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Linking 'performing' arts – what can a dancer offer leaders in the business/corporate sector? Exploring movement interventions to improve body awareness, physical presence, and non-verbal communication skills in the corporate/business sector

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Dance Fellow 2005/6

The Clore Leadership Programme
Research Project

Linking 'performing arts' – what can a dancer offer leaders in the business/ corporate sector? Exploring movement interventions to improve body awareness, physical presence, and non-verbal communication skills in the corporate / business sector.

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Introduction

The overall aim of this study is to explore ways in which 'body knowledge', accrued in the researcher's life as a professional dancer, can be used to advantage others, 'outside of the studio', in leadership and management positions across a range of business contexts. With the objective of satisfying personal and professional curiosity, the following research question was pursued: "Is it possible to facilitate body learning with people in the business sector: that is, to improve movement awareness and to utilise the power of physical presence and non verbal communication through movement mastery, more effectively?"

It has been said that "*Leadership is the greatest performing art*" (Bennis cited in Halpern & Luber 2003 *pxiii*). In pursuit of exploring what a professional performing artist can offer leadership it was important to reflect on personal views around issues of 'performing'. Very early on in my performing career as a ballet dancer I was impressed not solely by the technical mastery of my role models. It was their 'style' and the extent and aptitude of those more mature artists to perform and seemingly 'own the stage' that left the deepest impressions. The way that some dancers could, with great ease, in an assured manner and relative to the part they were playing, command the absolute attention of both those on the stage and in the audience. Naturally at times this was a personal and subjective viewpoint but more frequently peers and audience could comfortably agree that specific dancers had 'stage presence'.

Throughout my career one of my greatest pleasures was performing character and demi-character roles. Finding ways, subtle and overt, to express emotion, intention and subsequent narrative. For the most, this was about decoding the signals/instructions of the choreographer, recreating relevant emotions internally, imagining what the character might be experiencing and encoding and then communicating these corporeally to an audience.

Studying for my masters degree in the later half of my performing career gave me the chance to form connections between my vocational rigour and new (for me) theoretical academic thinking. Enlightening in many ways, it was the first opportunity I had to look beyond the cloistered career of a professional ballet dancer. It led to the increased understanding of the extent that art forms are interconnected, frequently cross fertilising each other. Most importantly it gave me the chance to understand and realise the wider processes and application of the arts and their value in the lives of others. Areas of study encountered that have relevance and application to the current research include:

- Examination of dance in education and the community models, for example, the use of accessible movement analysis models (notably a simplified version of Laban's movement analysis (Smith-Autard 1994) that enabled others to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding of movement.
- A cross-arts assignment through which I chose to attempt the application of a Stanislavsky dramaturgical model, for role research and preparation, to the analysis of a classical painting. This gave me the confidence to explore using models in different fields.
- Exploring the possibilities of increasing understanding through sociology and psychology, in particular social interactionist theories of how we are all influential and influenced by interactions with significant others; and applied psychology, for example using sport models to help elite ballet dancers with the psychological demands of their performing art.

Since my Master's Degree course my interest has been in finding creative ways to dovetail some of those processes studied, with the rigour of my professional background. In essence, exploring and developing theoretically informed practical interventions that emphasise empowerment, performance, learning and creativity. The ultimate goal was to offer authentic and accessible experiences of classical dance in the widest possible way and, in particular, for marginalised groups (for example in the establishment of Freefall, a dance company of young people with learning disabilities attached to Birmingham Royal Ballet).

My recent fellowship on the Clore Leadership Programme has extended me in many ways. Most relevant to this paper has been the exposure to leadership and management theory, thinking and practice, and the opportunities to enter the worlds of administration and management, both in the arts and, to a lesser degree, the business or corporate culture. This has led to the growth of an idea that in this 'mind dominated' culture where "... the body is merely seen as a means of transport for the brain" (Robinson 2006 track 2) there might be value in the application of processes that draw on skills, knowledge and understanding related to ways of using the body and movement as a form of communication, mastered by the elite dancer.

The literature base used to underpin the current research will build on these eclectic life experiences and interests and will therefore be cross-disciplinary. Perspectives will be drawn from the following areas: philosophy, sociology, and psychology. The focus will explore two distinct but interrelated fields of study:

- *An understanding of 'presence' and how one might kinaesthetically experience and enhance it.*
- *A greater understanding of the messages we are giving and receiving in the context of non-verbal communication.*

Using an action research framework the intention in this study is to develop movement interventions that use authentic art making and performance processes and seek to satisfy the notion that these interventions have value as learning experiences beyond the Arts World that can, for example, benefit corporations and their staff. The framework tracks the planning, delivery and evaluation of three case study workshops in the corporate and business sector. The intention is to learn through experience, to be reflective and advance skills, knowledge and understanding in this area.

Why dance and business?

Art and theatre based interventions are commonly used to provide facilitation and training for those working in the business sector. Actors, musicians and theatre directors are often employed by corporations to use their insights to enhance such essential things as leadership, team-work, creativity and communication skills. The concept of 'high performance', the 'corporate athlete' and the desire for businesses to get 'the edge' is meaning that more organisations are looking at novel and alternative ways to maximise the return on their training budgets (Mackey & Mackey 2007).

The most common use of the arts in this context seems to be the drawing on dramatic expertise. In an age where there is an increasing need for funding diversification, major organisations such as the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre, are developing offshoot departments to enable them to tap into this additional income stream (ibid. p.2).

Specialist companies offering a full range of Theatre for Training products employ a variety of full-time and freelance performers with a range of skills, and they design appropriate initiatives, in partnership with businesses. Additionally, smaller organisations may offer, as part of a portfolio of management and leadership development programmes, training with theatre-based content (ibid. p.3).

Many corporate training departments regularly use Theatre for Training companies to benefit their learning programmes. The initiatives employed are regarded as supplying proactive, integrated learning which is capable of being used as key change drivers. The most commonly used interventions include: forum theatre, analogy playlets, role play, large scale events and entertainment, team- building and presentation and personal confidence techniques (ibid, Leigh & Maynard 2004).

Dance and movement based interventions are as yet rarely used in the corporate training sector. However, dance and its wider processes of training, creating, performing and appreciating could be argued, at the very least, to parallel and share many of the attributes of those in theatre practice. The potential for, and evidence of, learning in through and about dance has been well documented in the education sector (Smith – Autard 1994).

As Hoyle (2007 p.8) states:

Dance operates inter-culturally, bringing together the skills, knowledge, experience and intelligence of diverse groups...Dance is able to work, often in unusual or innovative

ways... dance can provide some excellent models of “distributed“ leadership and dance also has the capacity and the experience to teach others about it.

Dance, and theatre generally, offer powerful metaphors that can be used by facilitators to communicate, compare and contrast, desired outcomes and models (Burton & Ready 2004). In the context of dance the metaphor - ‘the whole is greater than the sum of its parts’ - relates closely to corps de ballet performances and notions of effective teamwork. Arguably, the world of the performer is an interesting one to many and presents useful analogies through which to explore concepts and alternative ways of thinking and operating.

Metaphors are understood to be a powerful method for enhancing learning and communicating ideas. They are believed to offer a way to see and understand concepts in a new light and result in fresh insights. It has been argued that metaphors and stories close the gap between one’s experience as a human being and the theories that one can create to explain one’s experience (Bateson 1979). Further, Owen (2001 p.xii) espouses that they “can be a powerful way to generate creativity and greater choice.”

The notion presented by Shakespeare that - “ all the world is a stage” - is a famous example and ideas of being ‘in character’, ‘onstage’, ‘backstage’, ‘upstage’ and so on, present an interesting way to look at the modes of behaviour people operate within in their daily lives, in informal and formal situations. Leigh and Maynard (2004) suggest another metaphor – linked to their theory that the arts generally have always offered the promise of transformation, of realising potential as indicated here:

Every day in every organisation, the curtain rises, the lights go on and the performance begins. Many companies also have to create a transformation and bring about change. They face a similar challenge of creating a kind of magic that thrills customers, employees and shareholders alike.

(Leigh & Maynard 2004 p.4)

Erving Goffman (1959), in his seminal text “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” takes the metaphor of theatre further, specifically for the actor. He uses a dramaturgical approach exploring the mode of presentation used by the actor and its meaning in a broader social context. He suggests that there are two kinds of communication, intentional and unintentional, predominantly examining changes in behaviour related to an individual’s context in ‘theatrical’, formal, ‘front of stage’ situations, and familial, informal, ‘back stage’ situations. His analysis focused on non verbal communication through different usage of the body in such situations that demand different things from the individual. Using a symbolic interactionist perspective, Goffman explored the details of individual identity, group relations and the impact of the environment. He

viewed all social interaction as a “performance” that is shaped by the situation – the environment and audience. He applied the term ‘performance’ to all of an individual’s actions that occur before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers. Whilst dancers are conscious of ‘performing’ when they move on-stage, leaders in the business / corporate sector are much less conscious of the influence they have on others when they, for example, enter a room full of workers, chair a meeting, negotiate new deals with others. From my observations, few realise they have the potential to influence others more positively through greater awareness of the power of movement and the non verbal communication that is taking place.

Presence and Physical Literacy

A highly desirable attribute or quality of the performer, which arguably impacts the individual's ability to influence, is the possession of 'presence'. Terms such as physical presence, stage presence and executive presence are used to define, corporeal impact on individuals in various relevant contexts. 'Presence' could be seen to be distinct but related to body language and charisma and arguably difficult to describe and quantify due to the subjective nature of it. It is undoubtedly a multi-faceted attribute that Halpern & Lubar (2003 p.3), describe as not simply the ability to command the attention of others, as this is merely an outcome but as "the ability to connect authentically with the thoughts and feelings of others." They see the route to presence as the personal development and awareness of explicit beliefs, values and 'self-knowing'. Thus authenticity is seen as key to the leader and manifests itself as congruence of body, voice and content of verbal messages (ibid. p.13).

Presence and the notion of connection is supported by Rodenburg (2007 p.11) through a theory of reciprocal flows of energy. She maintains that presence is essential for success in a wide variety of contexts:

...presence is the energy that comes from you and connects you to the outside world it is when you are fully present that you do your best work and make your deepest impression. Great performers work in this state... great athletes win with presence.

Rodenburg also espouses the importance of presence as a leadership quality, as illustrated in the following:

Every great communicator speaks from this place. For good or ill, great orators can change the world. The powerful leaders of countries or companies have it. ... During a crisis, presence is essential. Those they are leading will only feel safe and confident if they are connected to their leader.

(Ibid. p.9)

The importance of the body in leadership is also maintained by Sinclair (2005 p.1):

Leadership is a bodily practice, a physical performance in addition to a triumph of mental and motivational mastery.

Additionally Eatwell (2006 p.147), in the context of the charismatic leader says:

Charismatic leaders are typically seen as having great personal presence or 'magnetism' in some cases this involves physical traits.

Arguably presence is unique to the individual and with a multi-faceted and subjective inference it is difficult to define in concrete terms. However, with the view to develop an intervention to explore and enhance it, without a firm and acceptable definition this would be problematic. Therefore the philosophical concept of 'Physical Literacy', used to advocate the place and value of physical education in the national curriculum, has been chosen by the researcher for its empathy with the desired outcomes of such a practical intervention. Additionally, in its widest use it provides an interesting definition of what some might refer to as 'presence'.

Whitehead (2005) describes physical literacy as "the ability and motivation to capitalise on our motile potential to make a significant contribution to the quality of life". She goes on to add:

...an individual who is physically literate moves with poise, economy and confidence in a wide variety of physically challenging environments and is perceptive at 'reading' all aspects of our physical environment... and responding appropriately to these...
(ibid. p.2.)

Whilst maintaining that Physical Literacy will be particular to each individual and within each individual's culture, Whitehead sees it as pertinent to every human being, in order to make the most of the opportunities that offer themselves in their environment. She argues that the mind is inherently embodied despite the fact that it is all but impossible to find a way of explaining how body and mind collaborate, because "the mind is as it is because it is embodied, and the body is as it is, because it is a dimension of a 'minded' person" (p.3). She cites Clark (1997) to support the importance of this proposed connection of the mind, body and environment:

Mind, body and world thus emerge as equal partners in the construction of robust, flexible behaviours.

(Clark 1997 cited in Whitehead 2005)

Essentially Whitehead views physical literacy as a route to a wide range of positive benefits that potentially provides a foundation for the development and continued exercise of a whole range of our personal capacities (ibid.p.8).

Movement activities such as dance and exercise (routes to physical literacy) are seen by many to not solely promote holistic health and well being but to also promote positive perceptions of one's body that then can change one's attitudes to the surrounding world (Brinson 1991). Therefore, a physically literate individual, endowed with confidence in his/her embodied dimension will have a clearer sense of self and this confidence will in turn have a positive impact on the individual's global self confidence (Whitehead 2005 p.13).

Whitehead also cites Gallagher (2005) who maintains the positive impact of physical literacy on the reasoning skills of the participant and the effect that such activity can have on our processes of thought and acquisition of knowledge and understanding:

Indeed there is now a large amount of evidence from a variety of studies and disciplines to show that the body through its motor abilities, its actual movements, and its posture, informs and shapes cognition.

(Gallagher 2005 p8)

A physically literate person is also one who is effective in operating in the context of social practices, in particular, affirming it within the ability to interact and to communicate non-verbally effectively with others. Whitehead (2005 p.15) uses two complex new theories from neuroscience. Both interpretations, although in different ways, suggest that a subject reads meaning in another's non-verbal signals, not directly from the other's actions but from an internally simulated model of themselves. She cites Gallagher (2005) to illustrate these theories.

The first relates to proprioception and intermodal communication between this, pre-reflective awareness, as well as the sensory systems and the motor system. In essence the theory suggests that when a person 'reads' or interprets a meaning from another they are relating what they see to an internal representation of self 'as if' action. This view suggests that in the process of understanding signals from the actions of others individuals interpret meaning from internalised recognition of what they are seeing. They 'internalise it', 'recognise it' and 'interpret it' as though it were their action.

The second neuro-scientific theory Whitehead uses is related to what are called mirror-neurons. Mirror neurons are attributed with the ability of one to read meaning in the actions of others. The neurons create a situation whereby watching another activates our own embodied system, creating an internal simulation which enables us to feel the experience of others. (Glasser 2007, Whitehead 2005). Interestingly, people who rank high on a scale measuring empathy have a particularly active mirror neuron system, thus the ability to share the emotions of others appears to be intrinsically linked to the functioning of mirror neurons.

In essence Gallagher (2005), cited in Whitehead, argues that the brain areas responsible for planning one's own action are the same as those that are activated during the observation, imaginative simulation or imitation of the action of others. Furthermore, effective communication through the body depends on, effective working of the mirror neurons, an individual's development of inter modal communication and significantly in the case of advocacy for physical literacy, the intensity of the observers awareness of their own embodiment. In other words,

Gallagher (2005) suggests that our sensitivity to and management of our embodiment affects our sensitivity to and empathy with others. In turn, our perception of others can in a reciprocal way deepen our perception of ourselves (Whitehead 2005 p.17).

To summarise, it seems that the benefits of developing physically literacy are many and applicable to all not least those in leadership positions where the skills of empathy and understanding are key. Many of the skills outlined as outcomes of physical literacy, are prominent in the literature on leadership and presence reviewed earlier. The case for it is made more compelling by Whitehead's recent addition to the definition given above – in response to her engagement with the two new neuro-scientific theories:

A physically literate individual has a well-established sense of self as embodied in the world. This together with an articulate interaction with the environment engenders positive self-esteem and self- confidence. Furthermore, sensitivity to and awareness of our embodied capacities leads to fluent self-expression through non-verbal communication and to perceptive and empathetic interaction with others.

(ibid.p.18)

Interaction and non-verbal communication

Empathetic interaction, successfully or unsuccessfully, begins at the first point of contact. A key psychological concept, in the area of communication surrounding perception of others, is known as the attribution theory. In essence this is concerned with the way that an individual attributes personality traits, motives and abilities to other people. In the context of leadership effectiveness and impact this is seen to be an area of importance as Cherulnik (1995) reports:

Attribution theories of leadership stress the importance of the social judgements that group members make of leaders and candidates for leadership.
(Cherulnik 1995 p.287)

In much the same way that the performer considers their first entrance on to the stage to be of vital importance in order to establish their presence, character and aid the narrative. The old adage that 'first impressions count' is also often key in formal and informal encounters. This is known as the primacy effect and it suggests that:

When we meet a stranger, we form an immediate impression of the sort of man he is. Without thinking we take in small details of how he stands, the way he uses his hands, his eye movements and facial expressions. The conclusions we draw may or may not be correct, but they certainly affect our actions. If we start to talk to him, our words are accompanied by other gestures which may elucidate, emphasise, enhance or even contradict what we say.
(*equally applicable to women*)
(Hinde 1972 p.xi)

Non-verbal communication forms a significant part of the theories surrounding primacy effects and attribution. In the same way that choreographers and dancers operate, whilst performing and expressing ideas, beliefs and emotions onstage, arguably through decoding and encoding meaning in and through movement, this process is experienced universally as we socially interact, as Fox (1997 p.vii) states:

The desires and behaviours of an individual are often enacted through their body. In turn we also search the bodies of others for signs of their persona and intentions.

Birdwhistell (1975) states that gestures and facial expression are indicative of personality and of absolute importance in human communication. Elements such as these are referred to as non-verbal communication or body language and this is a popular and widely researched topic. The potency of non-verbal communication is widely recognised (Adams 1996, Bainbridge 2006, Fast 1971, Collet 2003) as Raudsepp (1993 p.85) states:

Nonverbal communication is more eloquent, honest and accurate than verbal communication. It tends to be more spontaneous, less controlled or manipulated, and is the window to our true feelings and attitudes. ... subconscious body language reveals what we really think or mean.

Commonly used sets of statistics in communication training are those of the American physiologist Albert Mehrabian. According to Mehrabian (1972), face-to-face communication is made up of three parts, words, voice tonality and body language (Adams 1996, Bainbridge 2006). Mehrabian's studies showed that these three elements account differently for our liking for the person who puts forward the message. He found that words account for 7%, tone of voice for 38%, and body language for 55% of the liking. For emotions to be effectively communicated he stated that these three parts of the message need to support each other in other words they need to be "congruent". In case of any "incongruency", it becomes more likely that the receiver will trust the predominant form of communication, which to Mehrabian's findings is non-verbal (38 + 55 %), rather than the literal meaning of the words (7 %).

It is important to note that, in this study, Mehrabian carried out tests dealing with the communication of feelings and attitudes largely 'like or dislike'. He maintains that the disproportionate weight of tone of voice and body language comes in to play when the observer perceives a situation to be ambiguous. Most commonly this ambiguity occurs when the spoken words are inconsistent with the tone of voice or body language of the speaker. Mehrabian (1981) himself is conscious that his finding's, known as "Mehrabian's rule" have been overly interpreted. Some claim that in any communication situation the meaning of a message is transported mainly by non-verbal cues and not by the meaning of the words, he regards this as a generalisation:

Please note that this and other equations regarding relative importance of verbal and nonverbal messages were derived from experiments dealing with communications of feelings and attitudes (i.e., like-dislike). Unless a communicator is talking about their feelings or attitudes, these equations are not applicable.

(Ibid, p. 286)

Birdwhistell (1970 p.xi) suggests that body motion in the context of communication is a learned form that is patterned within a culture and which can be broken down into an ordered system of isolable elements. He refers to these as Kinesics and stresses their similarity to verbal communication:

Kinesic structure is parallel to language structure. The kinesic system has forms that are astonishingly like words in language.

(Birdwhistell 1970 p.80)

Perhaps the most prominent form of kinesics is the use of gesture. The hands are able to communicate a great deal and are closely co-coordinated with, and can even replace speech, as in gesture languages such as sign language and mime. They can indicate emotion, attitude and illustrate what a speaker is saying (Argyle 1972, Fast 1971).

Birdwhistell (1970 p.79) states that gestures are culturally linked both in shape and in meaning. Contentiously perhaps, he believes that there is no body motion or gesture that means the same social in all societies (p.81). However, Arthur (1995) and Collett (2003) maintain specific gestures can typically convey a particular meaning. In the context of classical ballet, mime actions are a codified but recognized form of 'intentional use of gesture'. They are used to aid narrative and by their very nature many of them would be recognizable to the initiated and some to the uninitiated.

Posture also fits into Birdwhistell's definition of Kinesics and likewise within the notion of presence. Like gesture, to some extent, posture has universal meaning but it also can have culturally defined connotations and conventions exist as regards interpretations in particular contexts. It is used to convey interpersonal attitudes, signals of status and varies with emotional state. Kinesics essentially refers to body movement and in addition to gesture and posture, head movements and facial expressions would fall within this definition.

In terms of non-verbal communication there are other dimensions that are significant within this form of interaction. Proxemics, oculemics, haptics and non-verbal aspects of speech are useful in underpinning this study.

Proxemics refers to an individual's use of interpersonal space and this would include the orientation or angle at which people position themselves in relation to each other. (Fast 1971) Cross-cultural variations are significant and according to Argyle (1972) individual differences are also consistent. Largely these are seen to be unrelated to personality however there is a tendency for people to stand closer to those who they like. Studies have shown that proximity communicates very little about the interactor in one to one encounters although in groups it can express something of the relations between them. More significant information results from

changes in proximity and these often communicate the desire to initiate or terminate an encounter (Arthur 1995, Argyle 1972 p.247). The use of space to create or establish mood, impact and establish the status of a character, is an essential skill used by the choreographer and performer.

Oculemics refers to looking and eye contact and this plays a key role in establishing relationships and communicating interpersonal attitudes. It is loosely coordinated with speech, is used as a signal in starting encounters and as a way of reinforcing or indicating a point that has been made or understood (Arthur 1995, Argyle 1972 p.250). Focus and eye contact are key 'presence' techniques used by the dancer both choreographically and intuitively within their performances.

Haptics refers to actual bodily contact and there are vast cross-cultural variations in the extent of which this occurs. The most common contact that occurs in public settings takes place during greetings and farewells (Arthur 1995, Argyle 1972 p.246). Non-verbal aspects of speech are also an important form of non-verbal communications. Differences in pitch, stress volume and the length of time between verbal exchanges known as Chronemics, can be signals of attitudes or emotions (Arthur 1995, Argyle 1972 p.251).

Special kinds of non-verbal communication are those aspects of personal appearance that are under partial or voluntary control. Appearance can be manipulated in order to send messages about the self. These signals can be related to status, social groups, personality or mood (Arthur 1995).

The complexity of non-verbal communication and body language analysis and the potential for misinterpretation is espoused by Arthur (1995 p.23):

Analyzing body language is complicated by the fact that no single aspect of non-verbal communication can be universally translated. That is a gesture that expresses a certain feeling for one person may mean something entirely different to someone else. ... such differences in interpretation occur not only among cultures but as a result of individual socialization processes. Each person develops his or her own pattern of nonverbal messages and tends to react to a particular situation in the same non-verbal way each time it occurs.

However the value of recognising in others and enhancing one's awareness of this form of, often unconscious, communication is widely realized (O'Connor & McDermott 1996, Adams 1996,

Arthur 1995, Morgan 2001). In the context of presenting, formally or otherwise, non-verbal communication can undoubtedly be used to support, enhance and increase the impact of verbal messages:

By making adroit use of your body and the space around you, you can create a physical connection with the audience that will earn trust and inspire action.

(Morgan 2002 p. 112)

On a more intimate interpersonal level, the extent to which positive body language can help to build empathy is also widely recognised (O'Connor & McDermott 1996, Burton & Ready 2004). In order to build rapport with another it is thought that 'mirroring and matching' aspects of body language such as posture, eye contact and breathing rates can be very effective. Empathy, seen by Borg (2004) as "the bedrock of communication", is often demonstrated and developed through synchronicity of body movements as supported by Levenson & Reuf (1997 p.55-56):

Postural synchrony across individuals can often be seen in interpersonal contexts. For example an intricate choreography of mirrored movements often occurs when individuals are deeply engaged in conversation.

They go on to add...

...postural mirroring results from and reflects interpersonal closeness... however, studies have also shown that it has the capacity to cause people to feel closer. ...subjects reported liking those who mirrored their body movements more than those who did not mirror and rated them as being more empathetic.

On an individual level the extent that physiology and thoughts are intimately connected has also been widely reported (O'Connor & McDermott 1996, James 2001) and aligns with Whitehead's (2005) notions surrounding embodiment and Physical Literacy. In other words this theory suggests that the emotions and one's physiology directly affect each other reciprocally. Therefore it is fair to surmise that a greater control of one's physicality could lead to a more beneficial and positive emotional outlook. Interactionalist sociologists, such as Goffman (referenced earlier) also study how human beings are both influenced by and influencing in relationships with others.

In conclusion, literature from philosophical, psychological and sociological sources has been interwoven to underpin the ensuing research. Arguably this review of literature has demonstrated that many of the same skills are required by dancers as those in leadership positions. Physical Literacy as an underpinning philosophy advocates the benefits of the embodied self and an awareness of the signals given off and observed through non-verbal communication are also advantageous in terms of building empathy, motivation and inspiration

in others. Psycho-sociological concepts have also been useful in extending understanding of ways in which people influence and are influenced by the body actions of others. The task of the research is to explore how movement training can help to improve a person's physical presence and non-verbal communication skills, skills the dancer uses everyday, in the business / corporate sector workplace.

Research methods

The method of enquiry used in this study is what Edwards & Talbot (1999) describe as action research. Action research is seen to be a sub category of practitioner research - a term used to define any research carried out by a practitioner in areas of their professional practice. However, practitioner research may be deemed to be action research if undertaken by a professional who is active in researching his or her own practice through structured self-reflection (Carr & Kemmis 1986). A significant feature of this form of enquiry is the central role of the self-evaluating practitioner in the process. Furthermore, incorporating both reflecting in action and reflecting on action distinguishes action research from simply reflective practice and as Edwards & Talbot, (1999 p.53) maintain:

Action research involves more than thinking about what you have done. It includes drawing on relevant theory and the work of other practitioners, examining its relevance for your practice and modifying widely held ideas to fit your practice. Ultimately it results in the emergence in your own right to be regarded as an informed expert practitioner who is able to make an important contribution to general public debate in professional issues.

The processes and relationships involved in action research are seen to nurture and empower the professionals who undertake this way of working (Edwards & Talbot, 1999 p.53).

The action research framework incorporates an extra dimension to the much used evaluation sequence of plan, act and review that underpins good practice in a wide range of contexts. It does this through the addition of systematic monitoring of the action taken alongside the collection and reflective analysis of relevant data and theory (Edwards & Talbot 1999 p.55 McNiff 1988).

The data collection methods used in this study include, the keeping of a reflective diary, informal interviews and discussions, observations and, in the case of the third case study, questionnaires. Edwards & Talbot (1999 p.57), recognise that seeking objectivity may be problematic in research but less of an issue for the action researcher whose engagement with the process and reflection is essential.

The methods were chosen primarily for the opportunities they offered for reflection and the extent to which they could provide adequate data. However, another important consideration was to make them as non-intrusive as possible for the workshop participants.

The process involved using theories encountered to underpin planning of interventions aimed at leaders and managers of businesses. Three case studies were implemented and led by the

researcher with assistance from a colleague in the case of the second and third workshops. Learning from each case study was made possible through the analysis of data, questionnaires, interviews and informal discussions and the use of a personal reflective journal. Final discussion of the action research exploring interventions to improve use of the body in the business / corporate sector, involved a synthesis of reflections on the three case studies in relation to theories discussed earlier. Finally a judgement will be made in answer to the research question:

Is it possible to facilitate body learning with people in the business sector: that is, to improve movement awareness and to utilise the power of physical presence and non verbal communication through movement mastery, more effectively?

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY ONE

Aim - To introduce the concept of physical literacy as a valuable resource for the business / corporate leader.

Workshop Outline

1. A brief introduction from the researcher/practitioner,

Tutor objectives

- To establish credibility and rapport
- To introduce researcher's philosophy surrounding the value of dance as a learning medium
- To set the context for the forthcoming tasks
- To inform the participants of the workshop aims, objectives and likely tasks

2. Body and postural awareness exercises.

Tutor objectives

- To enhance awareness of the body and posture, including areas of tension
- To encourage participants to find their centre and optimum posture
- To begin to warm-up the body safely and effectively

3. Ice breakers and name game

Tutor objectives

- To lower inhibitions
- Encourage use of space
- To activate reflexes
- To warm-up body – raise heart beat and aerobic capacity
- To covertly introduce core dance skills
- Encourage team-work

4. Teach prepared movement sequence

Tutor objectives

- Practically introduce notion of physical literacy
- To develop control and co-ordination of the body
- To develop fluidity in movement

5. Movement exercise and discussion around attribution theory

Tutor objectives

- To explore practically the non-verbal signals the body sends out
- To experiment with controlling these signals

6. Presence and status exercise with discussion

Tutor objectives

- To enable the participants to become more kinaesthetically aware of the changes they can make in relation to the impression they give to others
- To raise participants awareness of 'reading' the bodies of others

Background

Prior to delivering the first of the workshops outlined above. I was given the opportunity to spend some time at a management consultancy company. Interested in the ideas around body possibilities and positive about their potential, they generously offered me the chance to observe some of their workshops. These took the form of both leadership development and presentation skills. This was an invaluable experience giving me a feel for the likely atmosphere and broadly speaking a look at the environment and client group. It was also interesting to begin to notice the language used, the fast paced delivery and the use of a variety of teaching methods and support materials. For example, didactic approaches, facilitated empowering discussions and the use of visual aids, in particular several video clips illustrating good practice throughout the presentation skills training.

Neither workshop discussed body possibilities, language or presentation, to any great extent. I felt that there might be potential for some simple exercises to be incorporated had there been additional time.

There seemed to me to be particular relevance, in movement terms, in the workshops reference to the attribution theory – a discussion around first impressions – how do others see us and describe us to themselves when they meet us for the first time. I planned to attempt to develop an exercise that might raise one's awareness and subsequent control of the signals that one gives off and receives.

It was encouraging to see otherwise familiar formats being used, ice breakers early in the workshops to put the delegates at ease and a progressive format building to the most challenging and exposing tasks at the end of the courses.

Following these observation visits I was invited to explore practically some ideas with the consultants in a pilot workshop at their offices. This led to case study one.

Logistics

There were twelve participants, all female. The workshop lasted approximately one hour and took place in a small empty office space.

Resources

A CD player and variety of recorded music.

Various props to instigate and inspire movement activities.

Planning

The wider aim of the workshop was to explore movement possibilities and gain advice and feedback regarding their relevance within an intervention that might be applicable in a business-training seminar.

An authentic and conventional structure was employed which took the following form.

Implementation and evaluation

This pilot workshop was affirming in relation to the potential and possibilities it exposed. This was in spite of the fact that time was short and the physical space largely unsuitable for dance based activities. Whitehead's (2005) concept of physical literacy was introduced and explored via basic classical ballet vocabulary and additionally through movement tasks around body awareness, gesture and fluidity of movement. These exercises worked well and it was felt that as a definition physical literacy aligns clearly with the desired outcomes and skill development from such workshops. Aspects of Birdwhistell's (1972) kinesics also informed the planning with proxemics explored, although work on this was limited due to space constraints. Additionally more generally, non-verbal signals provided interesting discussion catalysts resulting from the final task.

I felt a dilemma over the extent to which I should articulate all the learning objectives beforehand or allow the participants to discover them themselves. Further it was apparent that skills and techniques were needed to facilitate discussions to identify the deeper learning with the participants following the tasks. I also felt that it would be advantageous for a movement framework that might help to substantiate the tasks and structure of the workshop.

It is important to note that these consultants were likely to be more confident and aware of their bodies than most and quite familiar with standing up and presenting to others. This belies the major challenge to develop a 'dancer's intervention' in these contexts, given the extent to which dance in our culture can hold fear and negative connotations for some, perhaps most specifically males.

It was an enjoyable successful workshop with honest and valuable feedback from the informal interviews that followed. To summarise the feedback can be listed as the following points:

- Workshop was great fun and very different
- Be authentic and confident in your processes – they are interesting and exotic to many and have genuine learning value.
- Ideally workshop should be able to demonstrate direct value to businesses or individuals
- Don't be tempted to limit workshops to presentation skills there is wider application, e.g leadership skills, non-verbal communication, creativity and team building.

(Personal journal entry 16/06/2006 see appendix 4)

A key piece of learning that would be taken forward from this pilot workshop was the overall effectiveness of a fast paced delivery style with rigorously set time constraints imposed on group tasks. Additionally as mentioned earlier exploring the use of a theoretical movement framework such as that created by Rudolph Laban could be useful in terms of offering a structure through which to articulate practical movement objectives (Laban 1948, Smith-Autard 2000).

CASE STUDY TWO

Aim - To build on the concept of physical literacy by introducing notions of creativity in movement, improvisation and choreographic methods that support team building skills.

Workshop Outline

1. Give personal background and introduce the workshop

Tutor objectives

- To inform participants of likely activities and to seek approval and consensus.
- Establish credibility and rapport.
- Establish philosophy that dance is a valuable learning medium and that everyone can dance.
- Establish context for the tasks and give workshop objectives as follows:
 1. To create a 5 minute completed piece of dance theatre on given themes
 2. Explore a range of authentic dance and theatre making processes
 3. For all to enjoy themselves

2. Warm –up and ice-breaker

Tutor objectives

- Prepare the body physiologically for the tasks ahead
- Name learning
- Establish an order for later choreographic use
- Introduce concept of proxemics, stage directions use of space
- To covertly introduce core dance skills and create ready-made choreography
- Encourage teamwork

3. Group gestural choreography and tableaux building sections

Tutor objectives

- Empower delegates to make own and collective choreographic choices
- Introduce notion of meaning through movement and 'physicalising' ideas
- Encourage teamwork

4. Pre-prepared group choreography

Tutor objectives

- Demonstrate effectiveness of illustrating meaning through the use of dynamics, movement and choreographic devices
- Illustrate alternative leadership style and direction method
- Demonstrate the importance of effective team-work
- Demonstrate use of proxemics and oculemics

5. Adding voice to the movement piece

Tutor objectives

- Creating congruency of voice and body signals

6. Join all the exercises together to create coherent whole and perform to peers.

Background

The workshop outlined above was planned and delivered in response to a request from a larger management consultancy company for a 'different' team-building experience to take place at their quarterly meeting. On these occasions all members of staff, permanent and freelance, gather together to discuss news and future plans. The brief was to 'stretch the participants and to push the group into their discomfort zone'. My contact at the company felt they were entering a period of significant change and growth and that dance might be an interesting way to explore ideas around this.

The following themes were given as a starting point.

- Belief in what's possible
- Dealing with change
- Celebration of success
- Setting and achieving big scary goals
- Fun

Logistics

With 60 participants in total it was decided that the groups be split 3 ways and the 75 -minute workshops scheduled at regular intervals throughout the day. Whilst the participants were waiting for their workshop they would be involved in other practical activities or meetings. Therefore this case study represents one workshop repeated three times.

Given the large numbers involved I brought in a friend and colleague with a background in theatre directing. This brought an invaluable additional expertise and allowed the inclusion of work on voice and vocal projection. We collaboratively planned and delivered the workshop.

Resources

A CD player with a variety of recorded music.

Various props to instigate and inspire movement activities.

Planning

Essentially, this workshop had a different area of exploration to the previous pilot workshop. References to presence and non-verbal communication were less explicit. In spite of this many of the activities were informed by its learning with a key focus on, examining and communicating, ideas and messages through movement.

Reflecting on the experience and feedback in the previous workshop I felt that it would be beneficial to be authentic to my background and to structure the workshop so that it offered the participants experience of the spectrum of choreographic processes used in dance. Simply put the tasks would include directed and taught material and more open-ended structured improvisation exercises. The workshop would work towards a four-minute piece of dance theatre that could be performed to colleagues at the close of the day.

We created a template of five stages with each given a choreographically linked metaphoric title for interest, relevance to business and to aid memory recall. The value of the use of metaphor was informed theoretically by Bateson (1979) and Owen (2001). These were linked to planned tasks. Suitable music was sourced that would be inspiring and provide the necessary cues that could prompt the delegates onto the next section. Given the short time available and the need to produce a 'product' the workshop was tightly structured, all the tasks and activities aimed to provide 'ready-made' choreography that formed the stages of the final piece. Through the inclusion of tableaux building exercises, non-verbal communication was explored – proxemics, expressing meaning through movement, positions and gesture. The starting point for this was the company's 'high performance model' incorporating four key attributes. This is used by the company, both internally and externally, to measure the performance of individuals and organisations.

Given the earlier reflections over the negative perceptions of dance held by some, and reflecting on the learning from the pilot workshop, we chose to make the tone of the workshop fast paced and relatively physical. Strict time spans were imposed on the creative tasks. A simple dance

sequence was taught that progressively became more complex and challenging. When layered, with more dancers joining in on cue, this added another metaphor – “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”. Incorporated into the dance was the use of many choreographic devices including repetition, canon and unison (Smith-Autard 2000).

Goal setting as a topic was explored through the use of an NLP model – *The keys to achievable outcomes*. In essence this is a series of questions that explore methods and identify routes to creating desired change. (O'Connor 2001) These 'keys' were divided amongst the groups and delivered vocally as part of the performance piece.

Implementing and evaluation

The second case study encompassed three workshops that were identical in their structure and largely similar through their delivery. They were successful. The participants clearly enjoyed themselves and although we were pushed a little for time, all aspects of the workshop plan were completed. The end of day sharing clearly exceeded the expectations of those performing and watching.

The fast paced nature of the structure and time limits strictly imposed on the tasks worked well and help to nullify some of the reticence likely felt early on in the session by some of the participants. The use of the metaphors was successful and the art-making processes new and interesting to the participants. Theoretically the workshop was informed by some of the literature reviewed in this study however, time and the nature of the commission did not allow for discussion around these areas. Feedback was positive although limited to informal snatches of conversation during the day. One such element of feedback was particularly encouraging and related to the perception held by some as regards dance:

At the start of the day I was so close to doing a runner I was convinced that this wasn't for me – shortly after the workshop started I was loving it. I can see loads of potential in this...

(Personal Journal entry 20/04/2007 –see appendix 4)

Additionally the following email was received shortly following the day.

.... I just wanted to say a very big thank you for a brilliant day on Friday. During the day and after you left people were raving about your session saying how much they had enjoyed it and also how much they have learnt. ***** (the MD) was suggesting that our Senior leadership meetings in future should only last 1/2 hour in stead of 6 hours based on how creative we could be in 10 secs!!!!

It would be great to talk about how your session may be crafted to different sorts of groups may be based on level and experience e.g., middle managers, seniors leaders, talent development, graduates, teams and executive teams.- (senior manager – account director)

(Personal Journal entry 22/04/2007 see appendix 4)

Although the three workshops were very successful in terms of a team –building activity and physical investigation of ideas and themes, due to the relatively large numbers and the fast paced product driven process, there was little time for reflection on non-verbal communication, its potency, and the potential of body awareness in enhancing this. Therefore key learning points surrounded the necessity to build in adequate reflection time and the need to limit where possible the numbers involved in future sessions. Exploration through Tableaux, as a team method of generating and exploring ideas in a non-verbal way was particularly effective. This will be developed and taken forward into future workshops.

CASE STUDY THREE

AIM - To further build on the concept of physical literacy through developing understanding of 'physical presence', knowledge of movement analysis, and tools used in dance and drama.

Workshop outline

1. Give personal backgrounds, introduce the workshop and introduce the underpinning theoretical/philosophical models:
 - a. Laban's movement framework;
 - b. Stanislavski's dramaturgical work;
 - c. Whitehead's concept of Physical Literacy.

Tutor objectives

- To inform participants of likely activities and to seek approval and consensus
- Establish credibility and rapport
- Establish philosophy that dance and theatre processes are a valuable learning medium
- Communicate the programme for the session, establish context for the tasks and give workshop objectives as follows:
 - - a. *Explore verbal and non-verbal communication through a range of authentic dance and theatre making processes*
 - b. *Explore use of body and space- awareness, gesture, posture eye contact*
 - c. *Explore use of voice - projection, tone and timbre*
 - d. *Explore practically and reflect on the concept of presence*
 - e. *Discuss and reflect on the processes and concepts addressed*

2. Warm –ups and ice-breakers

Tutor objectives

- Prepare the body physiologically for the tasks ahead
- Remove inhibitions and relax the delegates
- Explore the concept of physical literacy practically through a taught movement sequence
- Introduce and encourage use of space; introduce stage directions and body relationships in space (proxemics)

3. Defining presence – breakout discussion and facilitated feedback – with practical physical exercise

Tutor objectives

- Increase awareness of what attributes make up presence
- Introduce notion and understanding around physcallying ideas
- Encourage team-work

4. Vocal warm-up

Tutor objectives

- Prepare voice
- Lower inhibitions

5. Applying personal presence and facilitated discussion

Tutor objectives

- Delegates to learn to manipulate level of physical presence through experiencing kinaesthetic changes

6. Using silence, stage areas and eye contact to create presence with facilitated feedback and discussion

Tutor objectives

- Delegates to apply and experience proxemics and oculemics in silence

7. Classical mime sequence with delegate completion

Tutor objectives

- Explore meaning in movement through gesture, dynamics, oculemics and proxemics
- Practically apply and experience Laban's movement model

8. Intention through use of voice

Tutor objectives

- Practically apply Stanislavki's model using Shakespeare's text
- Exercise and understand potential of voice in communicating intention

9. Performance

Tutor objectives

- Implement theory into practice and apply given relevant criteria

10. Plenary

Tutor objectives

- Participants opportunity to reflect on learning and feedback to facilitators

Background

The final workshop described in this paper was commissioned by the same company as the previous, in response to requests from their staff. Due to communication difficulties the brief was a little vague, however, essentially the request was to explore stagecraft and aim to enhance physical presence, work on vocal techniques and to go deeper into some of the exercises used before. As on the previous occasion, this workshop was planned and delivered collaboratively. However, the focus within this study was on extending stagecraft, movement skills and analysis and non-verbal communication activities.

Logistics

There were 17 participants and a whole working day was made available for the training. We decided to divide the group into two to allow for an intimate working environment and perhaps permit some individual work that might have been too time consuming to attempt with a larger group. The workshops were scheduled at three hours thirty minutes each. We decided that we would deliver the session in tandem alternating between movement and vocal exercises.

Resources

Flipchart paper and pens.

Prepared handouts and flipchart definitions - see appendix one.

A CD player with a variety of recorded music.

Various props to instigate and inspire movement activities.

Planning

The increased amount of time allowed for the introduction of supporting theoretical models. The movement work, exploring presence, would be supported by Whitehead's (2005) philosophical notion of Physical Literacy. Additionally the view was taken that further substantiation of the

movement work might be gained by offering a framework within which to place the elements of Birdwhistell's kinesics. A simplified version Laban's movement analysis framework was chosen for this purpose, clearly demonstrating the kinesics through its framework of Action, Space, Dynamics and Relationships (Laban 1948, Smith Autard 2000). This would be referred to throughout although perhaps most explicitly and completely, through an exercise exploring a classical mime sequence. Reflection and discussion time was built into the programme and considered an important part of the proceedings.

Voice work around projection, articulation, pace and emphasis, led by my colleague was supported by Stanislavski's work on 'Intention and Super Objectives' (Benedetti 1989). This is a simple but highly effective process through which to explore Stanislavski's 'Method'. It seems that this has broad potential, not solely in public speaking contexts, as it offers an approach that enables in depth analysis and subsequent delivery enhancement of any form of verbal communication. A piece of Shakespeare's text provided the sample material for this.

Authenticity to our 'art making' processes a priority, we planned to close the sessions with a performance piece through which methods could be explored, practiced and animated by the participants. For this we chose speeches by Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy. These were used by the groups for creative development around the techniques explored previously in the workshops. For this final task a criteria was given for the participants to follow. This was built around the synthesis of the key areas of the movement and voice frameworks and aimed to give equal opportunity to all the delegates.

Implementing and evaluation

The third case study involved two workshops that were diverse in their group dynamics, energy and pace, but were equally successful. The first group of delegates were generally more extrovert and threw themselves into the tasks whereas the second had a more considered and thoughtful approach and thus required a little more background information and encouragement. As a result of this the session was adapted accordingly with more or less time allowed for discussion, feedback and practical tasks.

The discussion aspect of the exercise surrounding the definition of presence opened up an interesting dialogue that supported Halpern et al's (2003) notion of its subjective inference. However, some consensus was established in terms of individuality, connection and authenticity as espoused by many of the authors reviewed in this study. This was a very interesting and useful start to the sessions that raised awareness and realisation of the attributes of those seen to possess presence and gave credence and context to the forthcoming tasks. Whitehead's

(2005) notion of physical literacy was a helpful definition and foundation on which to develop and base the movement interventions.

The models of Laban and Stanislavski dovetailed effectively and both offered simple but supportive frameworks in which to substantiate the activities. However, the researcher felt that the Laban model might have been used in a more analytical way. This might have been more easily achieved whilst feeding back through individual work had time and structure permitted this.

The task on classical mime illustrating Birdwhistell's (1972) aspects of kinesics was enjoyable and relatively effective. However, the researcher felt that this would have benefited from a more time allocated to it. Additional time would have enabled more precision and clarity to be sought and allowed a closer and more explicit alignment to and articulation of Laban's movement analysis model.

In the first session the exercise on silence, stillness (posture) and space (proxemics) provoked a stimulating debate closely connected to the psychological theories explored earlier surrounding attribution and the primacy effect. Recognising that authenticity was key the delegates discussed their sense of self and degrees and contexts in which exposure of that 'true self' is appropriate (Personal Journal entry 20/07/2007 – see appendix three for sample) .

Interestingly an exercise designed to encourage the participants to feel a kinaesthetic shift and manipulate their own physiological presence provoked the comment that this had had an affect on the individual's mood. This supported O'Connor & McDermott (1996) and James's (2001) notion of the connection between physiology and psychology. This is an exciting area deserving of further research.

The performance, in terms of its process of creation and sharing, was an effective method of consolidating and demonstrating the methods and learning. Positive changes were observed kinaesthetically and in self –confidence. Additional time might have given the opportunity for the criteria set to beneficially more challenging and multi-layered.

Evaluations from the participants was gained through the plenary section, informal discussions and through the use of questionnaires sent out shortly following the workshop. Opened ended questions were designed to encourage breadth in response. For sample evaluation questionnaires see appendices two and three. Seventeen questionnaires were distributed of which eight were returned completed.

The responses were very positive with all respondents finding the session enjoyable and interesting:

“Really enjoyable, very stimulating and thought-provoking.” (Female 1)

Really enjoyable. **** and **** are fantastic with the group – great energy and charisma. Very supportive and I felt they both made a good 1:1 connection with me (Female 2).

Excellent. Very different and valuable (Female 3).

The broad offering and theoretical back up was also appreciated:

Lots of variety, informative Incredibly warm through the openness of the facilitators---got the tone just right and backed up the various ideas with an historical context and reference to best practice (male 1)

There were lots of exercises that helped me to understand space better. I also liked the theory link (Stanislavski and Laban theory), giving us something to research afterwards. (Female 4)

The positive feedback surrounding the breadth of the offering however is balanced by comments surrounding the desire for more time to absorb the learning and for the desire for one-to-one feedback:

I think that any one of the exercises could be given more time for effective ‘sense-making’ for the group, but in general each exercise had some relevance to our work (Female 4).

If we had had more time it would have been great to explore some of the exercises we did further and to look at applying techniques to improve our ‘stage presence’. (Male 3)

...no feedback on how I was doing or what I needed to work on...but in a 3 hour session there is limit to what can be done. (Male 2)

Additionally more time would have added a great deal (stating the bleeding obvious!) (Male 3)

Some of the delegates reported apprehension prior to the workshop. However, they felt that the workshop was structured and facilitated in a way that was sensitive to this:

Being honest, I was a little apprehensive. I was unsure about being asked to “perform” in front of my peers.... I need not have been concerned, since you managed the day well and introduced the ideas gently, with exercises that built up to the performance in a way that built confidence very well. (Female 3)

When asked in the questionnaire for the exercises that they found particularly useful, views from the respondents were varied but several of the delegates appreciated the exercise around the potential of stillness and silence:

The exercise where we changed our body language walking across the room. (Female1)

Creating presence by stillness and silence (I used the learning from this yesterday in a client workshop) and use of the whole stage area (Female 3)

I honestly found everything relevant and valuable ----nothing was wasted (Male 1)

Exploring presence and silence in front of the group. This was also the most challenging exercise which is perhaps why it was so valuable because it really took me out of my comfort zone. (Female 2)

When asked about improving the workshops an interesting and valuable piece of feedback was consistent within three of the questionnaires. This related to the use of a story or metaphor with which to support or illustrate the learning objective and supports the views as regard the use of metaphor as a learning medium by Bateson (1979) and Owen (2001) as referenced earlier :

I felt that there was almost a need for a story to hang each of the exercises onto, which would give the session more flow and would be less work for the presenters. (Female 2)

Also, more stories and examples from you of doing some of these things well or not so well to make it come alive more would be really interesting and valuable. (Female 3)

it would have been very interesting to hear from you both about your stage journey/experiences. (Female 4)

The relevance to the broader application of these 'presentation' skills was also recognised:

Of course in coaching and generally in the way in which we interact. (Male 1)

Giving confidence to others in the way in which you model behaviour (Male 2)

The idea of using space more effectively was also really valuable – something to really take forward into my work and also in life – to move around more, be aware of the space and use it to better effect. I really liked that (Female 3).

To summarise these workshops were successful in achieving their aims and objectives and provided new insights and learning for participants and researcher alike:

Great! There were loads of great exercises and ideas presented. You allowed us to explore new ways of working (how to move our bodies, with more clarity and emphasis, exercise our voices and understand the power of silence (Female 3).

Thanks very much for organising such a great afternoon – it was very valuable learning

(Female 2).

Something that made the learning much more effective is the fact that you two clearly have years of performing experience. This tells in your own physicality, voice and presence which in itself is a great role model. It was great, I'd love to do more. Thank you! (Female 4).

Previously in this study the concept of presence was espoused by Halpern & Lubar (2003 p.3) as 'difficult to define' and quantify due to its subjective inference. Despite moments of relative consensus in opinion from workshop participants throughout the three case studies, from the experience of the researcher, this has proved to be accurate. However, Whitehead's (2005) rich and multi-faceted notion of Physical Literacy, affirming the benefits of the embodied individual, in touch and responsive to themselves, others and the wider environment, in many ways aligns with and supports the opinions of both Halpern & Lubar (2003) and Rodenburg (2007) and their notions of authentic connection. Additionally, Physical Literacy has offered an effective underpinning philosophy, 'connecting' and providing congruence within individual workshops and across the three case studies as a series. Arguably Physical Literacy, with all its reciprocal pay offs, is essential in leadership contexts. As maintained by Sinclair (2005 p.1) and referenced previously, "Leadership is a bodily practice..."

When advocating for body awareness in leadership training, attribution theories surrounding social judgements must be seen to be valuable ammunition. Despite warranting further development the workshop tasks designed with these theories in mind provoked profound reactions and supported Cherulnik's (1995) claims of their importance in leadership contexts.

Likewise in terms of advocacy, "Merhrabian's (1972) well known "rule", although perhaps misinterpreted, nonetheless provided a set of statistics that were a useful entry point into the area of non-verbal communication. Following on from the 7%, 38% and 55% generalisation, in terms of analysing and developing interventions in this area, Birdwhistell's (1972) Kinesics has also offered a valuable framework. Isolation of the specific elements of non-verbal communication, in particular proxemics, oculemics, gesture and posture enabled a precise and targeted approach in workshop and task development and aided articulation of tutor and learner objectives.

The action research framework employed throughout the three case-studies has been useful,

not least through its affirmation and recognition of the value of a practitioner's contribution and validity within academia. It has encouraged a more rigorous and structured reflection process, greatly assisted by and through the collation and analysis of the various data. The theoretical areas explored earlier gave greater meaning and clarity to the articulation of aims and activities selected. 'Reflecting in and reflecting on action' has led to positive conclusions being drawn around the following research question:

"Is it possible to facilitate body learning with people in the business sector: that is, to improve movement awareness and to utilise the power of physical presence and non verbal communication through movement mastery, more effectively?"

Conclusion

This study aimed to answer the following question:

“Is it possible to facilitate body learning with people in the business sector: that is, to improve movement awareness and to utilise the power of physical presence and non verbal communication through movement mastery, more effectively?”

Through the three case studies authentic dance and theatre processes have been shown to offer valuable learning opportunities for those ‘outside of the studio’ and demonstrated their potential broader application and relevance in the area of social interaction, most specifically developing control in and awareness of the potency of non-verbal communication. The theoretical and philosophical frameworks have been shown to be supportive to these processes, beneficial in articulating learning, structuring workshops and specific tasks. For example, theoretical frameworks such as Birdwhistell’s (1970) Kinesics were helpful in isolating the specific components of non-verbal communication.

In the absence of a fully objective definition of presence, Whitehead’s (2005) notion of Physical Literacy proved to be a useful foundation for movement interventions. Some of these interventions, judging by the participant feedback and researcher’s observations, illustrated that presence could be positively manipulated through enhanced kinaesthetic and spatial awareness.

The challenges of selling and delivering programmes built around the topics explored in this study were two-fold. Firstly non-verbal communication, described by some as a ‘soft-skill’ and may not be prioritised over training which can more statistically demonstrate benefit to a company’s bottom line or operating efficacy. Secondly, there are complex and deep-seated issues relating to negative body image and the connotations that dance implies to some in our culture. These were not issues faced by the researcher in this study. However, it is fair to surmise that the client groups involved were likely to be more in touch and comfortable with their bodies than might be the norm perhaps due to the frequent experience that some of them have of public speaking. Challenges such as these might be overcome by sensitivity in delivery, and skilful facilitation to empower the delegates to discover and articulate their personal learning. Additionally ‘creative’ marketing of the product including peer group endorsements would be advantageous. It is apparent that in the current problematic arts funding climate there might be potential for new and mutually beneficial partnerships to be formed between dance organisations and the corporate sector. In much the same way as those that already exist with those in the wider theatre field (Leigh & Maynard 2004).

This study has raised several areas that warrant further research and exploration. Laban's movement analysis framework has shown a potential that deserves further development in the context of presence and an individual's application of action, space, dynamics and relationships. One such approach might be the formulation of a measurement tool designed to identify the extent that Laban's four key areas contribute to effective, impactful communication and connection. This might be informed by gaining consensus, through focus groups, on optimum levels shown by proven influential public speakers. The result then might be the development of interventions to target the specific development needs of an individual motivated to enhance their presence and presentation skills. An empirical study focusing on the extent to which presence is factor in successful leadership might prove to be valuable in justifying the value and potential of facilitating body learning and movement awareness.

As Halpern & Lubar (2003 p.3) stated presence is a multi-faceted attribute and this is reflected in this study meaning that an in-depth focus has not been possible. In the context of presence the notions of authenticity, congruence of voice, body and content of verbal message have been supported. Collaboration with the researcher's colleague was a key factor in the success of the workshops through providing the additional skills and elements to link verbal and non verbal communication elements of presence.

This research study has many areas of weakness. It has been a learning process in terms of the necessity for greater depth in and diversity of data collection and analysis. This would have enabled triangulation to a greater extent and led to more supported conclusions. Additionally, despite the congruency in terms of the client group that the case studies served, the workshops were too diverse in their aims and objectives to permit continuity of themes explored and a close comparative analysis. However, it is fair to surmise that as a result of the study that, the area of skilled use of the body is underdeveloped in the business / corporate sector and that dancers can offer training that will be valuable to people in these sectors.

This process of action research combining the study of relevant theory and practice has proved to be both nurturing and empowering as proposed by Edwards and Talbert (1999). Personally it has been a valuable confidence building exercise, enabling the partial satisfaction of both personal and professional curiosity. It has steered and underpinned some of the researcher's career ambitions, aiding the articulation of embedded vocational knowledge and reinforcing belief in the power of human movement, shared by a famous dancer of the 1930's:

Nothing so clearly and inevitably reveals the inner man than movement and gesture. It is quite possible, if one chooses, to conceal and dissimulate behind words, or paintings or

statues or other forms of human expression, but the moment you move you stand revealed, for good or ill, for what you are.

(Doris Humphrey, 1937p.1)

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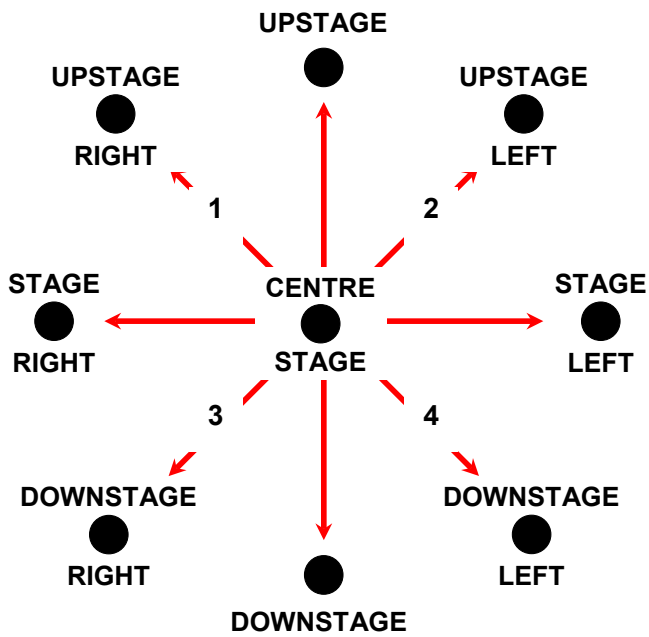
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STAGECRAFT and 'PRESENCE'

STAGE DIRECTIONS



Audience

PHYSICAL LITERACY

“An individual who is physically literate moves with poise, economy and confidence and is perceptive at reading all aspects of our physical environment ... and responding appropriately to these.”

Margaret Whitehead, 2005

RUDOLPH LABAN'S MOVEMENT ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

<p style="text-align: center;">ACTION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Gesture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Transference of weight</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Travel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Turn</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Body shapes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jump</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Stillness</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">QUALITY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Time – sudden, sustained, quick, slow</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Weight – firm, light</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Flow – free, bound</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SPACE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Size of movement</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Size of space</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Extension in space</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Levels – low, medium, high</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pathways – flow patterns, air patterns</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Directions in space</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Relating to objects</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Relating to people</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Group work – numerical, variation, shape of group, inter-group relationships, spatial relationships</p>

KONSTANTIN STANISLAVSKY

Intention and Super Objective



UNIT

UNIT

UNIT

UNIT

Objective

Objective

Objective

Objective

Typical Objectives (intentions) in Public Speaking (verbs!):

- Inform
- Entertain
- Challenge
- Inspire
- Move/ Provoke

**S
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Voice

Body

> EMPHASIS

> **GESTURE**

> ARTICULATION

> **POSTURE**

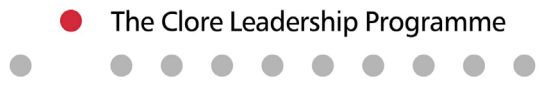
> PACE

> **PRESENCE**

> PROJECTION

> **EYE CONTACT**

APPENDIX TWO – SAMPLE Evaluation forms



23 July 07

Dear All

Many thanks for your part in two very enjoyable workshops on Friday. ***** and I both had a great time and felt that we had learnt much from the experience.

As some you may know, I am currently a Fellow on the Clore Leadership Programme - an initiative designed to identify and develop leadership in the Cultural sector. As part of the programme I am required to undertake a short research study in an area of interest and relevance to me. In essence, I have chosen to explore the concept of 'presence' and the potential, dance and theatre-making processes might have outside of their own industry.

I am hoping to use some of the learning I gained – through the design and delivery of Friday's session - as a part of small action research based study and I would be very grateful if you could assist me by offering any thoughts you might have on the workshop. For your information, the resulting paper will not be published and no names of individuals or organisations will be used.

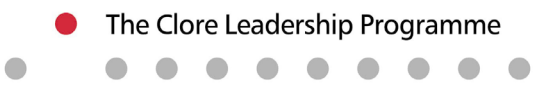
I would be very happy for you to return this via email – lee.fish@virgin.net - or if you prefer please send by post to the address below.

Many thanks, and I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Best wishes

Lee

Lee Fisher



The Clore Leadership Programme

The workshop ** and I delivered was designed to explore, the concept of 'presence' and verbal and non-verbal communication; through 'stage-craft', dance and drama processes.**

1. How did you find the workshop overall?

Excellent. Very different and valuable. It felt familiar to some extent given that we had spent some time leaping around with you at the previous Company Day, but this added more depth and more specific practice on a number of skill areas.

2. What were your expectations and aspirations?

Being honest, I was a little apprehensive. I was unsure about being asked to "perform" in front of my peers.

My main expectation was enhance my understanding of effective ways to stand/talk/project/be when standing up in front of a group.

3. To what extent were these met?

I need not have been concerned, since you managed the day well and introduced the ideas gently, with exercises that built up to the performance in a way that built confidence very well.

4. Of the exercises and tasks which did you find most valuable and relevant?

All of it was excellent, I would have loved more!

In particular I have reflected afterwards mostly on the following areas:

- Creating presence by stillness and silence (I used the learning from this yesterday in a client workshop)
- the kinesthetic/counting exercise
- the context around the "method"
- learning about words and breaking down sounds and sentences for a performance
- use of the whole stage area

5. And least valuable or uncomfortable in any anyway?

Nothing

6. What might you suggest to improve further sessions?

I would really like to have done more on breathing and use of voice. Perhaps some voice-strengthening exercises.

Also, more stories and examples from the two of you of doing some of these things well or not so well to make it come alive more would be really interesting and valuable.

7. Do you feel that any of the tasks/concepts we explored have application beyond the context of public speaking?

Other applications that spring to mind:

- group discussions, either leading, facilitating or just being a participant
- presence with individuals (e.g. coaching setting)
- greater awareness of the connection between body and mind in the context of adult learning

Please add any further thoughts or comments on any of the questions below. – Many thanks again. Lee

Something that made the learning much more effective is the fact that you two clearly have years of performing experience. This tells in your own physicality, voice and presence which in itself is a great role model.

It was great, I'd love to do more. Thank you!



The Clore Leadership Programme

23 July 07

The workshop ** and I delivered was designed to explore, the concept of 'presence' and verbal and non-verbal communication; through 'stage-craft', dance and drama processes.**

8. How did you find the workshop overall?

Really enjoyable. ***** and ***** are fantastic with the group – great energy and charisma. Very supportive and I felt they both made a good 1:1 connection with me. It's a real privilege to explore these concepts and to do so in the company of *** and *****.

9. What were your expectations and aspirations?

I hoped that the workshop would help me with the "craft" side of my development as a consultant. Specifically I was excited about the prospect of working with two "experts" who I had observed before and was impressed by their "presence" so felt that I would have a lot to learn from them, their knowledge, experience and role modeling. Other expectations included:

- a. Strategies to deal with nerves and be more confident in front of groups
- b. To explore the impact of physical presence and what "good physical presence" looks like.
- c. How to express my energy and enthusiasm in a way that will invigorate a group.
- d. How to project my voice

10. To what extent were these met?

My expectations were partially met. I definitely learnt a lot and enjoyed the day but perhaps the above expectations were a little ambitious in such a short space of time. See below for more comments relating to this...

11. Of the exercises and tasks which did you find most valuable and relevant?

Exploring presence and silence in front of the group. This was also the most challenging exercise which is perhaps why it was so valuable because it really took me out of my comfort zone.

The idea of using space more effectively was also really valuable – something to really take forward into my work and also in life – to move around more, be aware of the space and use it to better effect. I really liked that.

12. And least valuable or uncomfortable in any anyway?

I'm not sure any of the content was not valuable – I suppose the initial warm up where we did short routines of physical movement didn't feel like it had a great purpose but perhaps it was literally just warm the group up.

With respect to parts that were uncomfortable – there weren't any that were not helpfully uncomfortable. Its good to be taken out of your comfort zone as often that is where the most learning occurs. I also would add that ***** and ***** created a very supportive and safe environment to experiment which further recommends the value of being out of your comfort zone.

13. What might you suggest to improve further sessions?

Unsurprisingly, more stretching exercises that really challenge and take us out of our comfort zone.

Also...

- Presence – how to be confident and able to walk onto a “stage”, in front of a group and physically hold myself confidently.
- How to channel my nerves in a positive way
- How to project my voice (with appropriate volume, pace and tone) despite feeling nervous and also how to vary my diction/speed etc to make a real impact.

I realize that many ***** consultants are already very expert in these areas so perhaps there might be value in running another session for the more junior and developing consultants to really nail some of this stuff and have opportunities for more 1:1 feedback. I would really value working with ***** and ***** in this capacity and think I could learn a lot from them.

14. Do you feel that any of the tasks/concepts we explored have application beyond the context of public speaking?

I think the use of space was quite powerful possibly beyond this concept.. I'm not entirely sure what I mean by that but just I was really amazed by the impact of being in and observing others in different spaces and wonder if exploring space might be interesting when doing creative writing work, planning, researching, brainstorming etc.. to physically move around the room perhaps to shift state... maybe!?

Please add any further thoughts or comments on any of the questions below. – Many thanks again. Lee

APPENDIX THREE – SAMPLE PERSONAL JOURNAL ENTRIES

PILOT WORKSHOP DATA ENTRY 16/06/06

Not enough time and space way too small. But, workshop was a success, loads of fun and really pleasing to see that similar processes and structures work in this kind of context. Participants were very warm and encouraging very eager to try anything and a lot more up for it that I had imagined they would be. Improvisation exercises with props were lots of fun but its hard to imagine that most people would be quite so comfortable doing them and quite hard to articulate beyond pure movement skills what exactly they might be aiming to assist or achieve. Really apparent that facilitation skills/techniques are essential – the key is teasing out learning – however, also important to be really clear when asking people to try something outside of their realm of experience that the why's and how's are crystal clear too – it's a tricky balance.

Warm up with water balloons excellent really enjoyed by all and seen to have lots in it – could explore leaving one person out and then bringing them in at a later date – to illustrate new member joining a team and how it might feel. This would need t be very carefully done and sensitively dealt with but could be a great metaphor and very powerful demonstration Tableau exercises worked very well – loads of potential.

Definitely a potential primacy effect movement exercise there but again its all about the facilitation.

Visual aids and personal physical demos could be developed to support.

Probably looking at 2 hour session minimum.

Postural synchrony exercise would be easy to develop and effective way to look at rapport/empathy building and in small groups.

Very useful feedback summarised below:

- Workshop was great fun and very different
- Be authentic and confident in your processes – they are interesting and exotic to many and have genuine learning value.
- Ideally workshop should be able to demonstrate direct value to businesses or individuals – (this will be tough)
- Don't be tempted to limit workshops to presentation skills there is wider application, e.g leadership skills, non-verbal communication, creativity and team building.

COMPANY DAY WORKSHOP

Data Entry 20/04/2007

Really hard day 3 sessions quite exhausting to deliver. But very successful. Good space available – need louder CD player.

***** did a great job of introducing the day and us in the morning – with great humour. That set things up very well. The tight plan and choreographed sections essential and people definitely surprised themselves. Sensed a nervousness at start but the physical warm-up and fast pace helped with this and by the end everybody was enjoying a lot .

Great feedback throughout the day snatched throughout coffee breaks and lunch.

One staff member commented on accessibility of session in contrast to other team building activities that often are around 'macho' sport such as rowing where she didn't feel so able to take contribute. One male consultant commented:

At the start of the day I was so close to doing a runner I was convinced that this wasn't for me – shortly after the workshop started I was loving it. I can see loads of potential in this some of our clients would love it.

Highly likely that he was not alone in his feeling prior to the workshop.

Would have been useful have a more structured feedback session and reflection time.

They really appreciated the link to their HPE model great to see it dawn n them what they were producing through movement. Tableaux exercises again worked very well for this – especially the strict time limits – 10 seconds to... etc.

A effective team-building exercise and interesting demonstration of creative art making leadership – showed the spectrum of processes from taught choerography to improvisation. This could make for an interesting discussion session. Didn't go into any detail or discussion around non-verbal communication/body language.

Email received 22nd April 07.

... I just wanted to say a very big thank you for a brilliant day on Friday. During the day and after you left people were raving about your session saying how much they had enjoyed it and also how much they have learnt. ***** (the MD) was suggesting that our Senior leadership meetings in future should only last 1/2 hour in stead of 6 hours based on how creative we could be in 10 secs!!!!

It would be great to talk about how your session may be crafted to different sorts of groups may be based on level and experience e.g., middle managers, seniors leaders, talent development, graduates, teams and executive teams.- (senior manager – account director)