teaching methodology that embeds the use of technology in practical dance lessons (Bedford Interactive, 2006). There is little evidence of teachers in Ireland using art form exemplars - actual or virtual, instead relying on peer viewing [NQT F, Dissertation, 2009]. None of the newly qualified teachers taking part in the dance module had prior experience of working with technology-based visual resources for dance. None had used the folk dance resource available online (Professional Development Service for Teachers, 2008), which was the only accredited resource found in the Irish context. These were recent graduates, so it can be inferred that the resource had not been accessed as part of initial teacher education programmes in these three colleges of education. Findings show that access to technology equipment in dance teaching spaces is limited and display on an interactive white board is unlikely, given the lack of availability of this facility in Irish schools (Lee, 2010).

As mentioned previously, dance module participants found the DVD resource prepared for the course useful in terms of stimulating ideas for their own dance frameworks. The *Step Dance* CD-ROM was likewise, largely appreciated although the experience yielded some concerns about its use in an Irish context. While there is evidence to suggest that most of the children within the age range specified in the teacher handbook enjoyed working with the *Step Dance* CD-ROM (Bedford Interactive, 2006), the materials designed for use with the younger children proved too advanced for them to fully engage with. Materials designed for the older age group were considered relevant and effective in providing opportunities for teachers and pupils to acquire and develop skills and understanding in performing, composing and viewing dance as art. Relevancy for use within initial teacher education is also

evident. However, due its specificity, the resource was recommended for use only when student teachers had acquired knowledge and understanding of the principles and practices underpinning the midway model, in particular how to design and implement their own dance frameworks. Use of the ‘virtual teacher’ function received mixed response. While content displayed was considered motivating, teachers having no prior knowledge or experience in the technical vocabulary presented could find it difficult to support children in need of assistance – which was the case in this study when used with module participants and their schoolchildren. While not considered appropriate for use in all primary schools, largely due to lack of availability in the Irish language and limited access to ICT equipment in dance teaching spaces, a large majority of module participants appeared willing to use it in their own practice. It’s apparent that should similar resources be developed in the Irish context, they will need to address the issue of availability in the Irish language.

The absence of accredited visual resources in the area of dance education is a serious issue in implementing the midway model in an Irish context. YouTube is not accessible in primary schools. Dance module course assignments suggest that dance footage which was thought appropriate for use in the classroom by these newly qualified teachers, is downloadable, or commercially available on DVD. However, this is not a long-term or even an appropriate solution to providing quality teaching and learning resources for use in primary education. While some dance artists and companies based in Ireland may be interested in a project aimed at creating a resource similar to the *Step Dance* CD-ROM, authoring custom-made visual resources is a time-consuming process and interactive technology can be expensive to make (Leahy, 1997). A project of this nature requires leadership and funding. Developing a portal site has been identified as a priority in the Arts in Education Charter (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2013). Online resources which link art form practice and processes to the classroom is also an identified priority in proposals being considered by the Arts Council and Department of Education and Skills towards possible new supports for the performing arts within the context of junior cycle revisions (Ni Bhriain, 2014). Opportunities

for dance could arise within either context, which in turn, might inform the use of technology in dance pedagogy in Irish primary education. While the focus here is on technology assisted interaction with art form exemplars, the midway model also stipulates that live performances and visits to schools by dance artists is an enlivening and informative experience for both teachers and pupils. Colleges of education need to build an awareness of arts in education practices which can assist future teachers in their dance education endeavour.

6.5.4 Teacher expertise

The researcher's experience of using the midway model in this study suggests that effective implementation in initial teacher education in the Irish context will require a skill-set that includes considerable dance and dance education experience on the part of the lecturers/leaders involved. An examination of the midway model in this study was informed by my previous experience as the researcher. I experienced the model as part of a Masters programme in the University of Limerick, which I undertook in 2005, taught by Jacqueline Smith-Autard. I am a qualified physical education teacher with dance teaching experience at all levels of the curriculum, and have a background in contemporary dance practice, and Irish dance. Through my work at the Arts Council I am also reasonably familiar with the professional dance community and arts-in-education sector in Ireland. Experience in England (Smith-Autard, 1996) denotes a significant background, and high level of art form and dance education expertise in the formulation and dissemination of the model; and its associated resource-based approach. Ready access to theatre dance personnel with an interest and expertise in dance-in-education, and to informed, well supported services for dance educators is not the case in an Irish setting. While acknowledging the existence of good practice in Ireland, and the likelihood of at least some artists and companies willing to respond positively to opportunities for greater interaction between education and the art form, involvement or expertise cannot be assumed. In particular, implementation strategies will need to address perceived deficits in this study regarding knowledge and understanding of dance as art in the five main teacher education colleges in Ireland. Building a skill-set in physical education

and/or arts education departments capable of providing student teachers with quality experiences of dance as education and an art form, is requisite to enabling quality dance as art experiences for children in Irish primary schools.

6.6. Conclusion

Arising from the discussion, it would appear that a modified version of the midway model is viable in the Irish context. However, given the constraints identified in teacher education colleges and the limited access to continuing professional development opportunities, implementation strategies, and expectations, will need to be tailored accordingly. The following chapter offers some recommendations in this regard.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Summary of thesis

This qualitative, practitioner research study with newly qualified teachers, examined the art of dance midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002) in an Irish primary school curriculum context over a three-year period. A review of the literature provided an overview of the background and development of dance within the educational system in Ireland, and of the evolutionary processes which brought about a radical shift from dance as movement education (Laban, 1948) to dance as art education (Redfern, 1973) in United Kingdom curricula. The literature reveals that successive Arts Council reports (Benson, 1979; Brinson, 1985; Leatherdale and Todd, 1998; Marzin, 2003) pointed to serious deficits regarding the status and recognition of dance as part of arts education in Ireland. Furthermore, the marginal impact of dance, comparative to other performing arts, in the complementary area of arts-in-education policy and practice is demonstrated in more recent reports (Arts Council, 2007, 2008, 2013). While the youth dance sector has experienced some growth (McGrail, 2000; Coughlan, 2004), and the level of public participation in dance is high nationally (Clancy et al., 1996) in particular on the part of teenage girls (Office of the Minister for Children, 2007), and across Europe (Hibernian Consulting, 2006) this, inadvertently, sustains an Irish attitude towards dance which places value solely on recreational benefits. Lunn and Kelly (2008) found that the most important socio-economic factor influencing whether or not people attend arts events was educational attainment; with exposure to the arts as part of their school experience also featuring highly. Other than in early childhood learning (Whelan, 2012), potential links between high levels of ‘enjoyment’ of dance in recreational environments and ‘enjoyment’ of dance as an educational experience having potential impact on ‘attainment’ outcomes in mainstream education, appear unexplored in the Irish context.

While the influence of developments in the United Kingdom are apparent in the 1971 Irish curriculum (Department of Education, 1971), there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the paradigm shift towards dance as art undertaken in the United Kingdom in the late 1980s, did not significantly influence later curriculum reform in Ireland. Under the 1998 Education Act (Government of Ireland, 1998), a revised primary school curriculum was introduced. The curriculum presents dance as part of arts education but delivered within the physical education curriculum (Department of Education and Science, 1999a). Successful delivery of quality experiences of dance as art within the context of the physical education syllabus is problematical. The fundamental ethos of physical education is ‘achievement’ in the movement domain (Bailey, 2009). The fundamental ethos of dance as art education is ‘communication’ through the medium of movement (Redfern, 1978). The processes in each area of learning are different, requiring different pedagogical preparation (National Dance Education Organization, 2014b). Teaching and learning resources and professional development opportunities require specific tailoring to meet the needs of dance as an area of arts education (National Dance Teachers Association, 2014a). A review carried out by the Department of Education and Science Inspectorate Division (2005) reported that newly qualified teachers felt they were very well prepared to teach the revised physical education syllabus. However, this did not concur with the Inspectorate’s views on the matter which concluded that a number of newly qualified teachers had not taught physical education during the term reviewed, had no planning or preparation completed for the subject and consequently, experienced difficulties in organising pupils. The revised physical education syllabus was introduced to schools over a period of two academic years, from 2004 to 2006. Implementation was mediated through the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (O’Dowd, 2006). O’Dowd’s study on the implementation process of the dance strand found that less than one per cent of primary schools had delivered a unit on dance in 2005. The study identified three major obstacles, articulated by teachers to teaching dance in school: availability of suitable music; teacher knowledge and understanding of dance; and access to teaching resources. While negotiating the first might be achieved with relative ease, the latter two are far more complex, requiring

leadership, time and expertise to overcome. O'Dowd concluded that these obstacles warranted serious attention from primary school teacher education colleges.

Dance is one of six strands which make up the physical education curriculum (Department of Education and Science, 1999b). The dance strand comprises folk dance and creative dance which, in theory, are experienced in equal measure. However, where dance is taught as part of primary education, it is usually folk dance, in particular Irish traditional dance (Dáil Éireann, 2005; Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2007). The strong presence of Irish dance is on the one hand a positive feature, as teachers and pupils can explore and learn about Irish cultural heritage. On the other hand, its dominance over-shadows other heritage forms identified in the syllabus, and almost completely eclipses experiences in creative dance. In addition to timetabling constraints, Fitzpatrick (2000) identified unresolved tensions in concepts underpinning creative dance pedagogy in the Irish primary school curriculum. Content is rooted in modern educational dance (Laban, 1948), although terminology suggests that dance as art concepts (Redfern, 1973) informed elements of methodologies proposed. In the United Kingdom, claims made by Laban's educational framework came under scrutiny in the 1960s (Curl, 1966, 1967a, 1967b, 1968a, 1968b, 1969) and 1970s (Redfern, 1973). The term 'dance as art' was used to distinguish content and methodologies which are different from former terms associated with the Laban framework for example, 'modern educational dance', 'creative dance' or 'expressive dance' (Smith-Autard, 1996). The establishment of modern and contemporary theatre dance in England during the 1960s offered new opportunities for dance in tertiary education. New theory, which positioned dance within the aesthetic realm, informed course design in further and higher education in, inter alia, vocational and educational fields (Brinson, 1980; Adshead, 1983). Developments at third level had consequent impact on dance education in secondary and primary education curricula. The growing interest in modern and contemporary idioms brought opportunities for graduates emerging from third-level courses with specialism in dance education; for dance artists contracted on a part-time basis by companies

seeking peripatetic work in educational settings; and for companies wholly or partially focussed on developing work for children and young people (Cole, 1993). The dance as art paradigm, which promotes a three-stranded teaching and learning framework comprising performing, composing and viewing, became the consensus model in England and Wales as part of curriculum revisions in the late 1980s at which time GCSE dance programmes were also introduced (Smith-Autard, 1996). The literature indicates that the three-stranded ‘art’ approach now underpins teaching and learning strategies in dance curricula upheld in England and Wales (Smith-Autard, 2010b); Scotland (Education Scotland, 2004; Clark, 2011); New Zealand (Melchior, 2011); Australia (Meiners, 2001); Canada (Physical and Health Education, Canada, 2014); and in the United States of America (National Dance Organization, 2014b). This is not the case in Ireland (Fitzpatrick, 2000) or in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Curriculum, 2014).

This study explored the relevance of dance as art ideology and pedagogy for the Irish primary school curriculum. To this end, a model of dance education purporting to exemplify dance as art principles and practice was examined with fifty-seven newly qualified teachers over a period of three years within the context of a purpose-designed dance module, presented as an option in the Senior Sophister year of the Bachelor of Education degree programme (B.Ed.IV) organised by the School of Education Trinity College, Dublin. Smith-Autard (1976) had elaborated upon content and methodologies associated with the emergent ‘art’ model, initially related to compositional elements. She later pursued a more detailed formulation which incorporates elements of Laban’s educational framework and approaches associated with professional dance training leading to, it is claimed, an appreciation of dance as art (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002). This is achieved through qualitative experiences in performance, composition and critical viewing which, in turn, aim to contribute to artistic, aesthetic and cultural learning. The model, which also promotes a resource-based teaching methodology, was published as *The Art of Dance in Education* (Smith-Autard, 1994). Implementation strategies for primary, secondary and tertiary education are proposed in the

publication. Smith-Autard (1987) coined the term ‘midway’ as the model sought a more balanced approach between product-oriented methods associated with professional training and process-oriented methods associated with the educational framework. Ideology and methodology promoted by the midway model require access to a range of western theatre dance exemplars. The model is not interested in social or heritage dance idioms (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002). While other routes are suggested, including visits to ‘live’ performances, technology-based access is the optimum approach recommended. Smith-Autard and technology specialist Jim Schofield, trading as *Dance Interactive* a not-for-profit company originally registered as Bedford Interactive Production and Research, authored six multimedia resources for use in educational settings. These include an interactive CD-ROM entitled *Step Dance – a mini resource pack* (Bedford Interactive, 2006) which claims to exemplify the midway model in practice. *Step Dance* was specifically designed for use by non-specialist teachers working in primary and/or middle schools. The age range proposed is seven to fourteen year olds. In each of the three years of this study, a dance module based on the midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002) was delivered as part of the Bachelor of Education fourth year course organised by the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin. The *Step Dance* resource was implemented as part of the B.Ed.IV dance module in Year Two and Year Three of the study; and with primary school children in three Dublin-based schools in Year Two. The CD-ROM resource was not implemented in Year One of the study.

Curriculum development is an iterative process which at critical junctures usually invites, and often requires, engagement from both subject and ‘industry’ expertise. In England, accounts of the evolutionary process from Labanism to the dance as art approach demonstrate the involvement of a range of dance education interests and expertise. Organisations such as the National Dance Teachers Association (NDTA) continue to play a vital role in advocacy and teacher development, and in providing an advice and information service which includes access to a wide range of teaching and learning resources. Accounts of

experiences in Ireland, reported in the literature, demonstrate coordinated activity on the part of St. Raphael's College and the Department of Education Inspectorate Division which informed the 1971 curriculum (Irish Times, 1965; O'Loan, 1973); and review processes during the latter half of the 1980s demonstrate joint action on the part of the Dance Council of Ireland, the Arts Council, Thomond College and the Department of Education Inspectorate Division (O'Brien, 1985b, 1986, 1987, 1990; Leonard, 1987, 1988, 1989). This type of leadership appears to have fallen away in recent times, and there is little evidence of a coherent community of practice involving the various stakeholders in the area of dance and education in Ireland since the mid-1990s. The most recent national conference focusing on dance education appears to have been organised in 1993 (Leahy, 1993). While acknowledging the existence of good practice in dance teaching in Ireland, the main findings and recommendations of this study focus on improving the seeming inaction and lack of curriculum development, and on addressing needed support for teachers interested in dance.

7.2 Major findings

- The literature revealed poor understanding of the concept of dance as art in education policy, curriculum design and in initial and continuing teacher education programmes in the Irish context. It seems that dance is valued primarily, if not solely, as a recreational activity. Therefore, children do not experience dance as a developmental learning process. This study has shown that a conceptual shift is required from dance as leisure to dance as meaningful engagement with an art form framed within the aims and objectives of the arts education curriculum.
- There is limited access to dance as art in schools. Where dance is taught, there is an over-reliance on a narrow range of Irish step and figure dances (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2007). In creative dance the focus is primarily on Laban's (1948) educational framework. An exploration of the background and culture of Irish and other European folk dances, suggested in the curriculum (Department of Education and Science, 1999c) appears not to be pursued in the classroom, or in initial teacher educa-

tion programmes. Links are not made between the creative dance strand and the folk dance strand. The literature suggests (Redfern, 1978; Adshead, 1981; Brinson, 1986) that an overarching approach which presents dance teaching and learning within an 'art' construct might encourage teachers to explore connections between the two strands, and promote a greater diversity of styles and content in both.

- Cross-curriculum strategies promoted in the primary school syllabus for dance (Department of Education and Science, 1999c) were under utilised by the newly qualified teachers taking part in this study. Strategies explored as part of the dance module were well received. However, experience in New Zealand (Melchior, 2011) suggests that it is unlikely that the full potential of dance in such strategies will be fully realised in Irish classrooms until primary school teachers gain sufficient proficiency in dance and dance pedagogy.
- There appears to be little academic interest in dance education in the Irish context. Developments in the United Kingdom and elsewhere have been documented in, for example, practical handbooks and guidelines, conference proceedings, research papers and publications on dance and education. Such endeavour contributes to the ongoing discourse and, importantly, to further research, further challenge and further change in practice. In Ireland, the literature in the field of dance as education is limited. Materials that do exist are mostly unpublished, spread across a number of agencies and sources, and relatively difficult to locate.
- While modification is needed, this study found that an application of the art of dance midway model (Smith-Autard, 1994, 2002) appears to be viable in the Irish context. This view is further supported in the literature (Fitzpatrick, 2000; O'Dowd, 2006; Gray, 2007).
- Findings demonstrate that the newly qualified teachers who took part in this study engaged with content and methodologies which define the 'art' approach. Although they had no prior knowledge or experience of the 'art' approach, the high levels of enjoyment reported imply significant comfort with dance as art experiences in per-

forming, composing and viewing. A similarly high level of enjoyment was evident in the school children's experience of the midway model. The most enjoyed aspect reported on by children who took part in a B.Ed. IV study [NQTD dissertation, 2010] was 'making their own dance', which is the main dance learning outcome identified in the midway approach.

- Of note, is the effectiveness of a teacher prepared dance framework which aims to provide non-specialist teachers of dance with a structured approach to lesson planning in dance. This study demonstrated that a predetermined choreographic structure having 'a beginning, middle and end' provided the newly qualified teachers with an accessible means of designing and enabling meaningful and coherent dance as art experiences for their children.
- The necessity for teachers to have access to dance as art teaching and learning exemplars was shown, ideally in technology-based formats. There is no coordinated or consistent approach to the development and dissemination of visual resources for dance education that are specifically designed for use in Irish primary schools. Accredited resources for folk dance are limited and few, if any, exist for creative dance. Resources appear randomly selected, reflecting teachers' personal preferences rather than curriculum aims and objectives. While every effort was made to align visual resources used in this study with the aims and values of the primary school curriculum, with the exception of folk dance (Professional Development Service for Teachers, 2008) they were not drawn from accredited or recommended listings for use in schools.
- Use of visual dance resources was shown to be effective in stimulating dance ideas with children, and for demonstrating dance skills when working with older age groups. Although, usage for purposes of critical enquiry appeared to be less understood or appreciated, as demonstrated by the poor application of a teacher prepared guided viewing worksheet in course assignments. The development of dance as art exemplars in the Irish context would need to give attention to teaching and learning

methodologies which enable greater interplay between ‘viewing’ and ‘making’/‘doing’ dance.

- While this study found the midway model to be workable, certain claims appeared to be over-stated, in particular with regard to its efficacy in the area of cultural education (Doyle, 2003) which was not borne out in this study. In addition, expectations regarding the use of technology-based resources need to be adapted within an Irish context, largely due to the unavailability of equipment in Irish schools (Lee, 2010; Johnston, 2014).
- Furthermore, it was found that the researcher’s knowledge and experience of theatre dance, and of having taught dance at all levels of the curriculum, together with previous engagement with the midway model as part of a Masters programme in dance, were requisite to achieving this examination of the midway model in practice. Without such an extensive experience in dance, Irish teachers considering using the midway model in their classroom practice would require at least six months in-service education prior to being able to use the model and the associated technology effectively.

7.3 Recommendations

As a result of conducting this study, five recommendations are proposed, each of which aims to embed the concept of dance as art in the Irish primary school curriculum. The five recommendations have potential impact on the policy environment and more specifically, on classroom practice in the area of dance education. The importance of collaborative action is emphasised - between arts and physical education departments, between colleges of education and dance expertise in other educational institutions, between artists and educators, between the dance education sector and wider arts and education sectors, and between practice in Ireland and international dance education practice of relevance to developments in the Irish context. At the heart of these recommendations is the wish to ensure quality dance experiences for teachers as part of initial and continuing teacher

education programmes, which might, in time, impact positively on how children experience dance as part of their primary education.

7.3.1 Dance as art in the primary school curriculum

The first and overarching recommendation of this study is to embed dance as art in the primary school curriculum. The 1999 primary school curriculum established dance as part of arts education with responsibility for its delivery retained within physical education. In many international jurisdictions including England, Wales, Canada and the United States dance has developed as a discrete area of practice in third-level education and retained within physical education in primary and secondary education. However, curricula demonstrate that in these jurisdictions dance is understood and delivered as an area of arts education. These countries have, and continue to work on clarifying and resolving tensions that exist between the two disciplines. In some jurisdictions, for example, Scotland and New Zealand, dance is presented as teaching and learning in an art form at all levels. While it is unlikely that dance as a separate subject will be realised in the Irish curriculum in the immediate future, it is recommended that reform should be sought under the next Education Act. As in Scotland and New Zealand, dance education should be situated and delivered as part of the arts education curriculum. In the interim it is recommended that revisions to the current curriculum, from early childhood upwards to secondary level, should consult ‘art’ models applied in other jurisdictions with a view to giving effect to dance as art content and methodologies. Interim measures are often adopted as part of major revision, which was the case in revisions to the 1971 physical education curriculum. Therefore, the significance of incremental action should not be underestimated. Interim and major revisions to the dance curriculum should also seek a unified approach which encourages links and connections, rather than division, between folk and creative idioms. The aim here is to encourage an exploration of artistic, aesthetic and cultural distinctions and commonalities between styles, offer greater diversity, and give more coherence to the programme overall. A shift to dance as art will require that student

teachers and teachers have access to specialist dance knowledge and expertise as part of initial and continuing professional development programmes.

7.3.2 Dance as art in initial and continuing teacher education

Colleges of education should promote, develop and support dance as part of arts education. In similar fashion, continuing professional development services for teachers should also embed the concept of dance as art in course design and resource materials. A dance pedagogy purporting to be part of arts education will benefit by maintaining stronger links with other areas of the arts curriculum. While this is likely to require collaborative effort between physical education and arts education departments, the current situation which presents dance as part of physical education is counter to the position stated in the curriculum. The literature reveals support for a move towards the ‘art’ approach (Fitzpatrick, 2000; O’Dowd, 2006; Gray, 2007), which was mirrored in this study. It is recommended that pedagogic approaches described and promoted by the midway model (Smith-Autard, 2002), including resource-based strategies should inform initial and continuing teacher education programmes in the Irish context. Specialist dance input from experts familiar with the three-stranded ‘art’ paradigm, and access to exemplars which complement the primary school curriculum, should assist initial and continuing teacher education programmes in this regard.

7.3.3 Resource-based methodologies

A move towards dance as art pedagogy will require access to teaching and learning resources. Ideally, these should be accredited for use in the classroom and easily accessed by primary school teachers. Contrary to the aesthetic promoted by the midway model, it is recommended that accredited listings should extend beyond western theatre dance exemplars, incorporating wider cultural influences. In addition to technology-based materials, and as recommended by the midway model, resource-based approaches should include

engagement with ‘live’ performances and living artists. For over thirty years, the Arts Council (2008) has promoted and supported arts in education practice in all art forms and disciplines. Colleges of education, teacher education centres and professional development services for primary school teachers should encourage and support greater interaction between teachers interested in dance, dance artists and pupils to work together to create dance experiences which resonate with the educational mission of the school. Interventions may be in the form of, for example, attending a dance performance, one-off artist school visits, or more extended projects or programmes characterised by intensive engagement between the teacher, artist and pupils. Experience gained from dance residencies established in 2013 as part of a partnership programme between the Arts Council and colleges of education could inform further developments in this regard. In addition, a dedicated portal site is identified as a strategic priority of the Arts in Education Charter (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2013). Colleges of education, and/or teacher support services should ensure adequate attention is given to providing information and links to suitable resources for dance as art education, including Bedford Interactive (2006) resources. In addition, the contents of existing resource banks and materials should be reviewed from the perspective of dance as art education and any deficiencies remedied.

7.3.4 A community of practice

Curl’s (1966) challenge to claims made by the Laban (1948) framework instigated a process of development which lasted some twenty years and which culminated in the adoption of ‘dance as art’ in curricula in England, Wales and laterally, Scotland. The process also prompted the establishment of the National Dance Teachers Association (2014b), which in similar fashion to the National Dance Education Organization (2014c) in the United States of America, supports and promotes dance as art education. Since the demise of the Dance Council of Ireland in the mid-1990s leadership in the fields of dance education and dance in education in Ireland appears to have fallen away. The cultivation of a community of practice organised by and for teachers interested in dance, which might share expertise and resources,

encourage professional development and debate, create local, national and international strategic alliances, and advocate on behalf of dance education, is recommended. In the absence of a representative body, one or all of the relevant stakeholders should offer leadership, at least initially, in this regard. The relevant partners would include the five main colleges of education, teacher representative organisations, teacher support services, and teacher education centres. The involvement of dance personnel from the University of Limerick in the areas of dance pedagogy, contemporary dance practice and Irish traditional dance practice is strongly recommended. Initial steps taken should also include members of the professional dance sector with an established track record in the field of dance-in-education. While the outcome of initiatives cannot be pre-determined, it is possible that supports might emerge which would provide regular and sustainable services for teachers interested in dance, including opportunities to engage with dance as art approaches, and further exploration of the midway model. Arts Council bursaries and travel awards for artists and arts educators, which support opportunities for professional development, are underutilised in the dance education field. An emerging community of practice might seek funding support to for example, bring in international experts, or attend dance education events and conferences abroad that might develop expertise in dance as art education. In time, dance educators should seek membership or representation in Irish-based arts-in-education networks such as the newly launched 'Encountering the Arts in Ireland' advocacy organisation with a view to increased visibility and contributing a dance as education perspective to the wider arts education, arts-in-education, and youth arts policy and practice environment.

7.3.5 Research compendium

It is recommended that a compendium of studies, papers, articles and other extant documentation of relevance to dance and dance pedagogy as part of arts education in the Irish context should be prepared by an appropriate editorial team. A resource of this nature might provide the groundwork and/or prompt further research and/or dissemination, and might also provide a central reference point for advocacy and policy development.

7.4 Limitations of the study

While in general this study achieved its aims inevitably it also had some limitations. Some of these were inherent in the design and others arose due to external circumstances and constraints. Although every effort has been taken to ensure that the study has been conducted as objectively as the situation allowed, the researcher acknowledges that her own values, stance, and behaviour may have influenced the interpretation and evaluation of findings and recommendations. The nature, size, location and circumstances of the sample population, which was self-selecting, was small (11% of the student population registered for the B.Ed.IV course in the timeframe of the study). The fact that the study was university-based, and the participants were following an accredited dance module, may also have been limiting factors. A larger sample taking part as a required course element or in an unaccredited continuing professional development context, and a location based outside of a formal educational ethos may have resulted in different results. Moreover, it could be said that the researcher's involvement as module coordinator might have led to bias. However, as the B.Ed.IV programme is no longer offered by the School of Education this, together with the time span between the field work and submission of this thesis reduces prejudice. The dearth of research available on dance education in the Irish context is considered a limitation. Comparison with experience internationally and an in-depth investigation into the background and development of the field in Ireland may have addressed some of the limitations, however, this 'breadth and depth' approach cannot mask the need for further research in the Irish context which is starkly evident. An exploration of the *Step Dance* resource in two, rather than the three years allocated to the study was a limiting factor. The larger numbers involved in years two and year three of this study, together with the findings from the in-school practice may have offset some of the limitations, however again, reports of other experiences with technology-based resources in an Irish context, which were not discovered, would add welcome opportunities for comparison. Of particular regret is the missed opportunity to explore the full dance syllabus - creative and folk strands, in an 'art' construct with the newly qualified teacher cohort. However, as the study was focussed on the midway

model, which clearly states a disinterest in idioms other than western theatre dance (Smith-Autard, 1994), module design focussed on work which resonated with theatrical production values. While exemplars included excerpts from *Riverdance* and Hip Hop, it did not reach into the folk heritage. The exploration of dance as art in the Irish context from a more inclusive perspective has emerged as a recommendation. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study design and methods proved equal to the task set by the research questions. Inevitably, the findings gave rise to further questions regarding access to quality dance as art experiences as part of primary education. These are noted as areas for future research and attention.

7.5 Further research

There is a dearth of research in the area of dance education in the Irish context. Arising from this study, it is recommended that further study could be undertaken in the following areas.

- Explore the findings of this study with a larger sample, perhaps in initial teacher education.
- Design and pilot a dance as art module which incorporates the full content of the dance strand that might inform initial and continuing teacher education.
- Investigate the development of accredited online and/or the production of technology-based teaching and learning resources which promote dance as art education that are sourced in Ireland.

7.6 Concluding remarks

In this study, I worked for the first time with technology-based resources as a methodological approach to encouraging critical engagement with the art form in a classroom setting. The first resource I used was a clip from *Signes*, choreographed by American choreographer Carolyn Carlson for the Paris Opera Ballet. I incorporated a short motif from the work into materials developed for a session with the newly qualified teachers taking part in the first module. On viewing the clip, one of the participants who recognised the motif she had learnt

and performed was visibly and audibly excited by the connection which the methodology had enabled between her and the professional dancers, and the choreography. The experience validated both our efforts. For me, it brought the midway model 'off the page' and into my teaching practice for the first time. However, evolution in learning and teaching needs to be supported by an evolving curriculum. Neither is simple to achieve. The midway model evolved over a period of twenty-years (Smith-Autard, 1996). I am grateful to have had the opportunity to explore and learn from the work of Smith-Autard, Redfern, Curl and their dance education colleagues in the United Kingdom. The marginal nature of dance education in Ireland, and the limited size of the sector in comparison to other arts education areas represent both a challenge and an opportunity. While the sector is small and scattered, its size and scale also means that to gather together the relevant people and information sources is not an insurmountable task. It has happened before, in the 1960s and the 1980s. Debate and discussion at that time, which engaged with a range of agencies and expertise, informed the founding agenda of the Dance Council of Ireland which became the mainstay of support for teachers interested in dance until the early 1990s. New programmes at the University of Limerick, developed during the 1990s, introduced the art of dance midway model to Ireland and while a national approach has fallen away, programmes in Limerick continue to support dance and dance pedagogy. This study has built on that legacy.

The newly qualified teachers and children that I had the privilege to work with as part of my research were clear in their response to the midway model. Both groupings reported high levels of enjoyment of their dance as art experiences, and many module participants remarked on its relevancy for their teaching practice. The capacity which dance has for engendering 'enjoyment' as a context for artistic, aesthetic and cultural teaching and learning is perhaps crystallised in the observation of one module participant who reported that, while she had expected to enjoy the course, she hadn't realised how useful it would be: 'I didn't think it was going to be something that we could use in the classroom'.

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Appendix 1

B.Ed.IV Dance Module Course Specification

COURSE SPECIFICATION

Programme(s) to which Course applies

B.Ed. IV

1. Title of Course

Arts in Education (Dance)

2. Course Code

3. Level (JF, SF, JS, SS, Postgraduate)

SS

4. Course Size (hours and number of weeks)

21 weeks x 2 hours a week

5. Teaching and Learning Methods

Workshops, lectures and seminars

6. Aims and Summary

The arts permeate the whole curriculum, and are therefore central to the education of a child at the primary school level. The approach adopted in this course is that arts education is the education of a child’s artistic and aesthetic intelligence, and contributes to cultural learning and appreciation. Arts pedagogy has implications which reach all aspects of school life, contributing to discipline learning and also to pupils’ general intellectual growth and personal development. This module focuses on one area of the primary school arts education curriculum - Dance. Emphasis is placed on students’ own experience of dance, and on the curricular and cross-curricular nature of dance education.

The revised primary curriculum describes dance as an area of arts education delivered in the physical education curriculum. The dance strand reflects the current practice followed, and the cultural traditions to be explored in its creative dance and folk-dance components which aim a) to bring the child into an exploration and creation of dance and b) deepen his/her understanding and appreciation of dance. Informed by these interrelated outcomes, this course aims to provide content and methodologies for teaching and learning through the three-stranded approach of ‘creating, performing, and viewing’ dance. Particular focus will be placed on the selection and appropriate use of visual resources, including technology-based exemplars which enable the child’s understanding and appreciation of dance as art.

Specifically, the course aims to:

Provide a theoretical basis for dance education.

Extend knowledge and understanding of dance as a discipline and as an educational experience.

Develop students’ ability to prepare, implement and evaluate a scheme of work appropriate for the primary school cur-

7. Syllabus and Expected Learning Outcomes

Expected learning outcomes

At the end of the course, students should have:

- Investigated the artistic, aesthetic and cultural nature of dance in education;
- Enhanced their appreciation of dance as an art form discipline;
- Deepened their knowledge and understanding of dance in educational contexts;
- Examined and debated current teaching, learning and evaluation practices in dance education;
- Increased their ability to work purposefully, efficiently and creatively in group and individual situations with given and found movement ideas and tasks
- Increased their ability to design an effective scheme of work for their own teaching needs.

Syllabus Content

- Dance practice, appropriate for teaching contexts and suited to the students' level of skill and experience;
- Exploration of composition, performance and critical viewing concepts appropriate to primary education;
- Examination of the contribution of dance to artistic, aesthetic, and cultural learning;
- Developing safe practice; the importance of, and creative use of warm-up and warm-down ideas;
- Investigation of resource-based teaching and learning in dance education contexts;
- Introduction to the use of technology as a resource to dance education;
- Consideration of the cross-curricular possibilities, and implications, for dance education;
- Designing lesson plans and schemes of work suitable for primary school children.

8. Required Equipment

Suitable clothing for practical workshops.

9. Special Features (e.g. field trip)

Invited speakers.

10. Assessment Mode (e.g. coursework, examination, other)

There are two assessment points in this course: submission of a journal and a written assignment.

11. Method of Assessment: (e.g. essay, seminar paper, exam, etc. and criteria for assessment)

Assignment 1: An A4 size journal that accurately records and adequately reflects upon the practical experience of coursework, formatted on a session by session basis. Course hand-outs should be included and supplementary materials may be inserted.

Assignment 2: Design a unit of work (3/4 lessons) for Primary School pupils. The unit will show clear links with, and appropriate application of, theories and practice studied on the course. The unit will include selective use of resource-based methodologies and demonstrate an appropriately academic standard in both the structure and style of written work.

12. Course Mark

100% coursework
Assignment 1: 40%

13. Pass Requirement

40% overall

14. Supplemental Assessment Mode

Coursework

15. Method of Supplemental Assessment

Assignment 1: re-submission of journal

16. Pass Requirement for Supplemental

40% overall

17. Required Reading

Smith-Autard J.M. (2002) *The Art of Dance in Education*. London: A&C Black.
Gough, M. (1993) *In Touch with Dance*. Lancaster: Whitethorn Books.

18. Recommended Reading

In addition to handouts distributed during the course, students will be advised to refer to additional sources of information to complement lecture input. A recommended reading list will be supplied.

19. Subject Co-ordinator(s)

Ms. Gabrielle Tanham

20. Course Team

Ms. Gabrielle Tanham and invited speakers for sessions on folk dance and Laban educational framework.

Appendix 2

Dance Education Module, University of Limerick



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK

O L L S C O I L L U I M N I G H

Dance in Education

Module Code:
DN5105

Module Tutor: Jacqueline Smith-Autard

Module description:

This module will extend students' knowledge and understanding of aims, content, methodologies and assessment procedures relevant to the teaching of dance in a variety of teaching contexts. It will equip them with the skills to design and implement schemes of work, lessons and other dance experiences and to engage in critical debate on the nature and principles of dance education. A range of teaching methods and materials will be studied including those generated from the choreography, technique and improvisation modules that can be applied to education. The module will also address methodologies relevant to research in dance education.

Aims:

- To provide a conceptual basis for dance education.
- To extend knowledge and understanding of dance as a discipline and current practices in dance education
- To develop each student's ability to prepare, deliver and evaluate a dance curriculum.
- To introduce students to relevant research methods appropriate for investigation of dance education.

Learning outcomes:

Through completing this module students should:

- be able to engage in debate on current thinking in dance education.
- have examined and be conversant with current practices in teaching and learning in and evaluation of dance.
- have investigated the nature of artistic and aesthetic education in dance.
- have extended and deepened theoretical knowledge of dance and its educational context.
- applied knowledge and understanding to different dance education contexts.
- identified and applied research techniques appropriate for study of dance teaching and learning.

Module Content

The module will cover:

- dance practice at the students' own level to provide technique, dance performance skills, dance composition and appreciation skills appropriate for teaching in different contexts.
- application of the above to dance education contexts.
- the rationale for dance in education and consideration of ways in which dance contributes to pupils' wider education.
- an examination of ways in which dance contributes to artistic and aesthetic education.
- approaches to teaching and learning technique, performance, composition and appreciation.
- practical examples of different methods, teaching styles, content and assessment/evaluation processes.
- investigation of resource-based teaching and a range of resources.
- an introduction to use of technology to enhance delivery of dance.
- designing, writing and evaluating schemes of work and lessons.
- study of assessment criteria and examination syllabuses.
- research methods applicable to study of dance in education.

Teaching and learning methods

The module content will be presented through:

- lectures
- practical workshops
- seminars
- discussions
- viewing and analysis of resources
- private reading
- self and group based task completion.

Assessment

Task 1 (To be handed in on March 22nd, 2003)

50%

A) Design a unit of work (3-6 dance lessons) for a specified group that includes experiences in and development of:

- performance and technique
- composition and
- appreciation.

The unit should also employ a resource-based teaching methodology for at least one of the lessons and show ways in which you plan to assess the students' work.

B) Deliver a 10 minute presentation on A) above and demonstrate short examples of video, audio and/or textual resources used to deliver the lessons.

Task 2 (To be handed in with the above unit of work)

25%

Write a critical evaluation of your unit of work in light of dance education theories studied in the module. (2,000 words)

Task 3 (To be completed in July 2003)

25%

Create a teaching resource pack of four to six worksheets and accompanying materials based on the choreography developed in week one of the Summer School with Mary Nunan.

Bibliography - SELECTED READINGS from:

Books

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Abbs, P. (ed) 1989 *The Symbolic Order: a Contemporary Reader in the Arts Debate*
London: The Falmer Press
Arts Council 1993 *Dance in Schools* London: Arts Council of Great Britain
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Harlow, M. and Rolfe, L. 1992 *Let's Dance: a Handbook for Teachers* London: BBC Education
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London: Hodder and Stoughton
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Redfern, H.B. 1986 *Questions in Aesthetic Education* London: Allen and Unwin
Reid, L.A. 1983 'Aesthetic Knowing' in Ross, M. *The Arts a Way of Knowing* Oxford: Pergamon
1986 *Ways of Understanding and Education* London: Heinemann Educational Books
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2000 *Dance Composition*, (Fourth edition) London: A & C Black
1994 'Expression and Form in the Art of Dance in Education' 6th daCi
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1995 'Dance at Key Stages 1 and 2' *Teaching Physical Education at Key Stages 1 and 2* London: PEAUK
Smith-Autard, J.M. & Schofield, J.
2001 'New Technologies Partnering New Approaches in Teaching Dance' in
CADE 2001, Glasgow – Proceedings: Glasgow: School of Art Press.

Journals

- Dance Matters – National Dance Teachers' Association (UK)
Research in Dance Education
Journal of Dance Education – National Dance Education Organization (USA)

Video based resource Packs

- BBC 2 1998 *Sportsbank Special: Dance* Video containing five 30 minute programmes for secondary dance education first shown between Feb.23 and March 23 1998.
Smith-Autard, J.M. 1998 Teachers' Notes for the above BBC2 Dance Series
National Dance Teachers' Association, 1998 Video - *Teaching Dance in the Primary School* published by the National Dance Teachers' Association.

CD Resource Packs

- Bedford Interactive Productions Ltd., 2001, *Wild Child – A CD-ROM Resource Pack for Dance Education*: Dewsbury: BIP (See Website: www.dance-interactive.web.com)

Appendix 3

NQT Baseline Questionnaire
NQT Step Dance CD –ROM Questionnaire

A. RECENT DANCE EXPERIENCE

Q.1 In the past 18 months, have you **taken part voluntarily** (participated in a class or as a member of a group) in any of the following dance activities? (Please tick ☐ one column as relevant.)

Dance activity	Taken part once	Taken part 2-6 times	Taken part more than 6 times	Did not take part
Ballet				
Irish dance				
Creative dance				
Modern/Contemporary dance				
Tap dance				
Folk dance (non-Irish)				
Community dance				
Hip Hop				
Salsa				
Line dancing				
Jazz dance				
Ballroom dance				
Other dance activity (please state)				

Q.2 How many times, if any, have you **attended** a performance of (meaning gone out to attend) the following dance events in the past 18 months? (Please tick ☐ one column as relevant.)

Dance performance	Attended once	Attended 2-6 times	Attended more than 6 times	Did not attend
Ballet				
Irish dance				
Creative dance				
Modern/Contemporary dance				
Tap dance				
Folk dance (non-Irish)				
Community dance				
Hip Hop				
Salsa				
Line dancing				
Jazz dance				
Ballroom dance				
Other dance performance (please state)				

B. DANCE EDUCATION (please circle ‘yes’ or ‘no’ as relevant)

Q.3 Were you taught dance in primary school? Yes No

If ‘yes’ please write down which type(s) of dance and for how long:

Q.4 Were you taught dance in secondary school? Yes No

If ‘yes’ please write down which type(s) of dance and for how long:

Q.5 Were you taught dance in college? Yes No

If ‘yes’ was this as part of the Physical Education curriculum? Yes No

If ‘yes’ please circle the year(s) it was in and for how long:

1st year for..... 2nd year for 3rd year for

Q.6 Was there a dance elective offered in your college? Yes No

If ‘yes’ did you take the dance elective? Yes No

If ‘yes’ how long was the elective that you took part in:

Q.7 Which college did you attend? (Please circle)

Coláiste Mhuire, Marino Froebel, Blackrock College of Education, Rathmines

C. DANCE TEACHING

Q. 8 Did you teach dance as part of your teaching practice? Yes No
If ‘yes’ please write down which type(s) of dance and how many classes you taught:

Q. 9 If ‘yes’ did you find teaching dance was: (please circle one option)

Very Easy Fairly Easy Not Easy Difficult Don’t Know

Q. 10 If ‘yes’ in your opinion, did the children enjoy the dance classes you taught? (please circle one option)

Yes No Don’t know

Q.11 To what degree do you consider the following to be obstacles to teaching dance in schools?
(Please tick ✓ one column to indicate your view.)

Obstacles	Very Serious	Serious	Not Serious	Don’t know
Teacher’s knowledge and skill				
Availability of resources for teaching dance				
Teacher’s confidence				
Teacher’s attitude to dance				
Suitable facilities				
Availability of time				
Availability of specialist dance teacher				
Support of pupils				
Support of school principal				
Support of other staff members				
Support of parents				
Other obstacles – please state:				

D. PERSONAL DETAILS

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire. I would appreciate it if you could answer the following:

Q.12 Are you? (please circle)

Gender:FemaleMale

Age:18-2425-3435-4445-5455-64

Nationality:IrishEuropean (non-Irish)World (non-European)

TCD SS B.Ed IV

NQT Questionnaire: STEP DANCE CD-ROM resource

‘Wild Child’ Mini Resource Pack 1 – ‘Step Dance’

1 To what degree do you consider the CD-ROM relevant for the following?

(Please tick √ one column to indicate your view.)

Relevance for:	Very rel-	Relevant	Not rele-	Don’t
PE syllabus – dance strand				
Primary School Curriculum				
Primary School Teachers				
Initial Teacher Education				
7-9 year old pupils				
9- 14 year old pupils				

2. To what degree do you consider the story (Wild Child) accessible to the following?

(Please tick √ one column to indicate your view.)

Accessibility for:	Very ac-	Accessible	Not ac-	Don’t
Primary Schools Teachers				
Initial Teacher Education				
7-9 year old pupils				
9-14 year old pupils				

3. To what degree do you consider the dance framework (Sport Dance) suitable for the following?

(Please tick ✓ one column to indicate your view.)

Suitability for:	Very	Suitable	Not suitable	Don't
Primary Schools Teachers				
Initial Teacher Education				
7-9 year old pupils				
9-14 year old pupils				

4. To what degree does UNIT One (3 lesson plans) enable study of the following?

Enables study of:	Greatly	Enables	Does not	Don't
Performing dance (DO)				
composing dance (MAKE)				
viewing dance (LOOK)				
Music				
Design elements				
How to make a 'complete				

5 In your opinion does the resource explain the meaning of the following dance terms?

Explains meaning of:	Explains	Explains	Does not	Don't
'Abstraction'				
'Unison'				
'Motif'				
'Transition'				
'Contrast'				

6. Do you think the CD-ROM is suitable for use in all Primary Schools?

(Please circle) Yes No

Please write down the main reason why you do/don't

7. Would you use the CD-ROM? (Please circle) Yes No

Please write down the main reason why you would/wouldn't

8. Do you think 7-14 year old pupils would enjoy working with the CD-ROM?

(Please circle) Yes No

Please write down the main reason why you think they would/wouldn't

9. To what degree do you consider the CD-ROM easy to use by the following?

(Please tick ✓ one column to indicate your view.)

When used by:	Not easy	Fairly easy	Easy	Very easy	Don't
Primary Teachers					
Student Teachers					
7-9 year old pupils					
9 – 14 year old pupils					

10. To what degree do you consider the CD-ROM well designed?

(Please tick ✓ one column to indicate your view.)

Design element	Extremely	Well de-	Not well	Don't
Graphics – readability				
Imaging – ease of viewing				
Sound – audibility				
Language – appropriateness				
Aesthetic – attractiveness				
Navigation cues - usability				
Options – links with learn-				
Adaptability – for use in				
Overall coherence - con-				

11. Have you used a DVD/CD-ROM resource for teaching? (please circle) Yes No
If 'yes' please briefly describe:

12. Please add any further comment(s) you would like to make about the resource:

Thank you.

Appendix 4
Children's Step Dance CD-ROM Questionnaire
Response Worksheet

Children's Questionnaire Response Worksheet

The children's response worksheet was used in an exploration of the *Step Dance* CD-ROM resource in three primary schools in the Dublin city region, which took place in June 2009. At the end of each lesson pupils were asked by the researcher to respond to four questions with one of three possible responses: Yes, No, Don't know/not sure. The four questions posed to the children were as follows.

Question 1: Did you learn anything new about dance today?

Question 2: Did the DVD help you in making your partner/group dance today?

Question 3: Did you enjoy the lesson today?

Question 4: Would you do creative dance again?

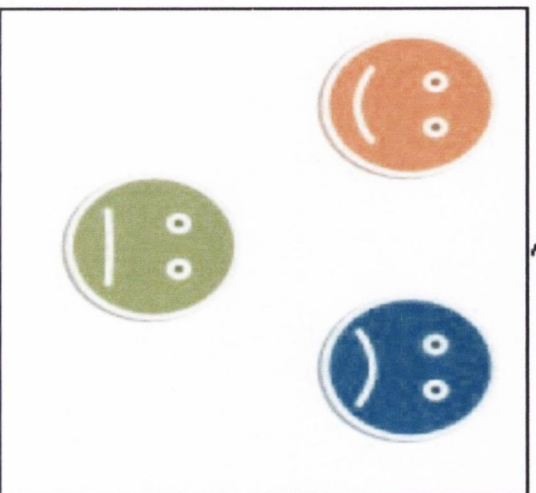
Following a discussion of each question, an age appropriate response sheet, self-administered by the children, was used to indicate their individual response to each question. For the younger children, age appropriate language was used to assist them in responding to the questions. Throughout the visits, with all age groups, the CD-ROM was referred to as a DVD as this is a term the children are more familiar with.

At the top of the worksheet two spaces are provided into which the children were asked to write down their age in one box, and whether they were a boy or a girl in the second box.

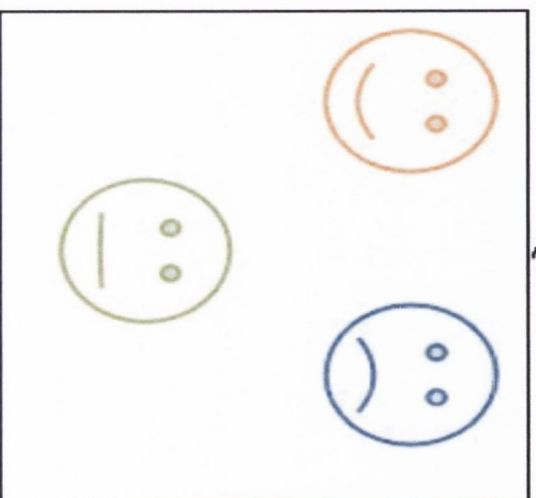
A sample worksheet is presented overleaf.

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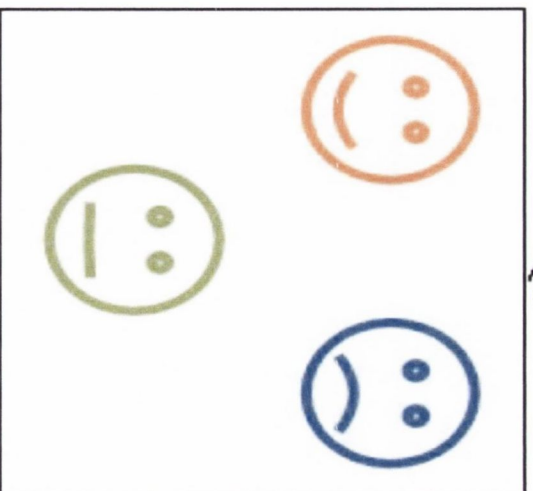
Q.1



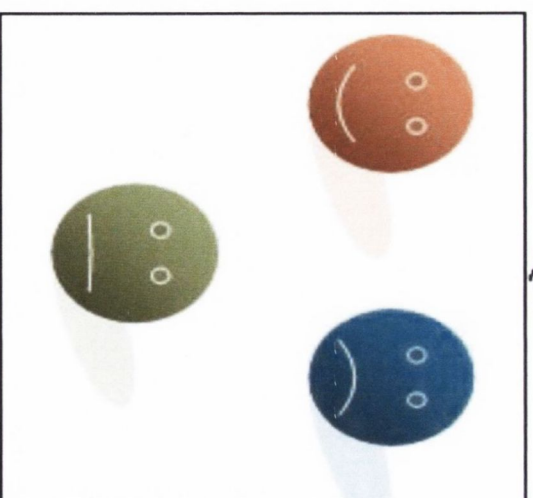
Q.2



Q.3



Q.4



Appendix 5

NQT Consent Form and Letter

Parents' Consent Form and Letter

Letter to School Principal

1st October 2009

Dear Student

I am a research student at the School of Education at Trinity College Dublin. I am conducting research in the area of dance education under the supervision of Carmel O'Sullivan.

I am particularly examining a model of dance education known as the *art of dance in education midway model* which includes a resource-based dance teaching and learning methodology attributed to UK dance educator Jacqueline Smith-Autard. This author and her colleague Jim Schofield are credited with the production of the first ever purpose-designed interactive digital dance education resource for primary schools (2006). The 1999 revised PE syllabus (dance strand) encourages the use of such resources however, these appear not to be widely used.

My key research questions are:

✦ Can approaches based on the *art of dance in education midway model* usefully inform implementation of the revised curriculum in Ireland?

✦ Can the *art of dance in education midway model* inform teacher development in Ireland in the area of dance education?

Can the *art of dance in education midway model* provide the prototype for the development of dance education teaching and learning digital resources sourced in Ireland?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. All information you provide will be considered confidential and your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study. However, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained for 6 years, only supervisors associated with the study will have access to data.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me by email at tanhamg@tcd.ie. You can also contact my supervisor Carmel O'Sullivan by email at carosull@tcd.ie.

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to those directly involved in dance education and the broader dance community.

This study meets the ethical research guidelines of Trinity College Dublin. However, the final decision about participation is yours.

Yours Sincerely,

Gabrielle Tanham

Research Student: School of Education

Consent of Participant

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Gabrielle Tanham at the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin under the supervision of Carmel O'Sullivan. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I understand that I will be asked to complete at least one questionnaire as part of the study and that the information I provide will be held in confidence and that I will not be identified in any way in the final study.

I agree to allow video and/or digital images in which I appear to be used to inform the research or when presenting the study results, on the understanding that I will not be identified by name.

This study has been accepted by Trinity College Dublin and meets the ethical research guidelines of the College. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact Carmel O'Sullivan at the School of Education.

I am aware that I may withdraw from the study without penalty at any time by advising the researcher of this decision.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Print Name

Signature of Participant

Dated

Witnessed

[Name]
Principal
[Name] School
[Address 1]
[Address 2]
Dublin

7th May 2009

Dear [name]

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Gaye Tanham and I work at the Arts Council as Head of Young People, Children, and Education (YPCE). I am also a research student (PhD) at the School of Education at Trinity College Dublin. My research concerns a particular model of dance education known as the *art of dance in education midway model* attributed to UK dance educator Jacqueline Smith-Autard. The model includes the use of resource-based dance teaching and learning methodologies. One of these interactive resources, specifically designed for primary schools, was launched in 2006. From my research to date, the resource appears not to have been piloted or used in Irish schools.

As part of my study, I teach the B.Ed.SS dance module at Trinity College. [Name of teacher] has just completed this module. [He/She] kindly offered to investigate the possibility of my taking a workshop with a class of pupils at your school; hence, this letter. The aim of the workshop would be to pilot the video resource with a class group. It would involve working with pupils in the 7-11 year age range for about 45 minutes. Ideally, I would like to conduct the workshop before the end of the current term.

For purposes of analysis, I would need to video the session. My study has been accepted by Trinity College Dublin and meets the ethical research guidelines of the College. However, should you agree to facilitate a workshop, I will need to attain both your and the parents' written permission. All information will be considered confidential and names will not appear in any written, or other, materials resulting from this study. Data collected would be retained for 6 years, only my research supervisor associated with the study will have access to data.

I will follow this letter with a phonecall. I will gladly answer any questions you have, or you can also contact my supervisor Ann Fitzgibbon at: afitzgibbn@tcd.ie Tel: 01 896 1292. My research contact details are: tanhamg@tcd.ie Tel: 087 679 2357.

Yours Sincerely,

Gabrielle Tanham
Head of Young People, Children, and Education (YPCE)

May 2009

Dear Parent

I'm writing to ask your permission to video-record a workshop I will be taking with the pupils of [name of teacher] class group as part of a research project I'm undertaking. I'm a research student (PhD) at Trinity College Dublin. My area of research is dance education and, as part of my study, I'm piloting a particular model of teaching dance that has been specially designed for primary schools. The Principal, [name], has given [her/his] consent. The video recording is purely for analysis purposes. All information recorded will be considered confidential and names will not appear in any written, or other, materials resulting from this study. Only my research supervisor will have access to the recorded data. The workshop with the pupils will be approximately 45 minutes and [name of teacher] will be in attendance throughout.

A permission form is given overleaf. If you wish to give your consent, please sign this and return to [name of teacher] at the school. Only those pupils who have the permission of their parents to take part will be involved in the workshop.

If you have any questions regarding my study, please contact me by email at tanhamg@tcd.ie. Or you can also contact my research supervisor Ann Fitzgibbon by email at afzgibbn@tcd.ie Tel: 01 896 1292.

Yours Sincerely,

Gabrielle Tanham

Research Student: School of Education

Trinity College, Dublin

Consent of Parent

I have read the information about a dance workshop being conducted by Gabrielle Tanham. I agree to allow my child to take part in the workshop and understand that a video recording of the session will be made in order to inform the research and study results. My permission is given on the understanding that information recorded will be considered confidential and names will not appear in any written, or other, materials resulting from this study.

Print Name

Signature of Parent

Dated

Appendix 6
B.Ed.IV Dance Module – Teaching Space

B.Ed.IV Dance Module - Teaching Space

